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From Access to Excellence: Shanghai's Comprehensive Strategy for High-quality Preschool Education

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Keywords: Puhui (universal affordable), child-centered learning, high-quality kindergarten construction

Abstract

Preschool education serves our most vulnerable group and affects every family and our nation's future; it is therefore a key public-welfare undertaking. Shanghai has just come through its third post-1949 baby boom and is now on a downward trend, from a peak of 230,000 births a year to about 100,000. Such fluctuations pose major challenges to resource planning. We carefully plan and build kindergartens according to the resident population size and urban development needs. Over the last decade, municipal spending on preschool education rose from 8.35 billion RMB in 2015 to 19.7 billion RMB in 2023, more than doubling. In addition, Shanghai also waives tuition and meal fees for children from disadvantaged families or those with special needs and supports Puhui (universal affordable) private kindergartens through per capital operational funding, rent exemptions, and other grants.

Shanghai has undergone two rounds of curriculum reform, evolving from teacher-centered "teaching" to child-centered learning. We now uphold play as the basic activity, respect developmental science and individual differences, encourage teachers to observe, study, and listen to children, arrange the daily routine scientifically, and support

autonomous learning, trusting every child to be an active, capable learner. Shanghai actively undertakes national pilot reform initiatives in preschool education, such as play-based learning pilot practice, universal affordable provision, and quality improvement experimental project—using them to unify educational philosophy and energize kindergartens and teachers. Recently, we launched a "high-quality kindergarten construction" initiative, shifting evaluation away from ranking toward lifting the "bottom" and raising overall quality. Overall, with Shanghai's urban development and rising living standards, public demand for preschool education has evolved from seeking 'access to kindergartens' to pursuing Shanghai-quality kindergartens. In the next phase, Shanghai will prioritize quality improvement in preschool education, focusing on elevating to every neighborhood kindergarten. Key initiatives include cientifically optimizing daily activities to align with child development research; enhancing professional competencies of teachers and childcare staff; and building public trust through demonstrable educational outcomes.

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Leveraging Pedagogical Research for Quality Improvement in Kindergarten Education

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Keywords: high-quality, play-based learning, child-centered routines

Abstract

In 2025, with the enactment of the Preschool Education Law of the People's Republic of China, the nation reaffirmed its commitment to developing education that satisfies the people, centering educational development around the needs and interests of the public. This legislation aims to actively promote the equitable and high-quality development of preschool education.

In response, Shanghai has undertaken in-depth explorations around four core questions: "What constitutes a high-quality kindergarten?", "What are the core elements of high-quality construction?", "How can professional development of teachers be realized?", and "How can pedagogical research provide effective support?". The city has taken a systematic approach—from defining developmental goals and identifying key indicators of high-quality kindergartens, to aligning with national directives by implementing play-based learning as the foundation of practice and constructing a child-centered daily routine.

Emphasizing the role of teachers as key drivers of quality enhancement, Shanghai advocates for educators to become professionals who study children in depth. Teachers are encouraged to observe and interpret the learning that occurs throughout children's daily activities, to reflect critically on their own pedagogical practices, and to cultivate a sense of self-diagnosis, conscious reflection, and autonomous improvement. Teachers are further supported in co-solving real-world problems with children, thereby becoming crucial links

between children and the curriculum.

To institutionalize these efforts, Shanghai continues to strengthen its three-tiered pedagogical research network, ensuring both horizontal coordination and vertical accountability. Efforts have also been made to enhance public communication by showcasing the processes involved in building high-quality kindergartens. Online professional development initiatives foster a shared sense of professional inquiry among educators undergoing change. Furthermore, pedagogical research is increasingly focused on studying children and addressing authentic challenges in practice, thereby providing sustained support for the professional development of educators across the city.

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"Hong Jiao Ya" Regional Project: High-quality Development of Preschool Education in Hongkou District from the Perspective of Home-kindergarten-community Collaborative Education

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Keywords: high quality education system, regional project, integrate

Abstract

Hongkou District has long centered on young children's development. By integrating diverse resources, it undertakes in-depth investigations in the core domains of the connotative development of preschool education, injecting new vitality into the high-quality development of regional preschool education.

In recent years, Hongkou District has continuously explored and practiced the integration of the basic curriculum and regional advantageous resources, and has been committed to constructing the "Hong Jiao Ya" regional project. Specifically, horizontally, it expands the radius of childhood. It involves approaching outdoor nature, promoting

home-school cooperation, and creating a community-sharing atmosphere. Furthermore, vertically, it links the present to the future by building a bridge between the advantageous resources of Hongkou District and the learning methods of preschool children.

It has been constantly promoting the construction of high-quality kindergartens. Through deepening the ‘Small Step’ curriculum for the transition from kindergarten to primary school, implementing practical-experience-based activities of the “Kindergarten Inside-and-Outside Activities”, and promoting the construction of the nursery classes from the perspective of ‘One-meter Height’, it exhibits the hconnotative features of the Hongkou education brand. It enables kindergartens to expand the concept of resources, integrate the concept of education, and connect the concept of curriculum, creating a rich childhood experience for every child in Hongkou.

These efforts has effectively resolved the practical problems in current education development, formed a joint force for regional curriculum reform actions, and promoted the high-quality development of regional education.

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Science, Grows in Nature: Practice and Reflection on Outdoor Scientific Inquiry for Young Children through the Lens of Deep Learning

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Keywords: outdoor scientific inquiry, nature education, deep learning

Abstract

As a pilot zone designated by China's Ministry of Education for improving the quality of early childhood education, Jiading District in Shanghai has developed a localized model of outdoor scientific inquiry. This model is guided by national frameworks such as the Kindergarten Quality Evaluation Guide and the Guidelines for the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6, and grounded in a "child development first" philosophy. Addressing common issues in early science education—namely, detachment from authentic experiences and a lack of inquiry-based orientation—this study contributes innovative practices to Shanghai's model of educational excellence.

Framed by the theory of deep learning, the study explores the potential of nature as a rich and authentic environment for scientific learning—one that sparks curiosity, supports free exploration, and fosters young children's abilities in observation, questioning, and problem-solving. Action research based on Jiading's district-wide "two-hour outdoor activity" policy reveals that natural settings promote emotional engagement, active inquiry, and experience transfer, thereby enhancing children's scientific literacy and holistic development.

Drawing on both theoretical insights and practical experience, the study proposes three principles of authenticity as a design framework for outdoor science inquiry: authentic contexts as the source of inquiry motivation, authentic problems as the driver of

child-initiated exploration, and authentic interaction—among children, teachers, and peers—as the mechanism that supports the natural emergence of deep learning. Multiple case studies demonstrate that in authentic environments, young children are capable of independently posing questions, engaging in exploratory play, and transferring knowledge—highlighting both the dynamic nature of scientific inquiry and the potential for deep learning in early childhood.

Finally, the study reflects on future-oriented challenges in the era of artificial intelligence, including the development of teachers' digital literacy, the tension between outcome-oriented assessments and process-based learning, and the balance between human-computer and human-human interactions. It proposes integrative approaches that bridge nature and technology to shape the future of early learning environments. Rooted in Shanghai's localized experience, this study offers Chinese insights and contributes to global discourse on high-quality early childhood education.

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An Exploration into the Development of Children's Sense of Belonging Based on Educational Perspectives and Cultural Values

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Keywords: Chinese heart, sense of belonging, cultivation of the sense of belonging

Abstract

The evolution of educational philosophy of Wunan Kindergarten has undergone three phases from "Cultural Diversity in School" to "Cultural Comparison" and to the current idea of "Looking for the root of Chinese Culture".

Taking "Chinese Cultural identity" as the foundation of the philosophy, Wunan Kindergarten aims to develop children's future competency and global understanding, addressing the core elements of a sense of belonging as "Order-Safety-Identity-Achievement" and proposing the pedagogical approaches "timeliness-cultural comparison–shared experiences". By constructing the curriculum framework which consists of "Themed Month-Cultural Week–Cultural Celebration–Special Moments" and the cultivating system of "group integration–value sharing-personal contribution", the research aims to establish the supporting system of "curriculum environment–professional development–shared resources" and form the strategies of "prioritizing emotional engagement–accompanying cognitive development–following action"

The study also explored the assessment tools and observation guidelines, with the findings of the characteristics of development of a sense of belonging of three-year old children. Based on the study, Wunan Kindergarten have constructed 8 Cultural Experiences Hubs, conducted 387 case studies and published monographs including "Chinese Heart,

Global Vision".

The research findings have been presented in both national and international conferences. They were also published on core academic journals and implemented in different regions, which offers evidence-based practices for developing children's sense of belonging.

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Benefits and Challenges of a Primary Caregiving System in Childcare Centres in Singapore

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Keywords: primary caregiving system, infant, childcare

Abstract

Since 2017, Singapore's childcare centres have been required to implement a primary caregiving system for infants aged 2 to 18 months (Early Childhood Development Agency, 2021). The system assigns a primary caregiver to each infant to ensure continuity and stability of care, while also requiring the caregiver to look after other infants within the group. The increasing demand for infant care in Singapore, driven by demographic changes and a growing number of working parents, underscores the importance of effective caregiving models. However, limited research has explored both the benefits and challenges of its implementation and impact on the quality of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Singapore.

As part of a larger-scale study, this presentation will report on the views of key stakeholders (including parents, educators and principals) on the benefits and challenges of a primary caregiving system. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collected qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 15 parents, 16 educators and six principals, and quantitative data from questionnaires completed by 62 parents and 32 educators across six selected educational settings in Singapore. The data were analysed using thematic analysis

for the qualitative data and descriptive analysis for the quantitative data.

Findings revealed that all three stakeholder groups consistently agreed that a primary caregiving system was beneficial in providing individualised care and support for infants aged under 18 months, as well as fostering secure and responsive educator-child relationships. They also acknowledged its benefits in strengthening parent-educator partnerships and teamwork among early childhood professionals. These findings suggest that the primary caregiving system is widely recognised for its benefits across the three stakeholder groups, indicating its positive impacts on the quality of care and relationships in educational settings. However, the study highlighted challenges related to communication and information-sharing, interpersonal relations, and workload within the system. These challenges suggest the need for improvements to fully optimize the benefits of a primary caregiving system in Singapore.

The findings of this study have significant implications for ECCE practices, emphasizing the need for effective implementation of the primary caregiving system to enhance the quality of care for infants in educational settings and support their learning and development outcomes.

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Sibling Relationships Longitudinally Predict 3-to 6-Year-Old Chinese Children's Prosocial Behavior: The Roles of Theory of Mind and Household Chaos

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Keywords: sibling relationship, prosocial behavior, longitudinal study

Abstract

Growing up with siblings provides abundant opportunities to negotiate, compromise, and learn to share and help others. Older siblings often act as caregivers providing companionship, care, and guidance to younger siblings. Research supports that having a sibling promotes children's prosocial development. After China's one-child policy, which lasted more than three decades from 1979 to 2015, Chinese families are now encouraged to have more than one child. While earlier studies, such as Cameron et al.'s 2013 paper "Little emperors: Behavioral impacts of China's OneChild Policy" published in Science, suggested that only children tended to be less prosocial, little is known about how sibling relationships affect the prosocial development of the new generation of Chinese children in early childhood.

Adopting a family systems perspective, the current study aimed to explore how sibling relationship quality predicts prosocial development of Chinese preschool children over 10-month period, while considering the child's individual characteristics and family environment. It was hypothesized that a positive relationship with an older sibling would predict imcreased prosocial behavior in 3-to 6-year-old Chinese children, mediated by the child's theory of mind. Additionally, it was expected that this association would be influenced by household chaos.

Eighty-two second-born children, aged 3 to 6 (target child: M = 58.46 months, SD = 10.27, 41 girls; older sibling: M = 137.30 months, SD = 45.44, 40 girls), from two-child families in China were recruited for the study. Parents provided data on demographic variables, household chaos, sibling relationship, and the target child's prosocial behavior and theory of mind. Sibling relationship quality was measured with Sibling Inventory of Behavior (Cronbach's alpha = .95). Prosocial behaviour was measure with the prosocial scale in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = .90 at Time 1, and .92 at Time 2). Theory of mind was measured using the Children's Social Understanding Scale (Cronbach's alpha = .93 at Time 1, and .94 at Time 2). Household chaos was measure using the Confusion, Hubbub and Order Scale (Cronbach's alpha = .74). The result showed that a positive sibling relationship at Time 1 predicted prosocial behavior at Time 2, with Time 2 theory of mind mediating the association between earlier sibling relationship and later prosocial behavior, while controlling for siblings' age, gender, and the target child's prosocial behavior and theory of mind at Time 1. Furthermore, Time 2 household chaos moderated the association between earlier positive sibling relationships and later theory of mind. Specifically, the mediating effect of positive sibling relationships on later prosocial behavior through theory of mind was significant in low-chaos families, but not in high-chaos families.

This study highlights the complex dynamics of family relationships and their impact on the prosocial development of children in two-child families. With China's recent shift to a two-child policy, the findings provide valuable insights into how family structure, environment, and relationship quality influence children's social development. The study has policy implications for family planning and supporting parents from two-or multiple-child families.

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The Relationship Between Social Avoidance and Problematic Media Use Among Preschool Migrant Children: A Cross-Lagged Study

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Keywords: social avoidance, problematic media use, Chinese preschool migrant children

Abstract

This longitudinal study explored the relationship between social avoidance and problematic media use among Chinese preschool migrant children. A cross-lagged panel model was employed to investigate the bidirectional associations between social avoidance and problematic media use across two time points (April 2022 and January 2023). Additionally, multi-group analysis was conducted to examine potential gender differences in these relationships. Mothers of 225 migrant children (Mage = 55.23 months, 52.90% girls) reported on children's social avoidance and problematic media use. Cross-lagged analyses showed that Time 1 (T1) problematic media use positively predicted Time 2 (T2; approximately nine months later) social avoidance, while T1 social avoidance did not predict T2 problematic media use. No significant gender differences were found in the reciprocal relationships between social avoidance and problematic media use. These findings suggest

that problematic media use may be a risk factor for the development of social avoidance in preschool migrant children. The study highlights the importance of addressing problematic media use in early childhood, particularly among migrant children who face unique developmental challenges.

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Respecting and Listening to Children's Voices: The Application of Making Thinking Visible in Yew Chung Approach to Early Childhood Education

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Keywords: making thinking vsible, inquiry, learning community

Abstract

Making Thinking Visible, as a tool for cognitive externalization, offers young children an effective way to express their cognition and emotions. It enables educators to understand children's thinking processes better, achieving authentic 'listening' and understanding. There are many tools for making thinking visible, such as 'I See-I Think-I Wonder,' 'Chalk Talk,' 'Zoom In-Zoom Out,' 'Compass,' and so on. It reveals that this approach has been extensively studied and implemented in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. However, there is limited research within early childhood education practices which really highlights and value child-center.

Based on the theory and tools of making thinking visible, this study utilizes qualitative methods, including classroom observations, teacher interviews, teaching documentation, and the children's work. It analyzes the application of making thinking visible in the practices across 15 kindergartens in Yew Chung Yew Wah International Education Institution, which applies the Yew Chung Approach to Early Childhood Education, centering emergent curriculum, child-led inquiry, and multilingualism. The results show that Making Thinking Visible is useful for kindergartens to establish a thinking-focused cultural

learning community. Firstly, using the Making Thinking Visible methods in the classroom could make the teacher discover children's abilities by listening to them, thus transforming their views of children and presenting respect for children. Secondly, when faced with inquiries, by using the Making Thinking Visible methods, teachers can shift their roles to allow children to become active thinkers and lead the direction of the investigation. Thirdly, teachers can skillfully apply the Making Thinking Visible methods in other work, fostering a work culture of loving thinking.

This study confirms the practical value of making thinking visible in the Yew Chung Approach to Early Childhood Education and provides new method for the practitioners for 'child perspective' research in early childhood education. Future research could further explore the adaptability of Making Thinking Visible methods to different age groups in kindergarten and their impact on children's long-term cognitive development.

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The Study on Children's Creative Performances in Kindergartens' Outdoor Physically Active Play of China from the Perspective of Body Phenomenology

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Keywords: children's creative performances, kindergartens' outdoor physically active play, body phenomenology

Abstract

Kindergartens' outdoor physically active play is recognized as one of the most fundamental approaches for children's expression, action and non-verbal communication. We should Focus on the connection between cognition and physical action, highlighting the physical experience of various perceived movements and being embedded in a wider range of biological, psychological and cultural situations, which is a relational existence in the dynamic coupling of brain-body-environment. Under the perspective of Body Phenomenology, it is necessary to adhere to the physical activity and curriculum concept of the trinity of body, cognition and personality, and put emphasize on children's creative performances in outdoor physically active play through observation and dialogue. This study employs the body as a medium to bridge disciplinary boundaries among pedagogy, physical activity science and phenomenology, exploring the paradigm of children's development and learning that transforms "functional movements"into "creative flows." In this study, 33 senior kindergarten children in Shanghai, China were randomly sampled and served as the research subjects integrating qualitative research methodologies that prioritized children's voices and

perspectives(e.g., participatory observation, drawing-and-telling, photo and video-elicitation interviews). Using qualitative analysis software NVivo12.0, the collected data were analyzed by three-level coding. Additionally, this study adopted the Body Phenomenology perspective to explore children's creativity of physical meaning and reached the following conclusions: the creative performances of children in outdoor physically active play includes four major components: creative playing method, creative body movement, creative physically play situation and creative problem-solving, paying attention to the creative expression of children's physical experience, including perceptual experience, conceptual understanding, embodied metaphor effects and emotional attitudes; These expressions are influenced by individual experiential factors, embodied environmental factors, and movement-related conditions, which collectively characterized by the four major features of life world-oriented embodied experiences, the spontaneity of play explorations, the culturally-constructed peer interactions, and ecologically-oriented aesthetic dimensions. In view of the above-mentioned findings, the following suggestions are put forward: (1) children's creative performances of kindergartens' outdoor physically active play highlight the ecological, life world-connected, and generative values of outdoor physically active play. Educators should soften boundaries between physical activities and play to nurture children's innate creative dispositions; (2) the complexity of the physically active play environment and task design should be adjusted in due time, while incorporating natural, loose part and open-ended play materials, can stimulate children's multi-sensory engagement (tactile, visual, olfactory, gustatory, auditory) to enhance their abilities of creative imagination, problem-solving, and improve fine and gross motor skills; (3) educators should adopt an integrated perspective of "physical activity as play, play as creativity " to deal with the relationship between physical activity, play and creativity. This study advances the Embodied and Enactive Creativity Account (EECA) of children's outdoor physically active play through phenomenological interpretation, emphasizing how children endow objects and movements with new sense by means of expressing emotions, narrating stories, and establishing relationships during physical activities.

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Transitioning to a Collective Environment: How Two-Year-Olds Adapt to Preschool Settings

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Keywords: transition, toddler, preschool

Abstract

Recently, several ECE policies in China including the latest Preschool Education Law encourage the enrolment of two years old toddlers into kindergartens, which mainly serve children aged from 3 to 6 years old. Entering into a collective setting poses both opportunities and challenges for these two years olds, who spend most of their time at home with parents or caregivers. Many studies from Western contexts revealed that experiences of group life create stress that might adversely affect child well-being and researchers identified an increase of stress during the transition period. This case study seeks to explore toddlers' experiences in kindergartens during the first month of their enrolment. Five toddlers from two public Chinese kindergartens are selected and observed continuously for four weeks. Data from observation of participant children, interview with parents and preschool teachers are collected. It is expected to identify the major challenges faced by the two-year-olds and

strategies they use to adapt themselves during the transitional period. The findings have significant implications for policy and practice, especially in light of the Chinese government's recent push to integrate childcare (0-3 years) and education (3-6 years) in kindergartens and its effort to boost the birth rates by providing high-quality, accessible childcare services.

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Montessori-Based Educational Game for Introducing Multicultural to Children Aged 5-6 Years

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Keywords: early childhood education, montessori, multicultural

Abstract

Religious diversity in Indonesia has begun to be introduced in several early childhood education institutions (PAUD). However, this introduction is generally limited to images without a structured learning concept. In fact, understanding religious diversity can be more effective when delivered through interactive and enjoyable methods. This study aims to develop a Montessori-based game to introduce the six recognized religions in Indonesia to children aged 5-6 years using a more systematic approach. The research method employed is the ADDIE Instructional Design model, which consists of analyzing children's needs in understanding diversity, designing the game, developing and testing it, implementing it in learning, and assessing its effectiveness. The results show that an educational game based on the Montessori approach, which emphasizes hands-on experiences and independent exploration, helps children better understand religious diversity and the importance of living in harmony. Children who participated in the game also demonstrated more inclusive attitudes and a greater appreciation for differences. Thus, this study contributes to the development of a more effective game-based learning method for instilling multicultural values from an early age.

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Playfulness and Resilience in Early Childhood: The Mediating Role of Curiosity

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Keywords: playfulness, curiosity, resilience

Abstract

This study investigates the direct and indirect relationships among children's playfulness, curiosity, and resilience. The 1,010 valid participants (mean age = 4.82 , 50.2% boys) were from six kindergartens in Hongkou District, Shanghai. Data on demographic information and children's playfulness, curiosity, and resilience were collected through parent-reported questionnaires on two separate occasions (Times 1 and 2), with a 6-month interval. Path analysis revealed the mediating role of curiosity in the relationship between playfulness and resilience. Cross-lagged modeling demonstrated that playfulness predicted subsequent resilience after controlling for gender. The findings suggest that playful children may exhibit heightened levels of curiosity, which in turn enhances their resilience. These results underscore the critical importance of playfulness in fostering early childhood development of curiosity and resilience.

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Supporting Behavioural Self-Regulation and Cooperative Behaviours in Three-Year-Olds through Orff-Inspired Music-Making

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Keywords: shared music-making, behavioural self-regulation, cooperative behaviours

Abstract

Three-year-olds are at a pivotal stage in their development, as they begin to internalise boundaries and navigate the rules of social play. At this age, developing self-regulation and cooperative behaviours is crucial for managing impulses and engaging in positive peer interactions—skills that lay the foundation for future academic success and social-emotional wellbeing (Lim, 2019). Music has long been recognised as a powerful pedagogical tool in early childhood education. One such approach is Orff Schulwerk, which invites children to explore music through movement, improvisation, and imaginative play, fostering both creativity and active participation (Shamrock, 1995). Research shows that music promotes self-regulation and prosocial behaviours such as empathy, cooperation, and turn-taking (Hallam, 2010; Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010). In particular, behavioural self-regulation—manifested in a child's ability to manage impulses, follow instructions, and participate appropriately with peers—is especially relevant during this developmental window (Winsler et al., 2011).

Despite the widespread use of music in early childhood classrooms, it is often implemented without intentional strategies to nurture social and emotional skills. Educators may lack clear guidance on how to design music experiences that serve this purpose. Although Orff Schulwerk is widely embraced internationally, its adaptation for very young

children remains underexplored. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how Orff-inspired group music-making can support the development of social and emotional competencies in three-year-old children, specifically, behavioural self-regulation, turn-taking, and collaborative problem-solving. The research is guided by two questions: "How do I design Orff-inspired rhythmic movement and music-making sessions to support behavioural self-regulation in three-year-old children? " and "How can shared musical experiences encourage turn-taking and collaborative problem-solving in three-year-old children?"

The study was conducted with four pre-nursery children who were selected based on their low scores in the Head-Toes-Knees-Shoulders Revised (HTKS-R) task (McClelland et al., 2024), a validated measure of behavioural self-regulation. A mixed-methods approach was used. Observation checklists tracked specific behaviours in the areas of self-regulation, turn-taking, and collaborative problem-solving. Post-hoc field notes provided insights into the implementation process and effectiveness of the activities. Anecdotal records documented contextual examples of social interactions, while a teacher journal captured reflections after each session and contributed to the interpretation of children's progress.

Findings indicate that rhythmic elements such as steady beats and musical opposites (e.g., stop/ go, fast/ slow, loud/ soft) supported children's behavioural self-regulation, with repeated practice enhancing self-awareness, attention, and impulse control. Shared music-making also nurtured cooperative behaviours by providing meaningful opportunities to practise waiting, sharing, and negotiating with peers. Over time, children showed growing independence and confidence in initiating these behaviours. These results reflect Kirschner and Tomasello's (2010) findings on the inherently social nature of music and its role in fostering peer interaction in young children. The study highlights music as a rich context for social learning and raises important considerations for how rhythmic play can be more intentionally integrated into daily classroom practice to support children's self-regulatory development.

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Teachers as Bridges: Strengthening Bilingual Early Childhood Education in Rural Yanbian

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Keywords: bilingual early childhood education, ethnic minority regions, teacher competence

Abstract

In China's ethnic minority regions, bilingual early childhood education has emerged as a priority under national policies such as "Tongyu Tongyin," which emphasizes Mandarin proficiency while preserving heritage languages. Yanbian, a Korean autonomous prefecture, highlights the complexities of this dual-language mandate. Preschool teachers here face unique challenges in balancing Korean and Mandarin instruction. This study investigates the bilingual teaching competencies of rural Korean preschool educators through a case study of a kindergarten in Yanji City of China. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combined questionnaires (167 teachers), classroom observations (12 sessions across age groups), and interviews (12 teachers and administrators). Grounded in Vygotsky's theory of learning development and Gardner's framework of multiple intelligence, this study assessed five dimensions of teaching competence: theoretical understanding, language fluency, goal alignment, instructional methods, and reflective evaluation.

Key findings reveal systemic challenges: limited grasp of bilingual pedagogy as well

as cultural integration strategies, Mandarin proficiency gaps among certified teachers, unclear bilingual goals mismatched with children's developmental needs, underdeveloped professional skills in activity design and assessment, weak self-evaluation practices and reflective teaching, contributing factors include insufficient training, resource constraints, fragmented policies, and preservice curriculum gaps. The study proposes the following actionable solutions: adopt child-centered methods and strengthen cross-cultural communication for teachers, localized training programs and collaborative learning networks for schools, establish bilingual certification standards and enhance rural teacher incentives for policymakers, and integrate practical bilingual modules and mentorship programs for scholars.

By centering rural educators' experiences, this study underscores the need for culturally responsive bilingual frameworks in China's multicultural landscape. It calls for systemic reforms to empower early childhood teachers as guardians of linguistic diversity while advancing national language objectives, fostering equitable early childhood development in ethnically diverse regions.

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Leisure and Lifelong Learning Support for Children with Medical Complexity

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Keywords: lifelong learning, leisure, children with medical complexity

Abstract

With medical advances, children under medical care CMC are increasing.

CMC is the children who, after being hospitalized for a long period of time in a NICU, etc., continue to use ventilators, gastrostomy, and receive medical care such as sputum suction and tube feeding on a daily basis. In Japan, it is estimated that there are approximately 20,000 CMCs nationwide.

While childcare, early childhood education, and post-school education for CMC have gradually been developed, their leisure and lifelong learning have not progressed much. Especially for children with severe disabilities and those with CMC, they spend most of their time at home with their families after returning from kindergarten or school, or on holidays, which is in stark contrast to children without disabilities who have many options for leisure and lifelong learning activities after school and on holidays. In this context, the presenters, in collaboration with a rehabilitation facility, have launched a leisure and lifelong learning support project for CMC.

Y Rehabilitation Center in Japan has been implementing a lifelong learning support project for CMC since 2023. Approximately two years have passed since the project began, and they have conducted various cultural and physical activities for children and individuals with severe disabilities, including those requiring medical care. These activities include water play (swimming pool), boxing experience sessions, video game experience sessions using

eye-tracking devices, tasting sessions for texture-modified foods, movie screenings, and wheelchair tennis experience sessions. In the questionnaire survey conducted with the individuals involved and their families after the project was implemented, multiple positive responses were observed, such as, “I was able to experience things I don’t normally get to do. I want to continue to try various things in the future.” “I was happy to see my child enjoying themselves so much.” (Family member).

Additionally, in the interview survey, there were statements like, “I was able to experience things I couldn’t have done just with my family,” and “I used to think negatively, assuming ‘it’s impossible anyway,’ but participating in the program changed that way of thinking.” There were also comments such as, “I realized that “you won’t know unless you try,” and “I’ve come to think that I shouldn’t prejudge things as ‘impossible’ based on assumptions.” These responses revealed the process of how participating in the project led to a transformation in their values.

This presentation will discuss the ideal approach to leisure and lifelong learning support for CMC, based on the activities carried out in the project and the results and analysis of surveys conducted with the individuals involved, their families, and support providers regarding these activities.

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Enhancing Learning Outcomes for Children from Low-Income Families: Insights from the Classroom Support Programme

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Keywords: educational interventions, low-income backgrounds, learning analytics

Abstract

In inclusive early childhood classrooms, teachers work with children from diverse backgrounds, each with unique strengths and challenges. For children from low-income families, the learning gap can be significant. These learning gaps may affect the academic, behavioral, and emotional development of these children significantly. To address these challenges, NTUC First Campus developed the Classroom Support Programme in 2013, aimed at providing targeted in-class learning support to 4-6 years old children from low-income families. A parallel study of the program was conducted in 2020 and a follow up study in 2024. Both studies utilised a mixed method approach, to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to gain insights in the areas of child development and effective pedagogical practices.

Assessment tools from different disciplines were utilised to identify key factors that influence children learning in the 2024 study. The tools included developmental assessments (Brigance IED III Standardized-IED III), classroom interaction quality (Classroom Assessment Scoring System-CLASS) and educational psychology (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire-SDQ). The IED III results show that the Classroom Support Programme is

having a positive impact on children's learning outcomes, particularly in numeracy and language. CLASS findings highlight the crucial role of teacher support, with a statistically significant positive relationship between teacher emotional support and improvements in numeracy skills, suggesting that emotionally supportive classrooms foster better numeracy outcomes. Teacher instructional support was also found to boost language development, particularly for children with lower initial scores, while classroom organization positively impacted language outcomes, emphasizing the importance of structured learning environments.

The data from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) revealed that behavioral and emotional traits influence academic outcomes in distinct ways. Prosocial behavior was found to negatively impact literacy improvement, indicating that highly social children may benefit from more structured academic support. Emotional difficulties, on the other hand, showed a marginal negative effect on numeracy, suggesting that children facing emotional challenges may require additional support with math-related tasks. These findings underscore the importance of addressing both academic and emotional needs to enhance the learning experience for children from low-income backgrounds.

This workshop will explore key research findings from the study conducted in 2024. It is hoped that by the end of the presentation, attendees will:

-Understand how targeted in-class support programs can improve numeracy, language, and social-emotional development, and be inspired to adopt or advocate for similar programs in their settings.

-Understand the critical interplay between emotional support, instructional strategies, and structured environments in fostering learning.

-Inform Educators and Policymakers by providing actionable recommendations for creating equitable and effective learning environments in the early childhood education field.

-Leave with a renewed commitment to addressing equity and supporting the holistic development of all children.

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Longitudinal Effects of Negative Emotionality on Loneliness in Early Childhood Considering Solitude Preference and Sibling Status

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(Shanghai Science and Technology Museum)

Keywords: negative emotionality, solitude preference, loneliness

Abstract

As declining birth rates emerge as a significant societal concern, understanding the implications of being an only child versus having siblings is becoming increasingly important in China, especially in relation to social and emotional development. This longitudinal study examines the role of solitude preference and sibling status in the relationships between negative emotionality and loneliness in early childhood. The participants were 204 children (Mage=48.58 months, SD=3.60). At Time 1, the children were interviewed to assess their preference for solitary play and loneliness, with a follow-up assessment of loneliness conducted at Time 2, two years later. Meanwhile, mothers provided evaluations of their children's negative emotionality at Time 1. The findings indicate that negative emotionality positively predicts loneliness two years later, with solitude preference acting as a mediator in this relationship. Additionally, sibling status was found to moderate the link between negative emotionality and solitude preference. Specifically, for only children, higher negative emotionality intensified the relationship between solitude preference and loneliness, whereas having siblings acted as a protective factor, mitigating this effect. These results underscore the potential social and psychological disadvantages faced by only children and highlight the

protective role siblings can play in mitigating feelings of loneliness.

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Navigating Challenges: Guiding Pre-service Early Childhood Educators to Support Special Educational Needs

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Keywords: special educational needs, early childhood education, teaching strategies

Abstract

This study explores the significant challenges faced by pre-service early childhood educators in supporting children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). It emphasizes the importance of effective strategies within inclusive education frameworks. The primary aim is to investigate the methods these educators employ during their internships to assist SEN students. Key research questions focus on how these educators enhance learning outcomes and navigate the complexities of teaching diverse learners.

Employing a qualitative case study methodology, this research analyzes specific instances from the internship experiences of 12 pre-service educators enrolled in a Bachelor's program in Early Childhood Education at a university in Hong Kong. Data analysis involves thematic coding to identify patterns in their approaches to differentiated instruction, classroom management, and communication.

Findings reveal that pre-service educators leverage innovative thinking and reflective practices to overcome challenges in supporting SEN students. The study concludes that ongoing professional development is essential for enhancing educators' skills. Implications for future research suggest that these insights can inform training programs, ultimately contributing to the development of more inclusive learning environments for all students.

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Co-designing a Program to Advance the Integration of Trauma-informed Approaches into Australian Early Childhood Education and Care

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Keywords: childhood adversity, trauma-informed, co-design

Abstract

[INTRODUCTION] Early childhood is a critical developmental period that shapes children's long-term social, emotional and physical health. Adverse childhood experiences and trauma that is experienced during this sensitive period is a significant public health concern. Extensive research evidence points to the deleterious consequences of childhood trauma for children, families, and society. Early Childhood Education and Care settings, as universal community services, are uniquely positioned to buffer the negative impact of early childhood trauma on children. Factors such as the physical environment, teacher–child interactions, teacher understanding of trauma and its impacts, beliefs and practices, policy and procedure, philosophy and culture of centres are thus vital in supporting children who have been exposed to traumatic experiences.

[METHOD] This presentation will briefly describe the Trauma-informed Early Childhood Education (TECE) project in Australia. This is a co-design initiative, that was guided by the Intervention Mapping methodology-a 6-step systematic and practical framework (Eldredge et al., 2016). For the ECEC sector where implicit knowledges are often privileged, IM provides an opportunity to engage key stakeholders (e.g., educators, parents, leaders) in participatory design processes, while systematically integrating theory and evidence to support decision-making throughout program development (O'Connor et al.,

2018).

The first step was needs assessment, where multiple systematic reviews were conducted to 1) understand the challenges educators experience in supporting trauma-impacted children, 2) unpack the enablers and barriers of embedding trauma-informed approaches in early childhood education, and 3) explore the effectiveness and components of existing trauma-informed initiatives. A mixed method needs assessment was also performed to understand the critical needs of Australian educators. The establishment of industry partnerships, where an advisory group and a design group were formed subsequently to ensure the process was participatory. These co-design groups made sense of the research findings, and used their lived experience to guide the meaningful development of resources. In total, three advisory group consultations and four design group workshops were conducted to inform the program development.

[FINDINGS] Benefits of incorporating trauma-informed approaches in education has gained burgeoning attention. Currently, trauma-informed programs evaluated at ECEC predominantly focused on upskilling educators, with the focus placed on educator-level change (Sun, Blewitt et al., 2024). However, qualitative inquiries synthesised the challenges experienced by educators, from lacking training and support to work with these children and emotional burden and burnout, to the difficulty in meeting the needs of all children, and confusion relating to the boundaries of their role (Sun, Tamblyn et al., 2024). Working with trauma-impacted children, without adequate preparation and support, can have a negative impact on educator wellbeing, which further undermines their capacity to provide high-quality education and care. While the current efforts to upskill educators are needed, the responsibility of supporting trauma-impacted children in ECEC should not reside with educators alone. Rather, a holistic approach is needed, with organisational change, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and a multi-tiered system of support needing further exploration. The logic model of the TECE program will be presented, along with the final program components. Future directions for research, practice, and policy will be discussed towards a trauma-informed early childhood education and care.

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Integrating Montessori Principles with Entrepreneurial Education: A Case Study of Kornkaew International Montessori School

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Keywords: montessori education, entrepreneurial learning, early childhood education

Abstract

Integrating Montessori Principles with Entrepreneurial Education:

A Case Study of Kornkaew International Montessori School

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"The children of today will make all the discoveries of tomorrow." Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952)

"If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow." John Dewey (1859-1952)

Introduction

Early childhood education is evolving to meet the demands of an increasingly complex and globalized world. Traditional methods of teaching are being re-evaluated in favor of more innovative, experience-based learning approaches that prepare children for the future. One such approach is the integration of Montessori principles with entrepreneurial education. This study examines how Kornkaew International Montessori School in Bangkok, Thailand, has successfully combined these two educational philosophies to foster creativity, independence, and problem-solving skills in young learners. By analyzing a carefully designed curriculum and documenting students' engagement, this research provides valuable

insights for parents, educators, and policymakers interested in shaping early education for the modern era.

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to explore how Montessori principles can be adapted to align with an innovative entrepreneurial focus in early childhood education. It aims to examine how entrepreneurial education can be effectively integrated into early learning and to assess its impact on young children's cognitive and social development.

Participants and Data Collection

The study was conducted at Kornkaew International Montessori School and involved school administrators, teachers, and students aged 1-5 years. Over an 11-month period (January-November 2024), researchers followed a structured process to design and evaluate a curriculum that:

• Aligns with early childhood learning principles.

• Supports mixed-age groups of 1-5 years old.

• Integrates Montessori principles with innovative entrepreneurial education.

• Utilizes Montessori materials and experiential learning to develop entrepreneurial skills.

This curriculum was implemented within the school, and various qualitative and quantitative data were collected to measure its effectiveness.

Data Analysis

To assess the impact of the curriculum, the study focused on two key areas:

1. Curriculum Review-A thorough analysis of the curriculum was conducted to ensure that it reflected the school's philosophy as an innovative entrepreneurial institution. The alignment of Montessori principles with entrepreneurial learning was critically examined.

2. Photographic Documentation-Detailed photographs captured students' engagement in learning activities, showcasing how children interacted with the Montessori materials and how they developed problem-solving and decision-making skills through entrepreneurial tasks.

These data points provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the curriculum in fostering creativity, independence, and real-world problem-solving skills in early learners.

Findings

The research confirms that integrating entrepreneurial education within a Montessori framework fosters a discovery-oriented learning environment. By engaging in hands-on activities and decision-making processes, children develop essential skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and innovation. The curriculum successfully prepares young learners to become future problem-solvers and leaders by encouraging exploration and curiosity. The findings reaffirm the belief that early childhood education should equip students with the mindset necessary to navigate and contribute to a rapidly changing global landscape.

Conclusion & Suggestions

This study highlights the significant potential of combining Montessori principles with entrepreneurial education to enhance early childhood learning. It suggests that schools seeking to prepare children for an evolving world should adopt flexible, experience-based curricula that nurture creativity, independence, and problem-solving abilities from an early age. By fostering a learning environment that encourages discovery, innovation, and resilience, educational institutions can help shape the next generation of thinkers and leaders.

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Dialogic Teaching in Collaborative Science Inquiry Learning with Young Children: A Case Study

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Keywords: dialogic teaching, collaborative inquiry, higher-order thinking

Abstract

This case study explores the use of Dialogic Teaching (DT) to improve STEM education for kindergarten children, an area with limited existing research. It examines how a teacher effectively used DT within a cooperative, inquiry-based science and engineering (IBSE) curriculum for K3 children in Fuzhou, China. The curriculum utilized the 5Es Instructional Model, and teachers were trained in DT strategies. Data was collected through classroom observations, interviews, and analysis of teacher plans and reflections. The results showed that teachers used educational dialogue to engage students, spark curiosity, and help them evaluate hypotheses through data analysis, leading to stronger conceptual understanding. Encouraging logical language increased student participation, active listening, diverse perspectives, and evidence-based reasoning. Teacher-led discussions, incorporating Mind Maps and self-assessment, promoted metacognitive reflection on collaborative learning. This study highlights DT's importance in enabling young children to actively participate in scientific inquiry, scaffolding their scientific thinking and cognitive skills, and enhancing the value and impact of early STEM education. By fostering collaboration and critical thinking, DT prepares children for future scientific challenges and promotes a deeper

understanding of STEM concepts from an early age.

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The Role of Kindergarten Teachers' Creativity in Their Intention to Implement STEM Activities

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Keywords: STEM activities, creativity, behavioral intention

Abstract

1.Rationales

Early STEM education has been found to benefit young children in numerous ways (Hapgood et al., 2020). Despite increasing attention to the importance of STEM learning in early childhood education, the exploration of factors influencing kindergarten teachers' intention to implement STEM education remains insufficiently addressed. According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985), individuals' intention to perform a behavior is predicted by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control regarding the behavior. Meanwhile, there is evidence that creative teachers tend to encourage students' possibility thinking and engagement in the learning process (Reilly et al., 2011). It is thus worthwhile to explore whether kindergarten teachers' creativity contributes to their positive attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention regarding early STEM education.

2.Purposes and research question(s) of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine whether and how kindergarten teachers' creativity is related to their intention to implement STEM activities. In light of the theory of planned behavior, the following research question was asked: Was kindergarten teachers' creativity associated with their intention to implement STEM activities through their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control regarding early STEM education?

3.Methods used

A total of 876 kindergarten teachers in China were recruited as participants through convenience sampling. They completed a questionnaire that tapped their creativity, as well as their attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention regarding early STEM education. Their prior training experience in STEM teaching was assessed as control variables. To answer the research question, path analysis was performed to evaluate the goodness-of-fit of our proposed model, which hypothesized that kindergarten teachers' creativity was related to their intention to implement STEM activities through attitudes and perceived behavioral control, but not subjective norms, regarding early STEM education.

4.Findings and implications

The results showed that our proposed model fitted the data well. After controlling for kindergarten teachers' prior training experience in STEM teaching, kindergarten teachers' creativity had a direct positive relation with their intention to implement STEM activities, as well as indirect relations through their attitudes and perceived behavioral control regarding early STEM education. Kindergarten teachers' creativity was not a significant correlate of their subjective norms regarding early STEM education. These findings imply that professional development activities for in-service kindergarten teachers should not just focus on promoting their positive attitudes towards early STEM activities and confidence in designing and implementing STEM activities, but should also nurture their own creative thinking.

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Food Education and a Better Life: Localized Food Education Curriculum in Early Childhood

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Keywords: food education, integrated childcare and early childhood care, curriculum

Abstract

China Welfare Institute Nursery (founded by Soong Ching-ling in 1950) has developed a comprehensive early childhood nutrition and health management system through over 70 years of practice. Supported by the National Ministry of Education Key Project "Practical Research on Food Education Curriculum Construction for 2-6-Year-Olds in Kindergarten-Nursery Integration Context" (DHA220489), this study adopted a three-phase methodology of "international comparison, localized investigation, and action research":

Firstly, a systematic analysis of the food education models in Japan, Europe, and America is conducted to extract a framework for the transformation of culturally appropriate courses.

Subsequently, a large-scale survey was conducted in 9 provinces and cities across the country (1246 parent questionnaires and 302 teacher questionnaires were effectively collected), revealing the problems in food education for young children in China and providing insights:

(1)Environmental support: analyzing food education theory and gaining a deeper understanding of the connotation of "equal emphasis on food education";

(2)Update on activities: explore curriculum resources, enhance children's enthusiasm and personalized development;

(3)Multiple participation in roles: reduce teacher burden, solve teacher structural difficulties from the root;

(4)Mechanism collaboration: improve multi-party cooperation, and put food education into practice through mutual assistance and learning.

After two rounds of action research, the curriculum system of "Food Education and a Better Life" has been explored and formed:

(1)Developing a tiered goal system for food education for 2-6 years old;

(2)Building a four-dimensional food education framework of "nutrition and health-dietary habits-dietary culture-cherishing food";

(3)Develop implementation guidelines and operational guidelines for food education courses;

(4)Establish a food education activity evaluation system consisting of narrative evaluation, structural evaluation, project-based evaluation, quantitative evaluation, and individualized evaluation.

Research has shown that our kindergarten's food education has made significant improvements in terms of activity content, teacher development, and parental parenting skills.

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An Action Research Study on Living Aesthetic Education in Kindergarten: A Case Study of a Kindergarten in Nanjing

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Keywords: living aesthetic education, aesthetics of everyday life, kindergarten

Abstract

This study proposes the concept of living aesthetic education in response to both the growing societal emphasis on the aestheticization of everyday life and the current limitations of aesthetic education in kindergartens. Living aesthetic education aims to cultivate children's aesthetic perception, understanding, and creativity by transforming ordinary life experiences into aesthetic experiences. Through this process, learners are guided toward a richer and more meaningful engagement with life.

Implementing this approach in kindergartens aligns with the developmental characteristics of children aged 3 to 6 and echoes the educational philosophy that "daily life is the curriculum." It also provides a way to transcend the constraints of existing aesthetic education models. The pedagogical principles of living aesthetic education include vision, dialogue, care, experience, expansion, and transfer. Its value lies in promoting children's aesthetic sensitivity, interpretive skills, and creative potential, while fostering a positive life attitude and foundational humanistic literacy.

The purpose of this study is to explore how living aesthetic education can inform and enhance aesthetic education practices in kindergartens. Employing an action research

methodology, the study first investigated the aesthetic education status of a kindergarten in Nanjing and selected one senior class as the focal group. Based on problems identified during the preliminary investigation, the research established goals in two areas: promoting children's aesthetic development and improving teachers' aesthetic literacy. Key implementation principles and entry points for living aesthetic education were then identified and an action research plan was developed.

The study followed a cyclical model of "observation-reflection-planning-action", conducted across three rounds. Research tools included a Child Aesthetic Behavior Observation Scale and a Teacher Checklist for Living Aesthetic Education with reflective prompts. Data sources comprised teacher reflections, video recordings of teaching activities, and researcher field notes. A comparison of pre-and post-intervention data revealed notable improvements in both children's aesthetic development and teachers' aesthetic competencies.

Specifically, children showed enhanced sensitivity in aesthetic perception, increased aesthetic imagination, stronger motivation and ability for creative expression, and greater openness to diverse aesthetic experiences. Their ability to apply aesthetic awareness to daily life also improved, along with a more positive attitude toward everyday experiences. Teachers, meanwhile, demonstrated growth in both their conceptual understanding of aesthetic education and their practical skills in delivering aesthetic experiences.

Based on the implementation outcomes, the study offers practical recommendations for living aesthetic education in kindergartens across four dimensions: activity initiation, organization, implementation, and evaluation. Recommendations for activity initiation include capturing spontaneous aesthetic moments in children's lives and favoring a top-down planning approach. For organization, project-based group activities and sufficient time allocation are emphasized. Implementation advice includes respecting individual aesthetic differences, trusting children's creative autonomy, and establishing non-hierarchical teacher-child relationships. In terms of evaluation, selecting appropriate assessment methods and prioritizing positive feedback are recommended.

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Practising ESD in Early Childhood: Mapping Sustainability across Daily Routines and Learning Environments in a Japanese Preschool

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Keywords: education for sustainable development (ESD), sustainability practices, Japan preschool

Abstract

This paper investigates how Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is embedded within the everyday practices of a Japanese preschool, with a focus on how sustainability is lived rather than taught. Framed within the cultural and pedagogical context of early childhood education in Japan, the study examines how the three pillars of ESD-environmental, social, and economic sustainability-are seamlessly integrated into daily routines, interactions, and spatial design. Rather than positioning ESD as a separate subject or formal curriculum area, this research conceptualises sustainability as an emergent, experiential process co-constructed through children's participation and guided by the

intentional rhythms of preschool life. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the study utilises spatial-temporal mapping, participant observations, and educator interviews to explore how sustainability values are mediated in practice. Findings suggest that young children engage with sustainability through play, caregiving routines, nature-based exploration, and communal responsibility, revealing a deeply situated and relational understanding of sustainable living. This research contributes to the broader discourse on ESD in early childhood in Asia-Pacific by emphasising culturally grounded, practice-based approaches. It offers a framework for understanding how young learners can cultivate sustainability mindsets through the lived experience of preschool environments.

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A Small Step: Evaluation Tools and Support Systems for Kindergarten-Primary School Transition Centered on Children's Development

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Keywords: transition from kindergarten to primary school, school readiness, evaluation index

Abstract

The transition from early childhood settings to formal schooling in the era of high-quality education should not only focus on helping preschool children transition smoothly from kindergarten to primary school, but also pursue the sustainable development of children's future.

Focusing on the core competencies and essential qualities of children's lifelong development, the study constructed the "Children's School Readiness Evaluation Index", also

known as the “School Readiness Energy Bottle”, for children’s school readiness through a combination of theoretical and empirical research. The scientific evaluation index includes five basic dimensions (Physical School Readiness, Emotional School Readiness, Self-care School Readiness, Interpersonal School Readiness, and Learning School Readiness), 20 core indicators and 80 specific indicators.

Through four years of practical exploration, the collaborative cooperation of Industry-University-Research built a “classification guidance strategy” and “specific transition curriculum task group”. A coordinated teacher support and parent support system among home, kindergarten and society has been established.

The research not only provides solid support for children’s smooth transition from kindergarten to primary school, but also promotes the construction of a high-quality education system in society.

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Reconceptualizing Care in Korea: Alternative Narratives Told by Childcare Teachers

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Keywords: care, narrative inquiry, alternative discourse

Abstract

This study aims to explore the care experiences of Korean childcare teachers and to understand their meaning in order to propose an alternative discourse on care. Despite the importance of care in early childhood education, the care work performed by childcare teachers has long been devalued as low-skilled and low-paid labor. This stems from a socio-cultural context that regards care as a natural instinct of women and from South Korea's institutional bifurcation of care and education.

Since the 1990s, qualitative studies influenced by postmodern philosophy have explored childcare teachers' care practices. However, these studies often limited participants to married women and infant-class teachers[In Korea, teachers of children aged 0-2 are called "infant-class teachers," while those working with 3-5-year-olds are "preschool-class teachers." These labels reflect structural assumptions that equate infant care with caregiving and preschool teaching with education, reinforcing a hierarchical divide.]. This trend suggests that previous research has not fully moved beyond traditional assumptions that have contributed to the devaluation of care. Therefore, this study seeks to offer new interpretations

and discourses on care by amplifying the voices of teachers-particularly male, unmarried, and preschool-class teachers-who have been largely excluded from earlier research.

As a voice-centered study, this research adopts a narrative inquiry approach, which is widely used in educational research to explore and interpret teachers' experiences. Between July 3 and September 22, 2024, nine in-depth interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately one hour. Three participants-diverse in gender, marital status, and years of teaching experience-were selected, and critical incidents related to their care practices were collected and reconstructed into field texts and research texts.

The participants' narratives revealed five key themes:

1. Participants experienced inner dissonance between their lived experiences of care and externally constructed perceptions shaped by factors such as parental demands. This tension undermined their ability to form a stable identity as care professionals.

2. Each participant held a distinct and evolving care perspective, reflected in three orientations: 'ensuring safety,' 'facilitating play,' and 'fostering dynamic relationships.' These views expanded and deepened with accumulated experience.

3. Although not biological or legal mothers, participants embodied a 'reconceptualized motherhood', caring for children through protection, nurturing, and training-grounded in both emotional warmth and rational reflection.

4. Their professionalism was expressed through 'listening to children,' engaging them as agentic beings, interpreting their expressions sensitively, and responding with respectful care.

5. Through their narratives, care emerged as dynamic and ripple-like force, catalyzing change not only in children but also in families, communities, and the teachers themselves.

This study reconsiders the dichotomy between care and education, contributing to Korea's ongoing efforts toward integrating early childhood education and care (ECEC) and improving the overall quality of care environments. Furthermore, by highlighting the individual care experiences of childcare teachers as socially significant and positioning them as forerunners in the discourse of care, this study offers practical insights into the transition

toward a sustainable, care-oriented community.

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How Does Receptive Language Foster Positive Social Behavior?——A Brain Imaging Exploration of the Mediation Mechanism of Inhibitory Control

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Keywords: social-emotional competence, inhibitory control, receptive language

Abstract

Positive social behavior is an integral component of preschool children's social-emotional competence. Existing research has demonstrated that its development is closely associated with children's receptive language and inhibitory control, yet few scholars have explored the interconnections and underlying mechanisms among these three factors. This study aims to clarify the influence of receptive language on positive social behavior through inhibitory control and its intrinsic mechanisms.To achieve this objective, behavioral questionnaires and functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS) were employed to collect data from 89 children (age 57.79±6.87 months) regarding their receptive language, positive social behavior, and brain activation patterns under inhibitory control tasks.The findings reveal that:(1)Under the premise that the inhibitory control condition (ST3) represents preschool children's inhibitory control level, receptive language can predict positive social behavior through inhibitory control.(2)Receptive language predicts positive social behavior via the oxygenated hemoglobin concentration in the left inferior frontal gyrus during the

inhibitory control condition (ST3).These two mediation models, from both behavioral and neural perspectives, further confirm the positive role of inhibitory control in preschool children's development.The results provide recommendations for children's linguistic, social, and cognitive development, while offering evidence highlighting the need to actively protect prefrontal regions and emphasize the prominent role of brain areas such as the left inferior frontal gyrus.

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How Do Preschool Teachers Perceive Quality Inclusive Education? A Thematic Analysis of 126 Inclusive Education Cases in China

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Keywords: early childhood, preschool teachers, quality education

Abstract

Background. The conceptualization of inclusive education (IE) for children with disabilities and special educational needs is rich and diverse due to its complexity. Teachers' perceptions and practices in IE warrant more investigations because of the variation in the landscape of early childhood education and the delivery model of IE(D'Agostino, S.R., & Horton, E., 2023), especially after the first legislation targeting early childhood was released in 2025, in which article stipulating local government's responsibility to promote IE.

Purpose. This study aims to investigate preschool teachers' perceptions of quality IE by analyzing IE contest cases.

Methods. A realistic, theory-oriented, semantic thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke,

2006) was adopted to analyze 126 anonymous IE cases written by preschool teachers in an IE cases contest. The xis-step process recommended by Braun and Clarke was followed to form sub-themes under the theoretical framework of Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, E. P., 2012).

Results. Codes were formed and categorized to form subthemes under 12 dimensions of ICP, representing teachers' perception of quality IE practices. Quality practices include: place materials, set up visual cues, adjust the space, provide emotional support, and meet sensory needs (Dimension 1 Adaptations of space and materials/equipment); promote peer interaction between general children and children with special needs, establish designated interaction groups, and leverage peer support to facilitate learning for children with special needs (D2 Adult involvement in peer interaction) encourage game participation, enhance game experience, promote game cooperation, and expand game content (D3 Adults' guidance of children's activities and play); intervene in conflicts, calm emotions, resolve problems, and teach strategies (D4 Conflict resolution); build relationship networks, enhance understanding of differences, unlock children's potential, empower children's participation in collective affairs, and raise parental awareness (D5 Membership); Respond to challenging emotions and behaviors, respect special needs, increase physical contact, enhance one-on-one interactions, and build trusting relationships (D6 Relationships between adults and children); integrate non-verbal cues, modify directive approaches, cultivate a low-pressure communication climate, and facilitate preschoolers' needs articulation (D7 Support for communication); consider children's interests, adjust activity difficulty and content, adjust seating arrangements, provide verbal and non-verbal assistance, and assign specific teachers (D8 Adaptation of group activities); Attract children's attention, provide individual assistance, adjust instruction methods, and familiarize with the surrounding environment (D9 Transitions between activities); Guide feedback from other children, implement token rewards, and provide both verbal and non-verbal encouragement (D10 Feedback); invite parents to the kindergarten, conduct home visits, guide shifts in educational perspectives, modify incorrect educational approaches, promote professional diagnostic assessments, and synchronize home-kindergarten educational strategies (D11 Family-professional partnerships); implement checklist-based evaluations, develop tailored IEPs, and flexibly modify teaching approaches

(D12 Monitoring children's learning).

Discussion. Teachers show respect and alignment with IE, demonstrating proactive engagement. However, gaps exist in pedagogical knowledge, including neurodevelopmental profiles and evidence-based adaptations. Despite using multidimensional interventions, methodologies lack empirical grounding and consistency.

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Inclusive Policy Model of Education Services for Non-id Card Communities in DKI Jakarta Province Based on Intersectional Integration

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Keywords: intersectional approach, inclusive policy, education services

Abstract

Urgency: Jakarta's non-ID card community can be called a community without status, they often face difficulties in accessing public services because they are not registered in the official regional administration system, which results in them being marginalized in terms of education, health, and social assistance. This research is important to identify and develop intersectional-based education policies that can create fairer and more inclusive access for non-registered communities, so that they are no longer marginalized in accessing education. Intersectional-based education policies refer to the theory introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw about intersectionality. Crenshaw first developed this concept in the late 1980s to describe how individuals who are at the intersection of social identities such as race, gender, social class, and others experience discrimination in public services.

Objective: This study aims to analyze the application of an intersectional approach in the design of social policies for Jakarta's non-ID card community, as well as to identify the barriers faced by this group in accessing public services. This research will also produce policy recommendations that can be implemented to improve non-registered communities' access to education services that are more inclusive and responsive to their needs.

Methodology: This study uses a mixed-methods methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative methods will be used through interviews with non-registered community members to explore their experiences, perceptions, and challenges they face in accessing education services. Interviews were also conducted with policy makers in Jakarta. Meanwhile, the quantitative approach involves a survey through a questionnaire to collect statistical data related to their level of access to education services such as KJP, KJMU, BOS, BOP and Free Schools.

Results: This study is expected to produce a social policy design based on an intersectional approach, which is more inclusive and effective in increasing access to public services by non-registered communities. The results of the study are also expected to broaden understanding of the importance of implementing an intersectional perspective in education policy.

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Investigating Expected Quality Standards in Chinese Early Childhood Education Policy Documents

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Keywords: Early Childhood Education, quality standard, policy document

Abstract

Clarifying the expectations outlined in early childhood education policy documents is essential for enabling teachers to deliver high-quality education and care to young children. Though Chinese national policy documents set requirements for teaching and learning, educators may understand and implement government expectations differently, therefore raising concerns in practice. Also, in the past decade, detailed quality standards have been developed by different local governments for assessing early childhood education quality. However, no studies have investigated how teachers implement these government quality standards in everyday teaching and learning. This study is a response to this gap.

This presentation shows how policy documents about early childhood education quality, video recordings, and focus group interviews were used as data to analyse and demonstrate connections between the government's expectations for quality education and teachers' everyday practices. A series of videos were produced to demonstrate high quality teaching and learning activities aligning with quality standards stated in policy documents. A key finding was that the videos produced from this study supported teachers to reflect on one another's practices and better understand government's expectations for high quality.

The impact of the research project is threefold. First, the participants' reflection on the video-recorded teaching and learning practices deepened their understanding of the

government's expectations for quality education. Second, the edited video footage can support pre-service teachers' learning at tertiary educational institutes, upon permission from participating kindergartens and teachers. Last, this study informs future larger research projects using videos to support early childhood teachers in enhancing alignment between practices and government expectations.

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A Study of Parental Satisfaction of Puhui Childcare Services Quality: Profiles, Predictors and Policy Recommendations

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Keywords: puhui childcare services, parental satisfaction, quality assessment

Abstract

The Puhui (普惠) early childhood education (ECE) program is a national, universal, and public-benefit policy aimed at addressing the fertility rates, the Puhui policy is recognized as the foundational framework for childcare services for children under the age of three. This policy seeks to provide quality-assured, affordable, and accessible childcare services (NDRC, 2019). Notably, research has shown that Chinese families often experienced a low sense of accessibility, a high perception of financial burden, and a diminished sense of quality regarding childcare services (Hong et al., 2019). However, few studies have explored parental satisfaction with Puhui childcare services (PCS) within the broader context of the Puhui policy. Therefore, to gain a deeper understanding of parents' satisfaction with the quality of PCS-an essential factor for optimizing both the supply and quality of these services-this study was designed to examine the current situation and identify the predictors and profiles of parental satisfaction with PCS quality.

In October 2024, a sample of 976 parents of children under the age of 3 from Shanghai was assessed using the Puhui Childcare Quality Scale (PCQS). First, we conducted factor and reliability analyses to confirm the validity and reliability of the PCQS. Second, we

explored the mean scores and profiles of parental satisfaction through descriptive analysis and latent profile analysis (LPA). Third, a three-step hierarchical regression analysis was performed to identify the predictors of parental satisfaction. Finally, we employed a person-centered approach (Marsh et al., 2009) to investigate the profiles and predictors of parental satisfaction using chi-square analysis and multinomial logistic regression.

There were four main findings: (1) The PCQS demonstrated good reliability and validity, encompassing 6 dimensions (CFI = 0.915, TLI = 0.908, SRMR = 0.035, RMSEA = 0.077, Cronbach's α = [0.91, 0.97]). (2) Descriptive analysis indicated that most parents were satisfied with the quality of PCS (M = 4.58, SD = 0.49). LPA revealed four profiles: (a) the high satisfaction group (61.17%); (b) the medium to high satisfaction group (13.42%); (c) the medium satisfaction group (22.95%); and (d) the low satisfaction group (2.46%). (3) Hierarchical regression analysis indicated that children's enrollment duration (β = -0.065), the ratio of fees to disposable income (β = -0.131), the parent-staff relationships (β = 0.575), and the father's education level (β = -0.094) were significant predictors of parental satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). (4) Multinomial logistic regression revealed that parents who visited the childcare center daily were less likely to belong to Profile 3 compared to Profile 1 than those who never visited (OR = -0.83). Additionally, parents with poor parent-staff relationships were more likely to belong to Profile 4 compared to those with good parent-staff relationships (OR = 6.14).

Based on the current level of parental satisfaction and the findings presented above, this study proposes countermeasures and recommendations for the government, childcare centers, and society to further enhance the quality of PCS.

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Importance of Recognising Diversity of the Early Childhood Education Workforce for Unity and Equity for All

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Keywords: Early Childhood Education (ECE), Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), culturally diverse workforce

Abstract

The early childhood workforce is highly mobile with many educators migrating across international borders (OECD, 2022). In Australia, for example, driven by the shortage of educators, there has been concerted efforts to recruit teachers from overseas. Many of these educators come from cultural and language groups that differ from the dominant Australian culture (Golebiowska, et al., 2018). In Australia, individuals who are born overseas, have at least one overseas-born parent, do not speak English as their first language, and have cultural or religious values distinct from mainstream and Australian First Nation communities, are referred to as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD). This paper focuses on the CALD early childhood workforce in Australia.

Whilst Australian early childhood education (ECE) policies focus on the needs of children and families, the needs of educators, who play a crucial role in delivering high-quality, culturally safe environments, are often overlooked. The National Children' s Education and Care Workforce Strategy (ACECQA, 2021), for example, emphasises the importance of a well-supported workforce to achieve quality ECE outcomes, and Australian census data reveals that 51.5% of Australia' s population is CALD. Yet, very limited data exists on the cultural composition of the ECE workforce. Such data is essential for ECE

policies that promote equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive early childhood services for educators as well as children.

This study aimed to determine the extent to which CALD educators reflect the broader Australian population and provide information on their qualifications (Post-Graduate, Bachelor' s Degree, Diploma, and Certificate III) and positional roles (Centre Director, Educational Leader, Early Childhood Teacher, and Educator). A national survey was conducted using purposive sampling of ACECQA-registered centre-based ECE services, resulting in 502 responses from 11,021 Long Day Care and Preschool directors. Initial comparisons with the 2021 ECEC National Workforce Census, the 2021 Population Census, and ACECQA reports, confirmed that the sample was representative of Australian centre-based ECE services.

Results showed that 82% of participating centres employed CALD educators. Within these centres, 42.4% of the workforce was identified as CALD. A key finding was that 15.3% of CALD educators held bachelor' s degrees or higher, but only 3. 3.3% held leadership positions.

This underrepresentation of CALD educators in leadership positions highlights the need for government bodies, policy developers, and researchers to recognize and address workforce inequalities. Comprehensive data collection on the CALD workforce and engagement in these discussions are vital to building a more equitable and diverse ECE for all.

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A Comparative Study of Work Climate and Job Satisfaction of ECEC Teachers in Japan and South Korea

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Keywords: Japan-South Korea comparative study, ECEC teachers' job satisfaction, re-analysis of OECD data

Abstract

A number of previous studies have reported that the mental state of ECEC teachers influences children's development. Research in this area is particularly advanced in the U.S., where it has been shown that the well-being of ECEC teachers-their physical, mental and social health and safety-is related to the quality of their teaching and care. For example, quantitative analysis has reported that lower levels of job satisfaction among ECEC teachers are associated with higher turnover and, conversely, that higher levels of job satisfaction are associated with better child development. However, there is a paucity of research in this area in the Asia-Pacific region. This study focuses on the job satisfaction of ECEC teachers in Japan and Korea and identifies job satisfaction and related factors to make recommendations for improving the quality of ECEC and teachers' career development. The analysis was conducted using the OECD TALIS Starting Strong International Survey 2018.

The analysis revealed the following two findings.

First, of the eight countries surveyed, both leaders and teachers in Japan and South Korea had the lowest levels of job satisfaction. Both Japan and South Korea are reportedly facing irreversible declining birthrates and aging population. Parents and grandparents have high expectations of their fewer children and want them to receive a quality education from

an early age; as evidenced by PISA scores, both Japan and South Korea have very high standards of compulsory education; ECEC teachers face high pressure from parents and society, but also low social status and wages, which may make it difficult to increase job satisfaction.

The second finding is that factors related to job satisfaction differ between Japanese and Korean, leaders and teachers. Many factors were associated with job satisfaction for Japanese teachers, including working hours, career, self-efficacy, evaluation of the leader, peer support, social evaluation and evaluation from parents and children, whereas for Korean teachers, social evaluation, evaluation from parents and children, and support for participation in training programs were strongly associated with job satisfaction. The job satisfaction of Japanese leaders was associated with benefits and relationships with parents and teachers, whereas the job satisfaction of Korean leaders was associated with the location of the ECEC center and relationships with parents and teachers.

Given that previous studies have shown that ECEC teachers' job satisfaction affects children's academic performance and that leaders' job satisfaction depends on good relationships with teachers, improving ECEC teachers' job satisfaction is essential for improving the quality of ECEC. Despite similar societies and institutions, the composition of teacher satisfaction in Japan and South Korea differed significantly. Therefore, a country-specific approach is needed to address this issue. Future research will aim to analyze in more detail the factors and causal factors that contribute to teachers' job satisfaction.

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The Development of Group-based Preschool Management in Shanghai in the Context of High-quality Education

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Keywords: group-based preschool management, high-quality education, strategies to challenges

Abstract

Shanghai's exploration of group-based preschool management primarily began in 2017. After years of development, what is the current status? What experiences have been gained? What challenges exist, and how can they be addressed? In the current context of comprehensively establishing high-quality preschools, how can group-based management effectively contribute?

To address these questions, we conducted a survey on the current state of group-based preschool management in Shanghai, covering: the number and scale of early childhood education groups in Shanghai; their composition types and organizational models; the categories of education groups; regional governance of group-based kindergarten management; operational outcomes and effectiveness. Based on the findings, we analyzed the challenges faced and proposed strategies to overcome them.

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The Representation of Child Abuse in Chinese Picture Books

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Keywords: child abuse, picture books, China

Abstract

The aim of this study is to systematically analyze the types of child abuse, characteristics of abused children, and coping mechanisms regarding child abuse depicted in picture books published in China from 1980 to 2024. The selection criteria for the research subjects focused on picture books addressing themes of child abuse, limited to those intended for young children. To this end, relevant books were searched using keywords such as ‘child abuse’, ‘abuse’, and ‘violence’ in major bookstores and libraries in China. Picture books of appropriate quality in both text and illustrations were initially selected, and a final list of 24 books was determined. During the analysis process, in addition to the researcher, faculty members in early childhood education and co-researchers participated in repeatedly reading and analyzing the selected books according to the established criteria. The findings of this study revealed that, firstly, among the types of child abuse, sexual abuse accounted for the highest proportion, while neglect was comparatively less frequent. Secondly, regarding the characteristics of the abused children, the majority of victims were girls, and the victims’ ages were predominantly young children. Emotionally, the victims primarily exhibited fear and anxiety as emotional responses. Thirdly, in relation to coping mechanisms for child abuse, ‘no response provided’ was most commonly observed for perpetrators, while victims

typically responded by ‘seeking help’ or ‘reporting’ the abuse, and bystanders showed supportive behaviors or reported the abuse. This study aims to raise social awareness of child abuse issues and, through this, identify practical improvements in child abuse prevention education. It is expected to provide foundational data to continuously improve and optimize prevention education targeting young children, parents, and educators.

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Child Abuse Depicted in Chinese Picture Books

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Keywords: child abuse, picture books, Chinese

Abstract

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the various forms of abuse, the characteristics of the victims, and the corresponding coping mechanisms as portrayed in Chinese children's picture books. The research methodology entailed the establishment of analytical criteria, followed by the selection of 24 Chinese picture books for analysis. Data analysis was conducted collaboratively by the primary researcher and two co-researchers, who systematically analyzed the selected picture books in accordance with the predefined criteria for identifying child abuse within children's literature. The findings indicate that sexual abuse is the most frequently depicted form of abuse in Chinese children's picture books, whereas neglect is represented at a relatively lower frequency. The victims portrayed in these picture books are predominantly female, with the majority being young children. The emotional responses exhibited by the victims are predominantly characterized by feelings of fear and anxiety. The coping mechanisms presented within these picture books illustrate that victims typically respond to the abuse by seeking assistance or reporting the incidents, whereas bystanders demonstrate supportive behaviors or engage in reporting. This study seeks to enhance awareness of child abuse issues and is anticipated to identify gaps in preventive education, ultimately contributing to the ongoing improvement and optimization

of educational interventions aimed at preventing child abuse.

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From "Playground" to "Living Circle": Practical Exploration and Iterative Research on Constructing Vitality-infused Play Environments in Kindergartens

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Keywords: kindergarten game environment, vitality, living circle

Abstract

Outdoor play environments in kindergartens serve as crucial catalysts for stimulating children's play vitality. Current outdoor play spaces commonly suffer from insufficient natural experiences, rigid zoning divisions, and lack of child agency, leading to diminished play interest and constrained creativity. This eight-year action research, conducted in a model kindergarten, addresses the core question of "how to construct vitality-infused play environments that awaken children's play energy". The study reveals a three-phase iterative development path: from "functional playground" to "engaging play space", ultimately evolving into "immersive living circle".

Phase I (Initial Stage) established a "Vitality Courtyard" framework through life exploration curriculum, creating five interactive zones: natural discovery, social interaction, cultural identity, life exploration, and physical movement. This prototype integrated natural

fields, grid-style shops, cultural pavilions, sand-water exploration areas, and modular sports equipment, achieving preliminary success in facilitating nature-based exploration and social learning. However, fixed zones and teacher-dominated design gradually reduced play engagement.

Phase II (Evolutionary Stage), guided by the "Kindergarten Education Quality Evaluation Guidelines", implemented the "Courtyard Council" project. By incorporating children's voices through meetings, autonomous drawings, and voting mechanisms, dynamic optimization of play spaces (e.g., cycling area redesign) was achieved. Post-intervention data showed 42% increase in play duration, 35% growth in creative behaviors (slope challenges, bus stop construction), and 90% zone utilization recovery.

Phase III (Transformational Stage) focused on creating an interconnected "Living Circle" through cross-zone collaboration and play currency systems. Case studies revealed children's self-designed "Exchange Hut" with dual-currency economy (white coins as wages, yellow coins for consumption), successfully integrating 85% of campus areas. Cross-zone collaborations in costume design, poetry printing, and documentary filming fostered "life-integrated play" experiences. Observations indicated 60% increase in play narrative complexity and 50% growth in social cooperation.

The research confirms that respecting child agency, connecting life experiences, and implementing iterative design form the core elements of environmental vitality. It establishes a progressive development model of "nature immersion-child empowerment-social construction", providing an operational paradigm of "problem diagnosis-child participation-mechanism innovation" for kindergarten play environment reform. Future research should deepen the synergistic mechanisms between environmental adaptability and curriculum generation, facilitating continuous transfer of play experiences to real-life contexts.

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Children's Co-construction • Cultural Symbiosis: The Creation Pathway and Educational Ecology of Folk Culture Museums in Kindergartens

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Keywords: co-construction • cultural symbiosis, folk culture museums, educational ecosystem

Abstract

Guided by the core concept of "Children Co-Creation • Cultural Symbiosis", this study explores the establishment pathways of folk culture museums in kindergartens and the logic of constructing their educational ecosystems. As the primary site for cultural enlightenment, kindergartens urgently need symbiotic mechanisms that integrate cultural heritage with child development. Traditional museum education faces dual challenges: the "one-way transmission of objectified exhibits" and the "absence of children as cultural agents". This study transcends static exhibition models by transforming folk cultural resources into dynamically evolving educational carriers, creating a cyclical pathway of "child-led curation-cultural immersion-ecological reciprocity" to form a vibrant educational ecosystem.

I. Child-Led Curation: Activating Cultural Agency

Positioning children as “active agents” and “meaning-makers” in cultural transmission, the research develops a participatory curation model. Using the Mosaic method, a multidirectional dialogue mechanism is established: During cultural theme selection, children’s interests in folk culture are identified through drawings, photography, and map-making. In local resource exploration, family-cultural exploration groups document artisans’ crafts via video journals. For exhibit collection and game design, children gather artifacts and co-design interactive zones. This “viewing culture through children’s eyes” transforms museums into tangible spaces for cultural cognition.

II. Cultural Immersion: Dynamic Co-Construction of Meaning

Educational activities follow a spiral pathway: problem-driven inquiry-immersive experience-multimodal representation-reflective evaluation-dynamic collection. Taking a weaving museum as an example: Children explore questions like “Why are palm leaves soaked?” and “What materials can be woven?” through visits to local weaving museums, interviews with intangible cultural heritage inheritors, hands-on weaving, and family-led material hunts. This generates 32 child-created exhibits, including diaries, picture books, and woven artworks. The model emphasizes operability, dialogicality, and growth, fostering a living field of cultural immersion.

III. Ecological Reciprocity: Iterative Renewal of the Educational System

A reciprocal mechanism of “child creation-museum renewal-curriculum extension” ensures ecosystem evolution. For instance, senior preschoolers’ tie-dye works become interactive exhibits: displayed by pattern, accompanied by plant dye experiments, and sparking community activities like dye filtration and charity sales. This cycle generates dual effects: horizontally, forming a “family-community-kindergarten” cultural network; vertically, building age-graded curricula “perception for juniors, experience for intermediates, creation for seniors”.

The study reveals three transformative values: (1) Reconstructing cultural transmission from “passive transfer” to “active co-creation”, positioning children as cultural producers; (2) Reshaping educational spaces into “cultural immersion fields” that foster generative learning; (3) Rebuilding relational dynamics through tripartite dialogue among

children, educators, and culture. By embedding folk culture into daily life via embodied, contextualized practices, this model establishes a bidirectional interplay where “culture nourishes children, and children regenerate culture”. Its framework-participatory curation, project-based immersion, and ecological reciprocity-offers a transferable paradigm for cultural enlightenment in early childhood education.

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Strength-Based Parenting and Mental Illness of Parents in Hong Kong: Parent-Child Relationship as a Mediator

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Keywords: strength-based parenting, mental illness of parents, parent-child relationship

Abstract

Background: Past research has indicated that parenting is a challenging and demanding task related to mental health of parents. However, research on the impact of strength-based parenting - a positive parenting approach aims to identify and cultivate positive attributes in children and adolescence, to mental health of parents is limited and the findings are still inconclusive. Objectives: To address this research gap, the present study aims to examine the predictive effect of strength-based parenting on mental illness of parents and the mediating role of parent-child relationship. Methods: The participants were 1,731 parents who have been invited to participate in the parent-child interactive program of KeySteps2.0 targeted at reducing the deficits of underprivileged young children aged 3 to 6 in Hong Kong. All participants were asked to respond to an integrated questionnaire containing strength-based parenting questionnaire for parents, parent-child relationship scale, and depression-anxiety-stress scale anonymously and voluntarily. Structural equation modeling was utilized to assess a mediation model with strength-based parenting specified as the independent variable, parent-child relationship as the mediator, mental illness of parents as the dependent variable, and gender as the covariate. Results: The results revealed that strength-based parenting negatively predicted mental illness of parents. In addition, parent-child relationship partially mediated the contribution of strength-based parenting to mental illness of parents. Discussion and Implications: As strength-based parenting negatively contributes to mental illness of parents, this finding enriches our understanding on the relationship between strength-based parenting and mental health of parents in the Chinese context. The findings also suggest that applying strength-based parenting and promoting parent-child relationship would protect parents from mental illness such as depression, anxiety and stress.

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Associations of Parent's School-based Involvement and Parent-Teacher Discrepancies of Children's Social Behaviour: A Linear Regression analysis

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Keywords: school-based involvement, parent-teacher discrepancies, parent-teacher relationship

Abstract

School-based involvement, defined as parents' active participation in their child's education, has been linked to improved socioemotional outcomes in early childhood, particularly during the transition to preschool (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). In Chinese contexts, where cultural values emphasize education and collectivism, parents' school-based involvement is critical for supporting children's social and emotional adjustment to preschool (Lau et al., 2011). However, discrepancies between parent and teacher perceptions of

children's behaviours can also hinder the effective support for socioemotional development during this crucial transition (Gagnon et al., 2019). In Hong Kong, limited research has explored how school-based involvement may relate with parent-teacher discrepancies towards a better shared understanding of children (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). Hence, this study examines the associations between school-based involvement and parent-teacher discrepancies in SDQ ratings, focusing on emotional symptoms, peer problems, and prosocial behaviours.

A cross-sectional sample of 1311 parents and 268 teachers of children (aged 3-4) newly enrolled in 89 kindergartens completed surveys on parental school-based involvement and perceptions of children's social behaviours. School-based involvement was measured using the School-Based Involvement subscale (6-items) of the Chinese Early Parental Involvement Scale (CEPIS; Lau et al., 2012), and a composite score was derived from parental and teacher reports. Social behaviours were measured using 15-items from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997). Discrepancy scores between parents and teachers were calculated for the three subscales of Emotional Symptoms (ES), Peer Problems (PP), and Prosocial Behaviours (PB). Linear regression analyses were conducted to examine associations between school-based involvement and each SDQ discrepancy.

Results indicated no significant association between school-based involvement with parent-teacher discrepancy in ES ($p = .738$). This may reflect children's tendency to exhibit distinct emotional behaviours at home and at preschool, potentially influenced by individual differences in attachment and emotional security (e.g. Janson & King, 2006), which may be particularly pronounced during the transition phase to preschool.

However, school-based involvement significantly associated with smaller discrepancies in PP ($\beta = -.123$, $p < .001$) and PB ($\beta = -.069$, $p < .022$), explaining 1.5% and 0.5% of variance, respectively. These findings suggest that greater involvement in preschool, such as communicating with the preschool and participation in various preschool activities assisting preschools' functioning, is associated with better alignment between parent and teacher perceptions of children's peer interaction and prosocial behaviours. It could be implied that increased school-based involvement, present opportunities for parents to develop

a stronger shared-care relationship with teachers in understanding children's social relationships, echoing with previous studies (e.g., Fantuzzo et al., 2004, Denham et al., 2014).

Our findings highlight the importance of strengthened collaboration between both family and school in providing a consistently supportive environment may foster children's socioemotional and peer-relationship development during the crucial period of transition to kindergarten. Given the cross-sectional design, future longitudinal studies are needed to establish causality and explore mechanisms underlying potential associations. Implications for educators and parents may include targeted preschool involvement initiatives and parent education programmes during the critical transition to preschool.

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Navigating Digital Parenting: Belief-Practice Consistency Among Parents of Young Children's Digital Use in Hong Kong

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Keywords: digital parenting, parent-teacher discrepancies, parent-teacher relationship

Abstract

Rationales

Children's engagement with digital devices has become a defining feature of modern childhood, with research indicating that even toddlers now regularly interact with screen-based technologies (Konca, 2022; Wang et al., 2023). This widespread use has prompted attention to both potential benefits and risks, including impacts on cognitive development, social skills, and physical health (Takahashi et al., 2023; Hammons et al., 2021). Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020) found that many parents experience 'digital dilemmas,' recognizing technology's benefits while worrying about potential negative effects. Despite extensive research on children's digital use and parental mediation strategies (Swider-Cios et al., 2023), important gaps remain in understanding consistency between parents' beliefs and behavior, as well as the characteristics of consistency.

Purposes and research question

To gain a clear understanding of parents' beliefs and behavior consistency, this study aimed to investigate how parents' attitudes, intentions, and perceived roles regarding children's digital engagement inform their mediation strategies, and what challenges arise in aligning these beliefs with practice in digital parenting in Hong Kong.

Methods

Using purposive sampling, 22 parents (19 females) with children aged 3-6 years from three Hong Kong kindergartens participated in semi-structured interviews conducted via telephone in Cantonese. The interview framework, developed from literature review and refined after pilot testing, focused on five primary themes: parents' attitudes regarding children's digital device use, purposes for digital use, parental roles, mediation strategies, and parenting challenges. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed in Traditional Chinese, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis approach. Inter-coder reliability was 98.12%, with coding discrepancies resolved through consensus.

Findings and implications

Thematic analysis revealed three subthemes of parental attitudes: negative emotions/concerns, ambivalent/complex attitudes, and positive/supportive attitudes. Parents' intentions for allowing digital use fell into four categories: babysitter, educational purposes, rewards/motivation, and entertainment. Regarding parental roles, we identified six types: instructor, role model, companion/co-user, supervisor/monitor, non-intervener, and role ambiguity. Drawing on Nikken and Jansz's (2014) framework, we identified six distinct mediation strategies: restrictive mediation, active mediation, co-use, monitoring, laissez-faire/hands-off, and controlling strategies.

A significant finding was the identification of three distinct belief-practice consistency patterns: (1) High Consistency with Active Management (31.8%), characterized by clear understanding of digital impacts, specific rules, and strategy adjustment; (2) Basic Consistency with Permissive Implementation (63.6%), showing general alignment but more flexible enforcement; and (3) Inconsistency (4.5%), displaying contradictions between stated beliefs and practices. The study found that parents with high consistency demonstrated: clarity of management goals; implementation specificity through concrete strategies;

proactive adaptation; and stronger perception of control over children's digital use. Additionally, parents faced five main challenges: difficulty in communication and enforcement, monitoring challenges, limited parental skills and confidence, family conflict, and consistency issues.

Effective digital management requires not only clear rules but continuous parental involvement and adjustment. Effective digital parenting shows consistency between beliefs and practices, flexibly adapting approaches based on children's responses and needs, while integrating digital management into family education. Future interventions should emphasize cultivating parental reflective capacity to optimize strategies in the rapidly changing digital environment.

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Parental Expectations and Behaviors in Family Education: Measurement and Correlation Analysis Among Contemporary Shanghai Households

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Keywords: educational expectation, parenting behavior, shanghai family education

Abstract

This study was conducted with parents of 3-6 year old children in Shanghai, aiming to validate the applicability of the Parental Expectations Questionnaire (PEQ) developed by Ren and Edwards in 2015 and the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) revised by Wu et al. in 2002 to the group of parents in contemporary Shanghai, to investigate the characteristics of the educational expectations and parenting behaviors of the contemporary parents in Shanghai as well as the inter-parental differences, and to explore the relationship between educational expectations and parenting behaviors.

Using the PEQ and PSDQ, this study analyzed data from 1,464 valid questionnaires (732 per parent) from six districts and nine kindergartens in Shanghai, and ultimately drew the following conclusions. (1) By calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the two questionnaires and conducting exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis with varimax rotation, it was finally found that the PEQ had good reliability and validity, but its factor structure was reconstructed from four dimensions to two dimensions, namely, 'comprehensive development' and 'future development', reflecting the change in parents' perception of educational expectations. Furthermore, the overall reliability of the

PSDQ is good, but the reliability of the ’protection dimension’ and the ’guidance dimension’ is insufficient and needs to be further optimized. (2) Through descriptive analysis of the educational expectation data, it was found that contemporary Shanghai parents generally valued their children’s comprehensive development. Mothers scored higher than fathers in this dimension and had stronger internal consistency, but showed higher dispersion in the future development dimension. (3) A descriptive analysis of parents’ parenting behaviors revealed that contemporary Shanghai parents’ parenting behaviors were mainly authoritative, with mothers more inclined to this type of parenting behavior; in addition, authoritarian parenting behaviors were less common in both parents, and the differences between parents were small. (4) Finally, through a bivariate correlation analysis between parents’ educational expectations and parenting behaviors, it was found that educational expectations were significantly related to parenting behaviors: expectations for comprehensive development were moderately positively related to authoritative parenting behaviors, and negatively related to authoritarian parenting behaviors, while expectations for future development were weakly related to all types of parenting behaviors, which reflected the characteristics of a ‘process-oriented approach. This study also suffers from limitations such as incomplete sample coverage and lack of follow-up interviews. In the future, the diversity of the sample can be expanded and qualitative methods can be combined to explore in depth the impact of cultural change on parenting practices.

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Improving How Preschool Teachers Facilitate Math Thinking for Young Children in Singapore

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Keywords: using Big Ideas to facilitate young children's math thinking, constructivist math, teacher education through learning by examples

Abstract

Children learn math concepts and numbers through play and inquiry rather than rote learning or direct instruction. It is however observed through research studies that many early childhood teachers tend to use traditional and direct teaching methods and thus, face challenges in designing effective lesson activities that facilitate children's understanding of fundamental math concepts. This method of teaching has also been observed among teachers in Singapore. There is therefore a need for early childhood teachers to better understand how young children learn math concepts and adopt more child-centred pedagogy like constructivism in their approach to teaching math.

The constructivist teacher plans the environment and materials for children to inquire, investigate and through explorations, build their own theories and construct their own understanding of number concepts from within rather than through memorization and practice. Research has shown that through training and support, teachers can improve their competency and knowledge in facilitating math thinking and learning for children.

This study aimed to pilot the use of observation learning by example as a strategy to support early childhood teachers understanding of how children learn math concepts and their use constructivist principles in teaching math and facilitating math thinking in children. The

research question in this study is “What is a strategy that can support early childhood teachers to improve their facilitation of math thinking and understanding of math concepts for preschool children in Singapore?”

The research was conducted with a group of in-service early childhood teachers studying an undergraduate math teaching course at a Singapore university. A survey of the course assignment containing math lesson plans designed by the early childhood teacher-students was conducted to investigate teaching approaches found in the lesson plans they had designed. The survey was conducted to collect quantitative data on the assignment performance of the students in the first (control group) and second (experimental group) cohort.

Observation learning by examples was used as the intervention strategy to support teachers' pedagogical conceptions in teaching math to young children in the experimental group. This included (a) example cases of lesson plans for learning, (b) providing multiple and varied examples, (c) connecting the example cases to underlying pedagogical principles of constructivist math learning, and (d) facilitating learner activities directed toward connecting example cases and principle

A larger number of lesson plans designed with constructivist principles and inquiry-based child-led pedagogy was found in the experimental group compared to the control group of teacher-students. It was also found that the experimental group assignments provided more sound rationale and understanding about the way young children learnt mathematics after experiencing the learning by examples and observations strategy.

The results of this study show the potential of a teacher-education strategy to improve the capabilities of early childhood teachers math teaching. Limitations of this study and suggestions on how the pilot study can be scaled up to benefit more early childhood teachers in supporting their facilitation of math thinking and understanding for preschool children will be discussed.

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International Early Childhood Student Teachers' Practicum Experiences in New Zealand

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Keywords: professional practice, international students, New Zealand

Abstract

Previous literature has shown that international student teachers, especially those who are from a linguistic or cultural background that is different from the host country, face multiple challenges as they adapt themselves to a foreign culture, understand the expectations of their role as a teacher, and adjust themselves to linguistic and cultural differences. However, little is known about the experiences of international student teachers in New Zealand as they complete their teacher education programmes, despite the notable increase of these students in enrolment in recent years. Professional practices, a critical component of initial teacher education, provide an excellent opportunity to examine the challenges, as the student teachers are compelled to examine their deeply entrenched educational beliefs and reflect in detail the kind of teaching they received and observed as students.

This study thus aims to examine the practicum experiences of international students enrolled in initial teacher education programmes. Those who study an early childhood education qualification are invited as they account for more than two-thirds of all international student teachers. Eight participants enrolled in one-year Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma, or Master's programmes will be interviewed on their most recent practicum experience. In these one-on-one interviews, the participants will be asked about their perceptions of a quality practicum and the realities of working in early childhood

services. Data will be thematically analysed to identify key components of a high-quality practicum and areas where the students need the most support or where their strengths contribute to practicum experiences. The findings of this study will hopefully inform ECE services on how to effectively engage with international student teachers as well as teacher education providers on how to create an equitable environment where international student teachers can optimise their educational experiences.

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Comparison of Pre-service Kindergarten Teacher Education Programmes among Universities in the Greater Bay Area

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Keywords: pre-service kindergarten teacher education programmes, the greater bay area, comparison

Abstract

Pre-service kindergarten teachers are people who pursue a relevant degree to become kindergarten teachers in the future. Pre-service kindergarten teacher education programs are the programmes usually run by the teacher training faculties in universities. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) constitutes the two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao, and the nine cities in Guangdong Province. According to Zhu (2023), 27 universities provide teachers' training courses and programs in the Greater Bay Area. Among them, 15 universities provide pre-service kindergarten teacher education programs, which vary significantly across these three regions due to differing ideologies, educational policies, cultural contexts, and administrative frameworks.

According to the status of key strategic planning in China's development blueprint, the development of the Greater Bay Area is having great significance in the country's implementation of innovation-driven development and commitment to reform and opening-up. To further deepen understanding and cooperation on kindergarten teacher education in the Greater Bay Area, this study aims to explore and compare the pre-service kindergarten teacher education programs among different universities in the Greater Bay

Area, especially the four major cities, Macao, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, with particular attention to the curriculum structures, key elements and characteristics of these programs.

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to collect documents and voices from the universities. A comparative analysis approach is used to analyze the documents and interview transcripts. Results show some differences and commonalities of the pre-service kindergarten teacher education programs among universities in the Greater Bay Area. Rather than highlighting their differences, this study focuses more on how to promote collaborative development in pre-service kindergarten teacher education among universities based on understanding their differences using the theories of regional integration (Woldegiorgis, 2013) to achieve harmonization. Harmonization refers to the coordination of educational programmes with agreements to minimum academic standards and ensuring equivalence and comparability of qualifications among universities in the Great Bay Areas.

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Pre-service Preschool Teachers' Needs for Online Teaching Video Cases: Links to Their Levels of Self-efficacy Belief

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Keywords: online teaching video cases, teacher self-efficacy levels, pre-service preschool teacher education

Abstract

Pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy has gained increasing academic attention due to its critical role in shaping their career commitment to early childhood education. While prior studies have demonstrated that integrating online teaching video cases (OTVCs) into teacher training programs effectively enhances their self-efficacy, little research addresses how pre-service teachers with differing self-efficacy levels exhibit distinct needs for such pedagogical resources. This study examined 744 pre-service preschool teachers, systematically comparing the needs of high self-efficacy (HSE) and low self-efficacy (LSE) teachers across four dimensions: OTVC content selection, OTVC application scenarios, OTVC collaborative stakeholders, and OTVC targeted development areas. Results revealed significant disparities between the two groups. HSE teachers exhibited greater autonomy and confidence, favoring peer-collaborated learning through modeled video scenarios to refine holistic teaching competencies and classroom management strategies. In contrast, LSE

teachers prioritized structured OTVC learning under expert guidance, emphasizing mastery of foundational content knowledge to prepare for professional demands. These findings highlighted the necessity of differentiated teacher training programs tailored to address the personalized needs of pre-service preschool teachers, thereby optimizing the precision and efficacy of professional development initiatives. The study advocates for customized pedagogical approaches in teacher education to accommodate trainees' varying self-efficacy levels, ultimately fostering more equitable and impactful learning outcomes for pre-service preschool teachers.

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An Initial Exploration of Chinese Student Teachers' Perspectives of Curriculum and Pedagogy in New Zealand's Early Childhood Education Context

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(Massey University)

Keywords: Chinese student teachers, culturally responsive ITE, intentional teaching

Abstract

Building a diverse early childhood education (ECE) workforce that reflects the "superdiversity" of New Zealand's multicultural society is a long-term goal of the government (Ministry of Education, 2019). Therefore, understanding culturally diverse student teachers' perspectives of curriculum and pedagogy becomes increasingly significant. This study focuses on Chinese student teachers, who represent a growing segment of the initial teacher education (ITE) cohort due in part to New Zealand's international education policies, yet remain underrepresented in research.

This study aims to explore Chinese student teachers' perspectives of curriculum and pedagogy, particularly intentional teaching, in New Zealand's ECE context. It also seeks to identify the factors influencing their perspectives by situating their experiences at the personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels within a cross-cultural context, including the supports and challenges that they have encountered in ITE.

This paper reports on Phase One of a two-phase PhD study using an explanatory

sequential design. Phase One involved a bilingual online survey distributed via eligible ITE providers and social media platforms, targeting Chinese student teachers enrolled in approved ITE programmes across New Zealand. A total of 53 responses were received. The survey included both open-and closed-ended questions, and responses were analysed thematically and descriptively.

Findings indicate that while Chinese student teachers acknowledged the value of both teacher-directed learning and play, they remained cautious about adopting either an entirely teacher-directed or purely free-play-dominated approach. Most participants expressed positive views about intentional teaching, although their familiarity with it varied, as it was not prioritised to the same extent as play-based learning, and culturally responsive practices. Mismatches between Chinese student teachers' personal beliefs and the ideas presented in ITE programmes were commonly reported and posed challenges as they navigated course content and practicum experiences. Nevertheless, through the interplay between their culturally shaped pre-existing beliefs and the new ideas introduced in ITE, Chinese student teachers actively and critically developed their professional beliefs and identities as prospective ECE teachers in New Zealand, drawing on their funds of identity—"the historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed resources" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014).

This study contributes to an initial understanding of how Chinese student teachers navigate curriculum and pedagogy in a cross-cultural context. It highlights the importance of culturally responsive and sustaining teacher education that honours student teachers' prior experiences and identities. It is anticipated that the findings could inform future research and practices for a more inclusive and responsive ITE sector in New Zealand and beyond.

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Early Childhood Teacher Education for Social Justice and Equity: A Systematic Literature Review

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(La Trobe University)

Keywords: teacher education, social justice, equity

Abstract

This presentation reports on a systematic review of early childhood teacher education literature. It investigates what teacher educators have been doing to shift the curriculum from developmental to more critical approaches. The search strategy resulted in 23 empirical studies that were coded and analysed. Most studies were qualitative and focused on a course/subject redesign or implementation of content and pedagogy that sought to enhance pre-service early childhood teachers' intercultural competence. Much of the curricula content and associated pedagogies were not new. Instead it seems they were changed and reorganised to engage pre-service teachers with diversities and difference. Few studies drew on critical theories that address power relations enacted through everyday practices. The presentation identifies implications of the findings for early childhood teacher education.

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Bridging the Gaps: Enhancing Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Initial Teacher Education for Early Childhood Teachers in China

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Keywords: social emotional learning, initial teacher education, early childhood education

Abstract

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is widely acknowledged as foundational to young children's holistic development and lifelong wellbeing. Growing policy attention to the early years has elevated SEL as an educational priority. However, significant gaps remain in how Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs prepare early childhood educators to support children's SEL in China. This scoping review investigates how Chinese ITE programs embed SEL, explores disparities across urban and rural contexts, and offers recommendations for future policy and practice.

Drawing on the CASEL framework, which outlines five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making; this study maps the integration of SEL into Chinese ITE programs through a systematic review of literature published between 2014 and 2024. Guided by Arksey and O'Malley's five-stage framework, the review synthesised peer-reviewed articles, professional articles, and international policy documents sourced from databases such as ERIC and CNKI.

The findings reveal three major concerns: (1) inconsistencies in curriculum coverage across ITE programs, with limited attention to structured SEL training; (2) lack of

experiential learning opportunities and assessment tools that support teacher capability in real-world classroom contexts; and (3) stark urban-rural disparities in access to SEL resources and professional development. While international models, including programs in the United States and Australia, demonstrate the benefits of integrating SEL into teacher preparation through coursework and field placements, such efforts in China remain localised and fragmented.

This paper argues for the cultural adaptation of global SEL frameworks, such as CASEL, to align with Chinese social values and educational traditions. It also highlights the need for coordinated national policy and professional learning strategies to support teachers in both urban and rural settings. Lessons from pilot projects, such as the MOE-UNICEF SEL initiative and regional interventions in Hong Kong and rural provinces, underscore the potential for scalable, culturally responsive models of SEL training.

In conclusion, this study emphasises that for SEL to be effectively embedded in early childhood education, teacher training should move beyond sporadic initiatives toward a more coherent, equity-focused national strategy. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of SEL-focused ITE on teaching quality and child outcomes, particularly in underserved areas. Culturally responsive and contextually grounded approaches are essential to ensuring sustainable and inclusive SEL development in China’s early childhood education landscape.

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Exploring Pre-Service Early Childhood Teachers' Readiness to Support Children with Special Educational Needs in Inclusive Classrooms in Hong Kong

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Keywords: inclusive Education, teacher readiness, early childhood education

Abstract

Early learning environments in Hong Kong reflect the diverse composition of its society, encompassing neurodiversity, socio-economic differences, and linguistic and ethnic diversity. With an increasing number of children diagnosed with conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and language and social delays, there is a growing need for early childhood educators to effectively support children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream school settings. This study investigates the readiness of pre-service early childhood teachers to meet the needs of children with SEN in inclusive learning environments.

The study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) as its conceptual framework. According to TPB, an individual's behavior is best predicted by their intentions, which are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms (perception of social expectations), and perceived behavioral control. Using this framework, the study examines key constructs—teachers' attitudes, perceptions of support, teaching efficacy, and intentions to facilitate learning for children with additional needs—as determinants of pre-service teachers' responsiveness to inclusive practices in Hong Kong's early learning settings.

The study involved 176 undergraduate students (ages 18-29, 93.8% female) enrolled in an early childhood education undergraduate programme specializing in leadership and special educational needs. Four validated scales were used to measure the constructs: the Attitudes to Inclusion Scale, Perceived School Support for Inclusive Education Scale, Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices Scale, and Intention to Teach in Inclusive Classroom Scale. A serial multiple mediation model was analyzed using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 6) to explore the relationships among these variables. Findings revealed that pre-service teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education were positively associated with their perceptions of institutional support, teaching efficacy, and intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms. Additionally, perceptions of support and teaching efficacy partially mediated the relationship between attitudes and intentions.

These results provide valuable insights for designing pre-service teacher training programs. Specifically, fostering positive attitudes toward inclusion, enhancing teacher efficacy, and improving perceptions of institutional support are critical for preparing educators to deliver high-quality, inclusive early learning experiences. This approach ensures that all children, including those with SEN, benefit from equitable and effective education in mainstream settings.

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Development of a Psychological First Aid Training Course Using a Peer Assist Support Process Model to Promote Resilience Among Student Teachers

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Keywords: psychological first aid, peer assist support process, resilience

Abstract

This research aimed to 1) develop a psychological first aid training course using the

Peer Assist Support Process model, 2) promote resilience among student teachers using a psychological first aid training course using the Peer Assist Support Process model, and 3) study the satisfaction of students who completed a psychological first aid training course using the Peer Assist Support Process model. The population used in the research was 1,952 student teachers in the Faculty of Education, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University. The sample group used in the study was 25 student teachers in the Early Childhood Education program using cluster random sampling. The research instruments used were 1) a psychological first aid training course using the Peer Assist Support Process model, 2) a resilience scale, and 3) a course satisfaction questionnaire. Data analysis included means, standard deviations, and a dependent t-test. The research results found that 1) a psychological first aid training course using the Peer Assist Support Process model was appropriate for promoting resilience among student teachers with an IOC value of 0.90, 2) the student teachers in the early childhood education program had higher resilience after the training ($\bar{x}$ = 75.32 ± 0.51) than before the training ($\bar{x}$ = 41.01 ± 0.65) with statistical significance at the .05 level, and 3) overall satisfaction with the course was at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.83 ± 0.42).

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An Experimental Study on Improving Preschool Teachers' Attitudes Toward Early Childhood Inclusive Education Through Positive Imaginary Contact

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Keywords: preschool inclusive education, positive imagination contact, attitude change

Abstract

The attitudes of preschool teachers toward inclusive education are a critical factor influencing the quality of inclusive education practices. This study investigates the effectiveness of "positive imagery contact" as an intervention to improve preschool teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. A randomized controlled trial design was employed, selecting 200 in-service teachers from three public kindergartens in Chongqing as research subjects. The "Preschool Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale" was used, combined with semi-structured interviews, for pre-test, post-test, and 3-month follow-up assessments. Teachers whose pre-test scores were in the bottom 30% were re-grouped into an experimental group (receiving four sessions of positive imagery contact training) and a control group (receiving routine training). The experimental group's intervention program included: 1) guiding teachers to imagine positive interaction scenarios with children with special needs (e.g., cooperative games, individualized guidance) to evoke emotional resonance; 2) utilizing cognitive restructuring techniques to help teachers correct biased

cognitions about children with special needs; and 3) simulating coping strategies for emergent situations in inclusive education to strengthen self-efficacy. The study found that teachers in the experimental group showed significantly higher acceptance of inclusive education than the control group after the intervention, with significant improvements in the dimensions of affective attitude, cognitive attitude, and behavioral intention. Follow-up data showed that the experimental group's attitude maintenance effect was stable, with a significantly lower rebound rate than the control group. The research confirms that positive imagery contact can serve as a low-cost, high-efficiency intervention tool, compensating for the deficiency of emotional experience in traditional training, and providing an innovative pathway for improving preschool teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education.

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Experts' Perspectives on Integrating Generative AI into Early Childhood Education and Care Policies in Australia

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(Macquarie University)

Keywords: generative artificial intelligence, early childhood education and care, policymaking

Abstract

With the rapid rise of GenAI, recent studies documented how GenAI can be used in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings to support interactive learning, personalize instruction, and develop AI-integrated curricula (Su & Yang, 2022; Yi et al., 2024). While these developments underscore the educational potential of GenAI, they also raise complex ethical, pedagogical, and social considerations—necessitating the development of robust, research-informed policy guidance.

Globally, educational authorities are beginning to respond. The European Commission, for example, has released guidelines targeting primary and secondary schools, while South Korea has introduced AI-powered digital textbooks for primary and middle school students. Yet, policy initiatives on GenAI remain limited, with even less attention given to the ECEC sector. In Australia, for instance, while a national framework is in place to guide the integration of GenAI in formal schooling, there is currently little corresponding policy attention directed towards the ECEC sector. In response to this policy gap, this study explores educational experts' views on the integration of AI into Australian ECEC

policymaking.

2. Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted to capture rich, in-depth insights on an emerging and complex issue. Using purposive sampling, the study targeted academics from Australian universities with expertise in early childhood education, educational technology, and GenAI. Through this recruitment process, seven experts agreed to participate. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to provide flexibility for participants to share their views while ensuring consistency across interviews. Interviews were conducted via Zoom and guided by an open-ended interview protocol designed to elicit detailed, reflective responses. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns in the data, concerning how experts conceptualise GenAI's opportunities, risks, and policy implications for the ECEC sector.

3. Findings

Five of the seven educational experts interviewed strongly agreed that an AI policy framework is necessary and urgent for Australia's ECEC sector, with two experts expressing some concerns over a lack of research informing policymaking. Nevertheless, all experts believe policy is crucial to ensure ethical practice, protect children's privacy, and guide responsible GenAI use, particularly as GenAI adoption becomes inevitable. Key factors informing their positions include data privacy and child safety, educator professionalism, equity between advantaged and disadvantaged settings, and alignment with broader educational policy trends, particularly given the existing GenAI framework in schools. However, experts also highlighted several challenges and risks in developing such a policy. These include the over-generalisation of GenAI tools unsuited to diverse ECEC contexts, the erosion of educators' professional judgement, the lack of knowledge on GenAI's effectiveness for early learning, and the insufficient understanding of core GenAI concepts for ECEC. Some experts cautioned against premature policymaking without thorough sector consultation and stressed the importance of distinguishing between using GenAI as a pedagogical tool and fostering AI literacy.

4. Significance

By synthesising experts' visions and concerns regarding AI policy in the ECEC sector,

this study contributes to ongoing discussions on integrating AI into early childhood education and provides a foundation for building future policy consensus.

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AI Companions or Electronic Babysitters? Conversational Agents, Concept Formation, and Adult Roles in ECE in China

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Keywords: conversational agents, everyday and scientific concepts, early childhood education

Abstract

The prevalent integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, particularly conversational agents, into young children's lives has transformed early learning, play, and communication. Despite their widespread adoption in households and educational settings, limited research explores how children interact with these devices, how they shape concept formation, and the role of adult mediation, particularly in non-Western contexts. This study addresses these gaps by investigating the use of conversational agents in Chinese homes and early childhood education (ECE) settings, focusing on their influence on children's development of everyday and scientific concepts, as theorized by Vygotsky.

A qualitative approach was employed, involving six Chinese kindergarten teachers and eight parents of children under eight years old. Data were collected through solicited observation diaries and semi-structured interviews, analyzed via thematic analysis. The study examined how conversational agents mediate children's learning, the perspectives of parents and teachers, and the sociocultural dynamics shaping these interactions.

Findings revealed that conversational agents play dual roles in home and educational environments. In households, they structured daily routines (e.g., hygiene practices, bedtime

rituals), promoted language development through verbal commands and storytelling, and introduced scientific concepts via interactive questioning. However, concerns emerged about passive information consumption, reduced critical thinking, and identity confusion, such as a child mistaking a device's name for their own. Parents emphasized the need for mediation to correct inaccuracies and reinforce learning. In ECE settings, teachers utilized conversational agents to enhance collaborative learning, bridging everyday experiences with structured scientific inquiry. For instance, group interactions with devices fostered negotiation and turn-taking, while teacher-guided inquiries transformed playful exchanges into educational moments (e.g., exploring how AI generates sounds). Teachers perceived conversational agents as valuable tools but stressed the necessity of adult intervention to address limitations and align use with pedagogical goals.

Moreover, the findings illustrate that cultural norms influenced mediation practices. In line with Chinese values emphasizing obedience, adults often leveraged conversational agents as authoritative figures to regulate behavior, raising ethical questions about technology's role in shaping autonomy. Additionally, disparities in access to advanced devices highlighted inequities in educational opportunities, with socioeconomic factors affecting the quality of AI-driven learning experiences.

The study underscores the importance of balanced, guided integration of conversational agents in ECE. While these devices can enrich concept formation by connecting everyday routines with scientific understanding, over-reliance risks hindering empathy, critical thinking, and human interaction. Practical implications include the need for educators and parents to actively mediate interactions, foster inquiry beyond passive consumption, and address digital divides. By contextualizing findings within Vygotsky's framework, this research contributes to global discourse on AI in ECE, offering insights for culturally responsive and equitable technology integration in rapidly evolving digital landscapes.

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Chinese Preschoolers' Creative Thinking during Educational Robots Activities: Patterns and Sequences

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Keywords: educational robots, creative thinking, patterns and sequences

Abstract

Educational robots are a new and emerging educational tool that is increasingly being valued in the field of early childhood education. This study aims to explore the impact of educational robot activities on creative thinking behaviours in preschoolers. The study used lag sequential analysis and behaviour transition diagram techniques to analyse the creative thinking behavioural patterns and sequences exhibited by children aged between five and six during educational robot activities. The results of the study showed that children exhibited various behavioural patterns of creative thinking during educational robot activities, with

involving others, knowing what to do and engaging in new activities being the most prominent manifestations. Educational robot activities promoted a behavioural sequence or cycle of “risk-taking persisting risk-taking”. In addition, boys and girls are found to exhibit similar behaviour patterns, but some subtle differences in the behavioural sequence between genders were identified. The results of this study provide reference and inspiration for the application of educational robots in early childhood education and provide an empirical basis for the study of creative thinking.

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Safeguarding the Cultural Foundations of Early Childhood Education in the AI Era: Reconstructing the "Individual growth" Based on the Rhythms of Children's Lives

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Keywords: cultural safeguarding of childhood, technological ethics in education, philosophy of early childhood education

Abstract

The infiltration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education is profoundly reshaping the foundational logic of Early Childhood Education (ECE). At the heart of this transformation lies a fundamental tension: the instrumental rationality of technological efficiency versus the humanistic rhythms of children's life and growth. This study draws on Professor Liu Tiefang's theory of the "individual growth," integrated with Confucian educational wisdom—particularly the notion of "meng yi yang zheng" (nurturing children through moral cultivation)—to examine how ECE can safeguard its cultural essence in the AI era. It emphasizes the importance of respecting the child as an "unfinished period of life" and nurturing future citizens who embrace technological innovation while remaining rooted in cultural traditions.

The research identifies three key risks of alienation AI poses to children's development:

1.Disembodiment in interaction: Intelligent devices weaken children's innate ability to construct knowledge through sensorimotor experiences (as emphasized in Piaget's embodied cognition theory), disrupting the natural integration of hand, brain, and heart.

2.Over-optimization through algorithmic precision: Recommendation systems, under

the guise of “precision adaptation,” limit the chaotic space of trial and error essential to exploration, violating the Confucian principle of “bu ling jie er shi”—teaching in accordance with a child’s natural timing and rhythm.

3.Simulated empathy and emotional dissonance: While affective computing technologies mimic empathy, they cannot replace the genuine emotional resonance found in teacher-child interactions, eroding the foundational trust where “loving the teacher leads to trusting their way.”

Anchored in the dialectical unity of cheng ji (self-actualization) and cheng wu (engagement with the world) in the “individual growth” theory, the study proposes a child-centered cultural safeguarding framework:

Cognitive dimension: Reconstruct embodied learning environments by positioning AI as an enhancer—not a substitute—of sensorimotor experiences (e.g., integrating motion capture with traditional games).

Emotional dimension: Establish a “human-led emotional connection” principle, clearly defining the boundaries of emotional robots to protect the warm memory of authentic teacher-child relationships.

Cultural dimension: Design “culturally infused intelligent media” that dynamically generate local narratives (e.g., VR-based idiom stories) suited to children’s cognitive development, enabling seamless cultural immersion.

This study also introduces the innovative concept of a “child development threshold.” When the intensity of technological intervention exceeds a child’s natural developmental bandwidth—such as attention span or sensory load—it triggers a “cultural safeguard mechanism” that mandates a return to human-centered educational modes. This theoretical contribution not only defines ethical boundaries for AI applications in education but also reaffirms the core mission of ECE: to protect the right to “grow slowly” in an age of technological acceleration. Ultimately, this research advocates for cultivating warm, culturally grounded digital citizens who can thrive amid the rapid transformations of the AI era.

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Research on the Standards for Quality Assessment and Usage Status of Multimedia Resources in Kindergartens across China

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Keywords: multimedia resources, screen time, independent use

Abstract

Multimedia resources are indispensable to young children's daily lives and learning environments. Practitioners in kindergartens across countries hold varying attitudes toward using multimedia resources in early childhood settings (OECD, 2023). What is the current state of multimedia resource applications in kindergartens in China? What are the quality assessment standards for using multimedia resources in kindergartens in China? This study uses a mixed research method to attempt to answer these two questions.

First, the study utilizes the Delphi expert method and semi-structured expert interviews to identify key points and indicators for assessing the quality of 'multimedia resources.' Experts believe multimedia resources encompass four aspects: the appropriateness of the multimedia content, how the functionality of multimedia devices stimulates children's participation in independent learning and operation, the amount of time children spend using multimedia devices, and how the multimedia resources foster children's creativity. The study then utilized this standard to conduct class observations and evaluations in 112 kindergartens across Shenzhen City, Jiangsu Province, and Luhe County. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA. The results revealed that kindergartens in first-tier cities significantly outnumbered those in second-and third-tier cities in providing multimedia resources related to children's current interests and allowing children to use

multimedia devices and resources independently. Almost 90% of kindergartens considered the age appropriateness of multimedia resources and ensured the content was positive. However, 60% of kindergartens did not allow children to use multimedia equipment and materials in the classroom independently. Approximately 50% of kindergartens provided multimedia resources unrelated to children's current explorations. Additionally, 50% of kindergartens had no restrictions on children's time watching and using electronic screens, and teachers often did not consciously turn off screens after use.

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Young Children's Literacy Practices in Digital Storymaking: Creating Multimodal Digital Texts

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Keywords: children, digital storymaking, literacy

Abstract

The new technologies, such as tablets and smartphones, with their interactive interfaces and creative applications, provide young children with opportunities to engage in digital storymaking. These technologies enable them to integrate multiple semiotic resources, including audio, video and images. This study explored the literacy practice of young children (4-5 years old) as they created digital stories in family contexts.

Grounded in a sociocultural approach to literacy, this qualitative study explored children's multimodal meaning-making processes, as well as the role of social and cultural contexts in their literacy development. Through the sociocultural lens, this study was conducted as a multi-site case study. Family visits were then conducted to four focus families-two from China and two from Australia- to investigate how 4-5-year-old children create digital stories with their parents.

Findings revealed that children actively engaged in digital storymaking by inviting parental interaction, utilising multiple resources, and demonstrating agency throughout the process. In light of these findings, this study acknowledged children's agency as they creatively and purposefully utilized multimodal resources to make meaning. Furthermore, their digital storymaking incorporated elements of imagination and life experiences, reflecting their special cultural backgrounds. This study highlighted how children engaged in

literacy learning through interactions with storymaking apps. It also emphasised the importance of introducing high-quality apps to children's daily digital practices. Future studies could explore how children from diverse cultural backgrounds develop their literacy learning using various creative apps (including augmented reality and virtual reality apps).

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Examining Joint and Separate Effects of Parenting Burnout and Emotion Socialization on Child Problem Behaviors: A Gendered Perspective

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Keywords: parenting burnout, supportive emotional socialization, child problem behaviors

Abstract

Changes in society and structures have heightened public and academic interest in child problem behaviors. While existing research has explored the effects of parenting burnout and emotional socialization on children's behavior, few studies have considered parental gender differences and the combined influence of both parents. A year-long longitudinal survey was conducted in four kindergartens in Shanghai, China, involving 546 matched families. Findings revealed that individual parenting burnout in both mothers and fathers significantly increased child problem behaviors, whereas combined parental burnout did not have a significant effect. Maternal supportive emotional socialization mediated the relationship between maternal parenting burnout and child problem behaviors, paternal supportive emotional socialization did not show significant effects. Furthermore, when examined jointly, supportive emotional socialization from both parents mediated the relationship between their shared parenting burnout and child problem behaviors. The study reveals the different pathways through which parenting burnout, emotional socialization, and

gender differences influence child problem behaviors. It enriches the application of family systems theory and the heuristic model of emotional socialization in understanding child problem behaviors. Moreover, the findings provide new perspectives for interventions aimed at child problem behaviors, particularly offering practical insights for mitigating the effects of parenting burnout on children's behavioral problems.

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Fun or Fear? Reconciling Global Aspirations and Child-Centered Pedagogy in Early Childhood English Education

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Keywords: English as a second language, children's perceptions, elicited metaphorical analysis

Abstract

This study employs Elicited Metaphorical Analysis (EMA), a qualitative research method that captures young children's abstract perceptions through metaphor analysis, offering a developmentally appropriate way to explore complex experiences in early education. Focusing on 5-6-year-old Chinese children learning English as a second language (EFL) outside formal school settings, the research reveals a nuanced interplay between societal aspirations for English proficiency and children's natural learning preferences. Parents in China often facilitate private English instruction at home due to formal restrictions in schools, reflecting a societal emphasis on English for future success. Children in the study exhibited generally positive attitudes toward learning English, frequently driven by parental expectations and aspirations. However, their metaphors conveyed a strong preference for playful, child-centered learning experiences, likening English learning to experiences that are "sweet like an apple" or "warm like sitting under the sun". Conversely, metaphors such as "scary like a fierce tiger" or "unpleasant like eating bitter gourd" depicted their responses to rigid, structured learning approaches. These findings emphasize the need for localized,

developmentally appropriate pedagogies that prioritize play-based methods to better accommodate young learners' cognitive and emotional needs. The study offers valuable insights into how culturally situated parental values intersect with children's intrinsic motivations, underscoring the importance of curriculum designs that respect both global aspirations for English proficiency and localized pedagogical frameworks. By advocating for child-centered approaches, the research contributes to discussions on globalizing curricula while remaining sensitive to local pedagogical practices.

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The Effect of Outdoor School Programmes on the Resiliency of K1 Children (5 Years Old)

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Keywords: outdoor nature-based experiences, resiliency, early childhood education

Abstract

Developed in collaboration with NTUC First Campus Outdoor School (OSS) and NTUC First Campus (NFC) Centre for EC Transformative Practices, our study aims to understand how OSS programmes influence resiliency levels of five-year-olds. OSS organizes multi-sensory nature-based outdoor programmes in Singapore's nature parks to invoke learning experiences beyond conventional classroom settings and foster a sense of appreciation and responsibility for nature. Engaging on extended hikes and being immersed in natural outdoor environments exposes children to challenges in authentic settings, such as unfamiliar and uneven terrain, changing weather, wildlife, and natural obstacles. These natural encounters present opportunities for young children to develop persistence and resilience, as well as nurture risk-taking and safe judgement decision making skills as children navigate through the nature trails (Cree & Robb, 2021).

We used a mixed methods approach of quantitative questionnaire ratings and qualitative observations and narratives. Employing pre-and post-programme teacher-rated questionnaires, the Dimensions of Mastery Questionnaire (DMQ-18) is administered at two waves and seeks to understand the children's responses, behaviours and persistence levels. With a focus on the child's willingness and ability to work through tasks in a focused persistent manner (Morgan, et al., 1990; Morgan, et al., 2020), teacher-ratings across the scales of mastery motivation are collected and analysed. To gain deeper insights into how children approach challenging tasks and demonstrate behaviours in the aspects of resilience, observations are conducted during the children's hike during their outdoor school programme. These outfield observations, followed by child-friendly interviews where the children's narratives and drawings are collected after their nature-based experience, will enrich the research findings with valuable insights and perspectives.

With data collection approaching completion, anticipated findings suggest that an exposure to natural elements and unpredictability in outdoor nature environments provide rich opportunities for young children to develop resiliency, particularly in influencing their persistence in working through difficult tasks and regulating emotional responses. Our research addresses gaps in the local literature on the influence of nature-based programmes in Singapore by exploring how children's experiences with OSS support resilience development. The findings will provide early childhood practitioners and professionals with practical insights and inform the intentional design of programme experiences that foster resilience across varying levels of persistence in young children.

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Experiences of a Singaporean Preschool Classroom Engineering with Blocks to Foster Design Thinking: A Teacher Inquiry

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Keywords: engineering design Process, block play, teacher Inquiry

Abstract

How could constructivist education look like in Singapore? In local classrooms, which traditionally have high levels of authoritarianism and didacticism of the curriculum, "learning" and "play" are often segregated. Blocks are reserved for free play sessions, where play is encouraged but not seen as learning opportunities. As our pedagogical policies evolve and grow, we are beginning to welcome a substantial push to change the current dialectic, structured forms of classroom teaching to more child-centric and inquiry-based practices.

This paper, framed as a teacher inquiry, uses qualitative methods to analyse a Singaporean classroom's explorations and conversations during block play, aligning with the study's overall focus on constructivist design thinking. It seeks to provide a local view of educational research and perspectives to support our cultural shift in pedagogical beliefs. The main research question thus emerged as: How will the use of the engineering design process (EDP) framework assist teachers in facilitating children's problem-solving process and discussions?

The literature review looked at themes of children's navigation of safety and risk in their block-building inquiries, the affordances of blocks and block play in engineering thinking and pedagogical approaches to documenting children's thinking. Qualitative methods of pedagogical narration were used to investigate moments of teaching practice,

through observations and recordings of their play and group discussions, to reflect on children's learning process, theories, and strategies.

Through documenting the children's actions and discussions, we were able to plot their learning and reflections in the flow chart of EDP stages.

A key discovery from this research was that, even with little to no prompting or structured "lessons", the children were moving fluidly and iteratively through all the phases of the EDP, sometimes engaging in numerous stages at once. The main role of the educator then morphed from one that felt the need to teach engineering skills in a structured curriculum to more of a facilitator that supported the children to better understand the skills they already had.

In early childhood education literature, most explained the EDP as learning concepts that teachers should formally teach to their students. This research challenges the notion of needing to "integrate science concepts" or "teach engineering skills" in a structured curriculum—the child already exists as an emergent engineer. It is our job as educators to make their own skills and knowledge visible to them.

Thus, implications for further practice pointed to teachers using the EDP framework as a tool to document what the children are thinking about and figuring out. With deeper and more sensitive understanding of the children's thought processes, deepening their learning to the next stage would be more meaningful.

We conclude with advocating for the use of the EDP framework as an most effective tool for teachers to better discover children and their wonderful problem-solving minds.

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Parent-Child Shared Reading and Young Children' s Listening Comprehension Development

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Keywords: listening comprehension, early years, parent-child reading

Abstract

Listening comprehension is important for learning, social communication, reading and writing. The study examined three dimensions of parent-child shared-reading: frequency, affective responsiveness (social-emotional engagement with children), and quality of reading (interactive and cognitively stimulating practices), in relation to young children's listening comprehension development using a longitudinal design. Specifically, through investigating the influences on executive function and oral language skills, the present study examined how the three dimensions of parent-child shared reading shape children's listening comprehension over time. A sample of 76 three-year-old children and their parents were recruited, with follow-up assessments conducted after nine months. The parent-child dyads were invited to conduct shared reading with video-recorded observation, and the children had been assessed with a battery of tasks tapping on executive function, receptive vocabulary, receptive morphological awareness and listening comprehension. The data showed that parents with higher shared reading frequency have children with better word-level language skills, yet the analysis of the parent-child shared reading quality found that frequency alone does not significantly predict later listening comprehension. Rather, affective responsiveness and

quality of reading are found significant predictors of the growth of listening comprehension, after controlling for age, receptive vocabulary (T1), morphological awareness (T1), executive function (T1) and socioeconomic status. These findings underscore the importance of parents' engagement and high-quality reading practices in fostering listening comprehension in young children.

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A Study on Self-Regulated Learning Processes of Two-Year-Old Toddlers' Class

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(Cardinal Tien Junior College of Healthcare and Management)

Keywords: two-year-old, autonomy with connectedness, self-regulated learning

Abstract

Prior to the integration of kindergartens and nursery schools in Taiwan, early childhood care institutions were classified into two distinct types: kindergartens, which primarily enrolled children aged 4 to 6, and nursery centers, which provided care for children aged 0 to 6. These two systems differed significantly in terms of teacher-child ratios and caregiver qualifications. Following the integration, early childhood education and care (ECEC) institutions were restructured to serve children aged 2 to 6. Even before this policy shift, some kindergartens had begun admitting younger children aged 2 to 4 by establishing toddler and junior classes. As kindergartens transitioned into the new system and began enrolling 2-year-old children, many educators encountered challenges in meeting the intensive caregiving needs of this younger age group. Consequently, adaptation strategies among preschools varied. Some institutions modified their physical environments to resemble those of infant care centers and adopted caregiver-centered pedagogical approaches. In contrast, others treated 2-year-olds similarly to older children, providing age-inappropriate equipment and encouraging greater independence. These divergent strategies have led to considerable variability in classroom environments and pedagogical practices for 2-year-old classes.

In accordance with the Early Childhood Education and Care Act, preschools in Taiwan are now permitted to enroll children aged 2 to 6. The Act mandates that classes for 2- to 3-year-olds must remain age-specific and maintain lower student-teacher ratios, thereby underscoring the distinct developmental and caregiving needs of this age group. Children aged 2 to 3 are at a pivotal developmental stage characterized by the emergence of "autonomy with connectedness" (Amy & Karen, 2009). During this period, children seek independence while still relying on adult support for emotional security and guidance. They show a strong preference for consistency, routines, and ritualized behaviors, making this stage particularly conducive to fostering daily routines and life skills.

This study examined a specialized class for 2-year-olds within a preschool that implements learning areas and game-based learning. Utilizing observation, interviews, and document analysis, the research investigated how a teacher supported the development of life skills through interest-driven activities. The findings identified a five-stage guidance process: awareness-based reminders, imitative cooperation, flashcard cues, peer reminders, and eventual independence.g and math.

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Long-Term Impact of a 12-Week Fine Motor Skills Training Program on 4-5-Year-Old Preschoolers' Mathematical Abilities

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Keywords: fine motor skills, mathematical abilities, preschool children

Abstract

Background: The development of fine motor skills is essential for overall growth and academic achievement(Michel & Molitor, 2022; Escolano-Pérez et al., 2020) in early childhood, especially concerning mathematical abilities (Gashaj, 2019; Kim et al., 2018). However, majority of previous studies only examined the correlation between fine motor skills and mathematical abilities, the direct causal link remains insufficiently studied.

Purpose: Thus, the aim of the present study was to investigate the effects of a 12-week fine motor skills training program on the mathematical abilities of 60 preschool children aged 4-5 years.

Methods: Participants were divided into an experimental group (n=30), which followed the fine motor program, and a control group (n=30) which did not receive the intervention. The program included finger exercises (five times per week, 20 minutes each session) and crafting activities (twice per week, 20 minutes each session). We conducted assessments using the Peabody Developmental Motor Scales 2 (PDMS-2) and the Preschool Numeracy and Spatial Skills Assessment (PNSA) at three time points: before the intervention (T1), immediately post-intervention (T2), and four months later (T3).

Findings and implications: Results from repeated measures ANOVA showed a significant group×time interaction ($F=3.425$, $p=0.036$), indicating improvements in

mathematical abilities in the experimental group compared to the control group. Simple effect analysis revealed significant, sustained improvements in performance four months post-intervention ($F=20.291$, $p<0.001$), indicating that the fine motor skills training had a sustained enhancements attributable to mathematical abilities. These findings support a causal relationship between fine motor skills and mathematical abilities, and highlighting the necessity of fine motor programs to ensure early developmental success, thereby supporting better academic achievements in foundational areas like reading and math.

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Trends in Eye-Tracking Research on Young Children in South Korea: Focusing on the Interpretation of Eye-Tracking Data

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Keywords: eye-tracking, child development, literature review

Abstract

This study aims to examine the trends of eye-tracking research conducted in South Korea involving young children (ages 0-6), particularly studies that directly collected and analyzed gaze data. It further seeks to articulate future research directions for the application of eye-tracking methodologies within the fields of early childhood education (ECE) and developmental science.

Traditionally, research on young children has relied on indirect methods such as observations, interviews, or surveys with teachers and parents. However, such methods are limited in objectivity, as the outcomes can be shaped by the intentions, interpretations, or biases of third-party observers. As an alternative, eye-tracking has emerged as a physiological method enabling direct and objective assessment of children's visual attention. Eye-tracking is a non-invasive method that safely monitors corneal reflections and allows for the real-time collection of natural eye movement data, making it particularly suitable for understanding learning processes in young children.

Unfortunately, eye-tracking research involving young children in South Korea has yet to gain momentum. Although eye-tracking provides a powerful means of empirically investigating young children's cognitive processes, there is a lack of clear guidance on how to interpret gaze data from a cognitive perspective. Therefore, this study not only reviews research trends but also analyzes of how gaze data has been interpreted, aiming of identify directions for cognitive applications in early childhood research.

To this end, 92 research articles published up to March 31, 2025, were collected from two of Korea's major academic databases: RISS and KCI. Search terms included both "young children" and "eye-tracking," as well as their related synonyms (e.g., infant, toddler, preschooler, child, eye gaze, gaze tracking, eye movement, eye-tracking, eye-tracker). Articles were included if they contained at least one of these terms.

After removing duplicates (42), non-academic publications (5), and studies unrelated to eye-tracking or targeting children with disabilities (28), 17 empirical studies were selected for final analysis.

The content analysis of cognitive dimensions in the interpretation of gaze data in studies involving young children revealed the following findings. Categories were counted inclusively, allowing for overlaps. The analysis showed that 'fixation'(78.3%) was the most commonly used eye movement indicator, followed by 'heatmap'(10.9%), 'saccades'(4.3%), 'other visualizations'(4.3%), 'gaze plots'(2.2%), and 'pupil dilation' (0.0%). When considering both eye movement types and measurement scales, 'fixation duration'(39.1%) was identified as the most frequently used metric.

Regarding cognitive processes, all 17 studies addressed 'attention and executive function', followed by 'reasoning and inference' and 'cross-modal perception'(10 each), 'memory'(6), 'theory of mind' and 'representation'(2 each), and 'categorization'(1). These findings suggest that eye-tracking studies involving young children in South Korea have predominantly focused on attention-related processes, which may be attributed to the method's strength in capturing real-time gaze shifts and visual fixation. In contrast, studies on cognitive processes such as 'theory of mind' and 'categorization' are relatively scarce, possibly because these areas require the interpretation of gaze data within the framework of established developmental theories. This suggests that the use of gaze data for studying

young children's cognition in South Korea is still in its early stages. This study serves as a foundational reference for expanding the use of eye-tracking in ECE and developmental science.

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Play and Project Activity in Early Childhood: Comparison of Developmental Outcomes

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Keywords: executive functions, social competence, cultural-historical approach

Abstract

Early childhood is a critically sensitive period for the development of cognitive, communicative, and socio-emotional skills that form the foundation for future learning and adaptation. The development of evidence-based, culturally responsive pedagogical practices has become increasingly urgent. Among such practices, play and project activities are widely recognized, yet their differential effects on specific developmental domains and the processual side, that is internal processes of play and projects influence the course of a child development, remain underexplored.

The present study investigates the impact of various types of play and project activities on the development of preschool children to reveal what exactly creates the conditions that lead to the observed changes. The sample consisted of 215 children aged 5–6 years (50.2% boys). A pre-test/post-test design was used to assess outcomes in the following domains: cognitive flexibility (DCCS), visual and verbal working memory (NEPSY-II subtests), cognitive and behavioral inhibitory control (NEPSY-II subtests), macro-and microstructure of narrative (MAIN), social competence, anxiety, aggression (SCBE-30), emotion understanding (TEC).

Over the course of 22 group sessions, children participated in one of five activity

types reflecting varied pedagogical practices: (1) free pretend play, (2) joint child-adult pretend play (3) research project activity, (4) creative project activity, and (5) no-intervention control group. The conditions differed in the degree of children's agency and the level of immersion in an imaginary situation.

The findings show that joint child-adult pretend play had a significant positive effect on visual and verbal working memory, behavioral inhibitory control, and both macro-and microstructure of narrative. Free pretend play supported gains in verbal working memory, behavioral control, and macrostructure of narrative. Creative project activity enhanced narrative skills (macro-and micro-structure, lengths of narratives) and significantly reduced anxiety. In contrast, children in the control group demonstrated a significant increase in aggression, underscoring the importance of targeted developmental interventions.
To sum up, the longer a child is engaged in imaginary situation—as observed in joint child-adult pretend play—the more advanced their development of self-regulation. Maintaining an imaginary level of the situation while acting on the real level requires the child to actively engage executive functions (Vygotsky, 2017). At the same time, the degree of the child's agency is associated with speech development and a reduction in social anxiety as observed in the experiment.

This study highlights the differentiated benefits of play and project activities, reinforcing their role in fostering well-rounded development during early childhood. The study advocates for balanced, educational practices that blends play, creativity, and adult mediation within the realities of local educational systems.

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Embedded Learning Support-Exploring the Possibilities for Enhancing Outcomes in New Zealand

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Keywords: early intervention, embedded learning support, inclusive education

Abstract

In New Zealand, the early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017) is designed as "an inclusive curriculum" (p. 13) and teachers hold a range of responsibilities for ensuring "all children will be empowered to learn with and alongside others" (p. 13). For children who experience developmental delays or have disabilities, additional learning support and early intervention are essential to support child and family well-being and optimise children's learning and success. Yet, evidence suggests that early childhood teachers are reluctant to identify potential developmental concerns and children who need early intervention might not receive the necessary support (Aspden et al., 2022).

When early intervention services are put in place, support has been described as limited or insufficient to promote children's learning. Teachers report lacking adequate training and resources to meet diverse learning needs in inclusive settings. Recent research found that when working with children with disabilities, teachers focus on building positive relationships and feel less confident in teaching more specific child goals (Tupou et al., 2024). To help address the lack of support for teachers and children with disabilities, our team has examined the use of embedded learning support to grow teachers' confidence and enhance child outcomes.

Embedded learning support ensures that children with additional learning needs

receive consistent, meaningful support within everyday activities, routines, and play. This approach helps early childhood teachers break down the steps for providing meaningful support in real situations. Embedded learning support (cf., Snyder et al, 2018) has been used in the United States, New Zealand, and is currently being piloted in Australia. Each new application of embedded learning support requires adaptation to ensure a good fit with local context and culture.

The proposed session will provide an overview of the origins and evolution of embedded learning support and describe the work to date in New Zealand. The session will highlight the existing and ongoing research that positions embedded learning support as an evidence-based practice and how contextual and cultural adaptations have been used to ensure the approach is effective and acceptable to early childhood teachers and teams in New Zealand. Teacher voice and experience will be presented as a key source of data. For example, one teacher reported: “[Embedded learning] has changed my whole view of some of our diverse learners, creating more positive interactions. It has enabled the whole team to work more collaboratively as we work towards the same outcomes and more specific and achievable goals for our diverse learners.”The session will end with recommendations for adopting and adapting effective and inclusive learning supports in early childhood education.

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Heritage and Societal Language Development of Ethnic-Minority Children: Understanding the Linguistic Attitudes and Community Resources for Ethnic-Minority Groups in Hong Kong

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(Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education)

Keywords: ethnic minority children, language and literacy development, linguistic attitudes

Abstract

This project explores the effect of linguistic attitudes and preferences towards heritage language and culture on the strategies and community practices for child language upbringing for ethnic-minority (EM) groups, and how this would ultimately influence the language capacity in young children growing up multilingually in these EM communities.

Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city-besides Han Chinese, there are many different ethnicity groups, such as Indonesian, Filipino, Indian, Pakistani, Nepali and Thai, that choose to reside and take root in Hong Kong. Although they are sometimes referred to as ethnic minorities, these groups have built vibrant communities in local society. Each group has a strong bonding among their members, and are rich in culture and native practices. This provides a rich linguistic context for children of these EM groups for their own heritage language and culture, allowing children to grow up in a native-like linguistic environment. On the other hand, given the trilingual education policy in Hong Kong (Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese and English), children often begin to learn to speak three languages at kindergarten.

With a carefully design questionnaire, we first attempted to understand from members

of different EM groups about their language use and identity. We will compare and contrast the language profiles of different EM communities in Hong Kong-the use of languages in daily communication (heritage vs. societal language-English and Chinese), attitudes and preferences towards the different languages.

As we are particularly interested in how young EM children develop their competence in different languages under such rich multilingual context, we also asked in the questionnaire for the participants about the availability and types of community resources in facilitating children in language and literacy development of their heritage language as well as the societal languages (English and Chinese). Moreover, we also tried to learn what they think about the importance of their children to acquire and maintain their own heritage language and culture while growing up in Hong Kong, a Chinese-dominant society. We will move to discuss what kind of linguistic attitudes would lead to what kind of strategies, measures and practices parents and community would develop to support children's development in different languages.

We will conclude the sharing by showing how this study allows us to better understand the linguistic context of children from the EM communities as they approach school age, thereby allowing us to better prepare teachers as well as curricula and programmes to address the linguistic needs of such children.

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Martumba as One of the Media to Include Character in Early Childhood in PAUD-KB Yobel HKBP Banuarea, North Tapanuli

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Keywords: martumba, early childhood character, character education

Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of Martumba, a traditional Batak dance, as a medium for instilling character values in early childhood at PAUD-KB Yobel HKBP Banuarea, North Tapanuli. Character education in early childhood is critical in building a personality based on positive values. However, the learning methods used are often less contextual to local culture, so they are less than optimal in attracting children's interest and understanding. Therefore, this study tries to present Martumba as an innovative culture-based approach to support character learning.

This study uses a qualitative approach with an action research design. The subjects of the study were 20 children aged 4-6 years and 2 PAUD teachers who acted as facilitators in Martumba-based learning activities. Data were collected through observation, teacher interviews, and visual documentation during the learning process. The data analysis technique used was thematic analysis to identify themes related to the internalization of character values in children.

The results of the study showed that Martumba can be an effective medium in instilling character in early childhood. Students showed an increase in understanding and

application of values such as cooperation, discipline, and responsibility after participating in Martumba activities. In addition, the use of Martumba in learning not only enriches teaching methods but also strengthens the relationship between character learning and local cultural heritage.

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Teacher's Perspectives of Preschool Children with Disabilities Playing in Inclusive Settings: A Scoping Review

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Keywords: children with disabilities, teacher's perspectives, inclusive play

Abstract

Background

Play has an important role in the development of physical and social skills of children, and is recognized as a fundamental human right. Enabling opportunities for young children with disabilities to co-engage in playing and learning activities alongside their non-disabled peers is essential for promoting equity in early childhood education. Teachers are tasked with promoting children' s learning and development in play. However, children with disabilities are frequently excluded from these experiences. Teachers' attitudes towards play, knowledge about play and its benefits, and their experience in promoting effective play are key factors that determine the play experience of every child in inclusive early childhood education. When a child has a disability, these factors become even more important. The best role of teachers in the play and how to effectively support the disabled children in inclusive play is very important, however, few studies have discussed the problem. In order to find out what situations and conditions can enhance the play experience of children with disabilities and expand their participation in inclusive environments, a review of the existing literature on teacher perceptions is needed.

Methods

Given the potential diversity of the current research field in terms of methodology, research design, and development themes and concepts, we decided to conduct a scope review. Three key questions framed the analysis and dictated which information was extracted: 1. Attitudes: Summarize teachers' positive and negative perspectives on the participation of children with disabilities in inclusive play. 2. Experience: Explore the strategies and practices of teachers in supporting play for children with disabilities in environment and teaching. 3. Impact: Analyse how teacher perspectives affect the quality and effectiveness of inclusive play. We used published studies between 1994-2024 extracted from the Web of Science, EBSCO and Google Scholar databases by using Boolean (inclusive settings OR disabilities) AND (preschooler OR young children OR kindergarten) AND (play OR playground) AND (teacher OR educator). Exclusion criteria were studies involving school-age children over 6 years.

Results

Some preliminary results are presented here. First, In terms of teachers' attitude, there are far more studies on teachers' positive attitude than on teachers' negative attitude. The teachers with negative attitude showed more distrust and risk awareness of the play ability of special children, while more teachers affirmed the importance of the development of special children in inclusive settings through play and thought that play is an important part of the curriculum. Many studies report teachers' focus on outdoor play, while few focus on inclusive play-based learning and teaching in the classroom. Most studies have only explored teacher' views on inclusive play for special children, and few have studied the impact of different teachers' views on the implementation or results of inclusive play. In addition, although most studies reported research ethics, some of the teachers' perceptions of the purpose of the inclusive play were purely intervention rather than education or children rights, so the conditionality of the findings seems to need clarification.

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"Emotional Palette" in Kindergartens: Art Therapy Aids Young Children with Attention Tendencies in Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School

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Keywords: art therapy courses, children with ADHD tendencies, the transition from kindergarten to primary school

Abstract

Young Children with Attention tendencies in the preschool-to-primary school transition stage, due to the lag in the development of their emotional abilities, have more difficulty adapting to the transition compared to the ordinary children. Art therapy, as a non-verbal form of psychotherapy, has received much attention in the field of special education for children in recent years.

This research aims to explore the effectiveness of art therapy courses in promoting the development of emotional abilities of young children with attention tendencies in the preschool-to-primary school transition stage, and to provide kindergarten teachers with operable courses to help these children exercise their abilities in emotion recognition, emotion expression, emotion attribution, emotion regulation, and to help them better adapt to changes in their living environment and interpersonal relationships.

This research selected two cases from the senior class of kindergartens in Shanghai for research. According to the development level of the emotional abilities of the cases, 12 individualized art therapy courses mainly focusing on free drawing, comprehensive handicrafts and artwork appreciation were designed and carried out. The courses were held once a week, each lasting 20 to 30 minutes (with a break in between). The two cases

completed the courses on the same theme at different time periods on the same day, and parent interviews were conducted after the courses. After the 12 art therapy courses were completed, the effectiveness of the courses was verified by observing the changes of the two cases in the four aspects of emotion recognition, emotion expression, emotion attribution and emotion regulation.

The research results show that through art therapy, the two cases were able to more effectively recognize their own emotions, learn to express their emotions in appropriate ways and reduce emotional impulsivity.

The 12 art therapy courses have been put into trial use in three kindergartens in Shanghai, hoping to be helpful for the development of emotional abilities of more young children with attention tendencies in the preschool-to-primary school transition stage.

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Project Approach in China: Transitions, Challenges and Reflection

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Keywords: project, project approach, emergent curriculum

Abstract

Recently, project approach has attracted more attention in China. However, tracing back to the origin of the 'project', John Dewey introduced this concept to China a hundred years ago. In September 1918, Dewey's student William Kilpatrick published "The Project method" in Columbia University, US. Then Dewey visited China between 1919-1921, giving many speeches and influencing Chinese education. In the past century, project approach has been existed with many different names in China, like Theme teaching, School-based curriculum, etc. This paper found that all these programs have certain project topics as the core, supporting children's active participation, cooperative inquiry and diversified presentation in real problem situations. A good and deep project must begin with a real problem in living world and embody children's perspective. Giving a vivid and interesting Chinese project case, we could find that both the children and the teachers grow within the project.

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A Systematic Review of Integrating Computational Thinking with Arts across Kindergarten to K12 Education

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Keywords: computational thinking, arts integration, PreK-12 education

Abstract

In the 21st century, computational thinking (CT) is recognized as one of the essential skills for individuals in the digital age, and there is a growing interest in the study of CT and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. With arts being emphasized, STEAM (STEM+Art) education advocates combining arts with other disciplines to foster creativity and problem-solving skills. However, the activities integrating CT and arts are limited, and the relationship between them remains underexplored. Therefore, our study aimed to address this research gap by exploring the intrinsic connections between CT and arts and analyzing how CT and arts integration activities were implemented at the kindergarten and K-12 education levels as well as the roles of the arts in CT integrated activities. Our study systematically reviewed 21 empirical articles and the results indicated that existing CT and arts integration activities were commonly conducted at the primary school level, with kindergarten being the least and CT was primarily integrated with three arts forms: visual arts (e.g., drawing, crafts, and artistic elements), performing arts (e.g., music and dance), and

digital arts (e.g., animation arts and virtual reality (VR) dance). In addition, we found that arts play seven types of roles in these CT integrated activities, including (1) Serve as discipline; (2) Provide hands-on practice; (3) Utilize artistic elements; (4) Enhance interest and engagement; (5) Support learning of CT and coding; (6) Cultivate creativity and (7) Foster Expression. Based on the cross-disciplinary theory the integration of CT and arts activities can be categorized into three ways: arts as disciplines in CT activities, arts-enhanced CT activities and arts-integrated with CT activities. Furthermore, we discussed the challenges of integrating CT and arts activities, which primarily stem from the limited knowledge of arts and underestimation of the roles of arts in education by researchers and classroom teachers. This study emphasizes the importance of integrating CT and arts and provides educational recommendations on future curricular activities for educational policy makers and in-service teachers as well as new perspectives in CT educational research.

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Rooted in Tradition, Facing the Future: Indigenization Pathways for Early Childhood Sustainable Development Education in China under the UN SDGs Framework

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Keywords: kindergarten curriculum, sustainable development education, indigenization pathways

Abstract

This study focuses on the integration of indigenization and globalization in early childhood education curricula in China, framed within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It explores the application of the traditional Chinese philosophy of "Harmony between Heaven and Humanity" ("Tian Ren He Yi") in kindergarten curricula. Utilizing an action research methodology combined with qualitative analysis tools, the study constructs a transformation model linking "Global Goals," "Chinese Cultural Symbols," and "Teaching Practices."

The findings reveal that the philosophy of "Harmony between Heaven and Humanity" provides a cultural foundation for sustainable development education. Its transformation pathways in kindergarten curricula include:

1. Nature-based education curricula that translate abstract goals into actionable behaviors through community practices and waste sorting activities.

2. Innovative practices in traditional festivals that activate intergenerational environmental awareness through cultural narratives.

3. The application of local materials, where “upcycling” practices illustrate the connection between traditional wisdom and sustainable lifestyles.

The study identifies challenges such as teachers’ limited capacity to transform cultural symbols and constraints in family involvement. To address these, the study proposes tiered solutions:

1. Developing a “Culture-Ecology” dual-dimensional teacher training framework.

2. Designing parent-child task chains to reinforce behavioral internalization.

3. Creating community-linked cultural-ecological study models.

The study introduces a “Dual-Circulation” educational model, asserting that global goals must be contextualized through local symbols, while local practices should be systematized through global frameworks. It advocates for a tripartite mechanism of policy support, technological empowerment, and community collaboration, providing a methodological framework for balancing cultural heritage and global responsibility in early childhood education. This research echoes the global vision of the SDGs and highlights the innovative vitality of Chinese culture in sustainable development education.

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Why One-to-One Listening Is Praised Yet Underused: A Qualitative Study Based on Teacher Interviews

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Keywords: one-to-one listening, teacher-child interaction, listening pedagogy

Abstract

Listening pedagogy, which recognizes and celebrates children as active and capable agents in their own learning and development, is a critical component of successful teaching practices (Bridget A. Egan, 2009). It emphasizes children's autonomy and creativity, as well as close collaboration between schools and families, thereby contributing to a more positive and effective early childhood education environment (Martin, 2016). In recent years, China's preschool education has actively explored localized practices of listening-oriented education, positioning "one-to-one listening" in kindergartens as a key measure to enhance preschool education quality. This approach has been incorporated into policy documents such as the Guidelines for Assessing the Quality of Kindergarten Care and Education. Specifically, "one-to-one listening" is designated as a key focus in evaluating teacher-child interactions, with explicit requirements for teachers to engage in one-to-one listening and to authentically document children's thoughts and experiences.

The practice of "one-on-one listening" draws inspiration from the Reggio Emilia approach while being deeply rooted in China's traditional philosophy of "tailored education". It emphasizes teachers' attention on each child and integrates a child-centered view of childhood. By valuing, encouraging, and responding to each child's expressions, "one-to-one listening" fosters a more inclusive educational environment. Furthermore, China has explored

the utilization of listening outcomes, attempting to leverage them as opportunities for collective teaching, supporting individual child development, home-school collaboration, environmental design, and peer learning among children. These efforts aim to promote high-quality teacher-child interactions.

In the practice of “one-to-one listening” , we identified practical challenges’ factors through semi-structured interviews with ten teachers. Subjectively, teachers often lack a proper understanding of “listening” and fail to apply effective strategies.Objectively, kindergarten policies do not align with the intended purpose of “one-to-one listening” , and insufficient parental engagement creates barriers between home and kindergartens. At its core, the issue lies in the lack of consensus and coordinated efforts among families, kindergartens, and teachers.Through analyzing the causes of these challenges and proposing solutions, it is suggested that a tripartite collaborative effort involving teachers, kindergartens, and families could be achieved by implementing tiered teacher professional development, systematically optimizing kindergarten management policies, and fostering a deep consensus on listening among home and school. This collaborative approach could promote the implementation of “one-to-one listening” and advance high-quality teacher-child interactions.

The emphasis on the practice of “one-to-one listening” in education reflects a deeper exploration of dynamic balance in education among collectivism and individualism, tradition and modernity, and technology and humanity. Beyond its practical benefits, the exploration of one-to-one listening not only helps realize the ideal of educational equity by focusing on every child but also deepens our understanding of the cooperation and consensus that should be achieved among families, kindergartens, and teachers.

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Blending Global Perspectives and Local Cultural Heritage in Early Childhood Color Exploration: A Project-Based Learning Case Study

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Keywords: early childhood education, project-based learning, cultural diversity

Abstract

Globalization, shaped by economic, technological, cultural, and policy dynamics, has driven the internationalization and diversification of early childhood education while raising critical challenges, such as balancing global standards with cultural preservation. Culturally, globalization facilitates cross-border exchanges of educational practices, yet risks overshadowing local traditions. Research highlights that Chinese early childhood education, despite embracing multicultural influences, remains anchored in traditional values centered on national identity and cultural heritage (Xiaoqian Pei, 2016). This underscores the imperative for educators to design curricula that harmonize global pedagogies with localized cultural narratives.

This paper examines a project-based learning (PBL) initiative on color exploration in the K2 class of Shanghai Zhongshan Kindergarten. Inspired by children's discussions on emotions and colors from the film 'Inside Out', the curriculum employed Plutchik's "Emotion Wheel" to explore how colors influence feelings. Johannes Itten's twelve-hue color wheel further guided investigations into primary colors and their real-world connections. Notably, children observed cultural discrepancies when comparing traditional Chinese

hues-such as the ‘Chinese red’ in national flags or Hanfu colors for the Mid-Autumn Festival-with Itten’s system, recognizing unique shades like ‘ochre red’ and ‘peacock blue’ absent in Western frameworks.

Delving deeper into color origins, children initially associated colors with manufactured, imported paints. To counter this, the curriculum integrated China’s intangible cultural heritage, introducing mineral-based pigments (e.g., ‘azurite blue’, ‘coral red’) and traditional techniques. Children ground minerals to create vibrant paints, experimented with color blending, and produced artworks mimicking enduring Dunhuang murals. They also crafted persimmon tannin dye, observing its sun-induced deepening hue during tie-dyeing, and designed Sichuan opera masks, fascinated by their bold, symbolic palettes. These activities sparked admiration for ancient ingenuity, fostering cultural pride and identity.

The study reveals how blending global pedagogical tools (e.g., PBL, emotion theories) with local heritage enriches early childhood education. By engaging with traditional practices, children developed scientific curiosity, aesthetic appreciation, and a deeper connection to their cultural roots. This approach advocates for curricula that leverage globalization’s opportunities while safeguarding cultural uniqueness, nurturing young learners who embrace global diversity yet remain grounded in their heritage.

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An Action Study on the Effectiveness of an Experimental Life Education Curriculum for Young Children

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(University of Macau)

Keywords: life education, life education curriculum for young children, action research

Abstract

This study examines the learning effectiveness of implementing life education curricula in kindergarten settings. The curriculum is structured around four core dimensions: “Self and Being,” “Self and Others,” “Self and Environment,” and “Self and Life”. Thematic life education picture books—focused on respect for life, empathy toward others, self-affirmation, environmental care, and cherishing life—are used as key instructional tools.

Using an action research approach, a one-year life education curriculum was implemented for 30 five-year-old children through a cyclical process of planning, execution, evaluation, reflection, and re-execution. Data were collected from the teaching context, including video recordings, children’ s work, observation notes, teaching reflections, and interview transcripts to analyze the learning outcomes.

The findings revealed that:

1.In the “Self and Being” curriculum, children developed self-awareness by recognizing their strengths and talents, and understanding how to apply these abilities to help others. They also learned to reflect on their weaknesses and strive for self-improvement in daily life.

2.In the “Self and Others” curriculum, children demonstrated significant improvements in life attitudes such as sharing, gratitude, care, and respect, particularly in their interactions with family members, peers, and teachers. These values were frequently reflected in their creative work.

3.In the “Self and Environment” curriculum, children acquired knowledge of resource conservation, including reducing food waste, saving water and electricity, minimizing plastic use, and recycling. They also developed deeper awareness of global warming and its impact on ecosystems. This empathy toward the survival challenges faced by animals and humans translated into eco-friendly behaviors in daily life.

4.In the ‘Self and Life’ curriculum, children developed a stronger appreciation for life by understanding its finite nature and stages of development. They learned to construct personal dreams, plan steps to achieve them, and recognize that the beauty of life lies in pursuing meaningful goals and serving others, which reflects the true value of life.

5.Thematic picture books significantly enhanced the learning outcomes of life education for young children, while also promoting teachers’ self-reflection on life and improving their curriculum design capabilities.

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Optimizing Physical-Motor Stimulation for Children Aged 4-6 through Curriculum and Instructional Strategy Development in Early Childhood Education Settings

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Keywords: physical-motor development, early childhood education, curriculum

Abstract

This study aims to optimize physical-motor stimulation for children aged 4-6 by developing an integrated curriculum and instructional strategies in early childhood education (ECE) settings. The research is motivated by the low level of children's physical fitness and the limited opportunities for physical activity within ECE classrooms-conditions exacerbated by the dominance of early academic instruction, driven by parental expectations, and the increasing use of digital devices from an early age.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that young children engage in at least three hours of physical activity daily. However, OECD survey data, particularly from Kudus City, Central Java, indicates that more than 50% of 15-year-olds exercise only once a week or less—suggesting that the formation of healthy physical activity habits from early childhood remains inadequate.

This research employed a development approach using the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), and was conducted as part of the "Physical-Motor Stimulation Enhancement in ECE" program, initiated by the Bakti Pendidikan Djarum Foundation in five supported PAUD institutions in Kudus Regency. The program ran from July to December 2024 and involved 45 teachers and 650 children from KB/TK and RA institutions, who participated in training, mentoring, and curriculum

implementation over six months.

The results showed that developing learning objectives based on physical-motor sub-elements of the national curriculum—along with instructional strategies integrated into daily routines, transitions, and core learning activities—positively impacted children' s motor development. After six months of implementation, assessments conducted by certified physical-motor specialists revealed improvements in children's basic movement skills (locomotor, balance, and manipulative skills), shifting from a "low" to a "moderate" category.

This study recommends embedding structured and sustainable physical activities into ECE curricula that are accessible and practical for teachers to implement. It also emphasizes the importance of active collaboration between teachers and parents to support children's holistic development through consistent physical activity and balanced nutritional practices at home.

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Implementation and Glocalization of Play: Experiences and Challenges from Two Public Kindergartens in an Ethnic Minority Region in China

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(Universiti Sains Malaysia)

Keywords: play, implementation, ethnic minority region

Abstract

This qualitative study aims to explore how the officially promoted play-based approach is implemented and glocalized in Chinese kindergartens. Two public kindergarten and twelve preschool teachers from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region were selected. Data drawn from observation, interview and documents revealed several positive changes in teachers' practices brought about by the recent policies and government initiatives. First, in terms of time allocation, play has replaced collective teaching and become the dominant pedagogy in both kindergartens. Second, participant teachers utilized various strategies to integrate play with intentional teaching. They provided play materials in learning corners and proactively involved in children's play. Detailed analysis of the onsite observation unveiled two main categories of intentionality in play materials: play for academics, and play for development. The former included materials aimed at promoting math, science, and literacy, while the latter focused on supporting moral, physical, and socio-emotional development. Teachers also made use of diverse and rich cultural and natural resources from this region and integrated them into play materials. Analysis of teachers' involvement in children's play identified eight different roles. Contrasting with teachers' directive roles identified from

previous studies, teachers in this study adopted more facilitative roles. Despite all these improvements and progresses, teachers also face considerable challenges, including the lack of resources, lack of parental support, and lack of ‘how-to’ guidance. By considering culture, context, and the individual needs of children, this study highlights the importance of rethinking and reconceptualizing the roles and definitions of play in Chinese context.

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Localising Drama-in-Education across Regional Contexts in China's Early Childhood Education

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(The Education University of Hong Kong)

Keywords: drama-in-education, localisation of pedagogy, teacher perspectives

Abstract

In recent years, Drama-in-Education (DiE) has gained growing recognition in Mainland China's early childhood education (ECE) sector, supported by national education reforms that promote creativity, socio-emotional development, and learner agency. While DiE aligns closely with global pedagogical ideals, its implementation within China's diverse educational landscape presents complex challenges, shaped by distinct cultural, institutional, and policy contexts.

This qualitative study explores how preschool teachers across three urban regions—Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Hangzhou—interpret and apply DiE in their daily teaching. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 9 DiE-trained educators, complemented by classroom observations, the study adopts a comparative case approach to examine emerging regional patterns. Although limited in scale, the research offers in-depth, context-sensitive insights into how teachers adapt DiE strategies to align with local expectations and systemic structures.

Findings reveal that while participants across all regions embraced DiE's child-centred and imaginative philosophy, their practices varied significantly by location. In

Shenzhen, teachers reported greater curricular flexibility and institutional support, allowing for more experimental use of techniques such as teacher-in-role and improvisation. In Shanghai, educators described supportive school environments that emphasised emotional development and creative expression, facilitating more consistent integration of DiE into daily instruction. Meanwhile, teachers in Hangzhou highlighted cross-disciplinary approaches, integrating DiE into subject areas such as science, literacy, and social development, often within well-structured curricular frameworks.

Despite these localised strategies, teachers across regions reported common challenges: limited access to sustained professional development, pressures to demonstrate visible learning outcomes, and difficulties aligning DiE with prescriptive curriculum requirements. Several participants also expressed concerns about managing open-ended activities in classrooms with tightly scheduled routines or high academic expectations. In addition to regional influences, some differences in DiE implementation were also associated with school type, particularly between public and private kindergartens.

This study argues that the localisation of DiE in China is not a uniform process but rather a series of situated negotiations shaped by teachers' professional contexts and regional cultures. Supporting educators in this process requires more than policy endorsement; it demands regionally responsive training, professional networks, and curricular flexibility that empower teachers to adapt DiE practices meaningfully. By foregrounding the voices of teachers working within distinct educational systems, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how global pedagogical innovations are translated into local practice. It provides timely insights for policymakers, curriculum designers, and teacher educators seeking to foster culturally grounded, context-sensitive approaches to arts-based learning in early childhood settings.

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"Teaching Benefits Teachers as Well": Reimagining Early Childhood Pedagogy through Drama in a Cross-Cultural China

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Keywords: drama-in-education, early childhood pedagogy, qualitative research

Abstract

In today's China, early childhood education is shaped by the intertwined legacies of Western child-centered ideals, Confucian hierarchical norms, and Soviet-style instruction. Within this complex cultural landscape, Drama-in-Education (DiE) offers more than a creative method—it becomes a space where pedagogy itself is questioned, negotiated, and reimagined.

This qualitative study explores how six kindergarten teachers in Shenzhen engaged with DiE through classroom-based observation and post-session reflections. Rather than being formally trained, these teachers experimented with drama activities during their everyday teaching, adapting on the spot, reflecting on children's responses, and negotiating cultural expectations in the process.

Findings show that while initial discomfort with improvisation and child-led exploration was common, teachers gradually embraced more flexible, dialogic, and collaborative teaching roles. DiE served as a catalyst for professional reflection and transformation, challenging the traditional image of the teacher as the sole authority. Instead, many teachers began to see themselves as co-learners and co-creators alongside children.

This study suggests that when global pedagogies like DiE are localized through practice—not imitation—they can meaningfully contribute to pedagogical change. By closely

examining teachers' lived experiences and negotiations, this research sheds light on how educational borrowing can foster professional growth from within.

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Enhancing Intercultural Educational Environments: Elevating Early Childhood Teachers' Cultural Wellbeing

Sonja Arndt
(University of Melbourne)

Keywords: early childhood teachers, cultural wellbeing, identity formation

Abstract

This presentation foregrounds an Australian Research Council (ARC) project focused on strengthening anti-racist orientations and inclusive practices in early childhood teaching environments. The key aims of the project are to enhance culturally safer relationships in early childhood education (ECE) settings. It is premised on the fact that while the rich and diverse cultural contexts of children and families are well recognised in curriculum and policy mandates in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, existing research largely disregards teachers' own cultural realities, sense of wellbeing and belonging in their teaching teams. Nevertheless, teachers and educators are at a crucial juncture for (re)shaping children's attitudes and behaviours towards diverse identities and cultural and racial injustices within Australasian communities and society.

In this research 25 teachers and educators from four cities in Australia and Aotearoa are taking part in online focus group discussions. Their ideas are then expanded into culture stories which they share over three years. Critically and deeply reflecting on how they see culture and how their cultural realities affect their lives, teaching, and their orientations towards children's and others' diverse identities, they share their stories in multimodal ways: they may be oral, artistic/visual, or take various written formats. Importantly, their views and ideas grow and evolve during our online discussions, as well as over time, as they tell and

retell them, through their own and each other's stories, influenced by realities in which they are situated. Similarly, the submitted culture stories grow and change, taking off in different directions as time passes and as further nuances emerge. This presentation will highlight some of the ways in which stories are presented, engaged and re-engaged with, illustrating that there can never be just one truth in identity formation, and that culture is not a neatly classifiable or neutral construct.

Theorised through feminist poststructural and posthuman philosophies, this project elevates ECE teachers' and educators' diverse identities and both marginalising and uplifting experiences in their teaching teams. This theoretical grounding affirms the power relations and mutually affective influence of teachers' multiple (hi)stories, relationships and behaviours. The presentation will foreground the transformative potential of ongoing shifts in attitudes, insights and understandings-temporary as they necessarily are-and how they are expected to inform teachers' and educators' grass roots engagement in developing a framework that will enable them to elevate cultural safety in their teaching teams. Given that teachers' wellbeing is known to have a direct influence on the rights, wellbeing and early education of young children, and that ECE services, their communities and wider society are increasingly diverse, it is crucial that this aspect is contextually tailored. Above all, this presentation offers an opportunity to share insights and engage in dialogue with the audience on the importance of this crucial area of research.

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A Snapshot of Time Allocation and Influencing Factors in U.S. Early Childhood Education

Hyunwoo Yang
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Keywords: time allocation, instructional practices, home-based childcare

Abstract

This study analyzed classroom activity time allocation in early childhood education across U.S. center-based and home-based childcare settings using data from the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education. Five activities were examined: whole-group, small-group, one-on-one instruction, child-directed activities, and screen time. The survey sample included 6,333 teachers, primarily female, with diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. Results revealed that whole-group instruction remains common, high-quality practices match whole-group time, and screen time is higher in home-based settings. Factors including teacher education, professional development, child-centered beliefs, and class size are significantly related to time allocation. Policy and practical implications are discussed.

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Semiotic Interaction and Agency Construction: A Multimodal Ethnographic Investigation of Cross-cultural Adaptation Mechanisms in Reggio Emilia-inspired Learning Environments

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(Chongqing Normal University)

Keywords: Reggio Emilia-Inspired Learning, cross cultural adaptation, semiotic interaction

Abstract

This research constructs an interdisciplinary framework integrating cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) and actor-network theory (ANT), developing a multimodal ethnographic methodology (combining 360°audiovisual documentation, material interaction trace mapping, and teacher-student interaction logs) to systematically investigate the co-evolutionary mechanisms of semiotic mediation and agency construction in the cross-cultural adaptation of Reggio Emilia-inspired learning environments. The study proposes an "ethics-sensitive educational environment transplantation" theoretical model by analyzing 20,000+ multimodal interaction episodes. Its policy implications encompass designing a three-dimensional implementation framework ("cultural representation-cognitive schema-spatial configuration") and developing a dynamic risk assessment matrix to advance cultural inclusiveness in quality education. Key findings include: (1) Agency development exhibits a "micro-meso-macro tri-level transition" pattern, where children's material exploration frequency (2.3±0.4 instances/min) drives cultural script reinvention through semiotic density threshold effects (β=0.71, _p_<0.001); (2) Divergent cultural translation

pathways emerge between contexts, with Italy's "piazza-style" spatial syntax (UIA=0.68) and China's "transitional object-mediated" mode (UIA=0.52) forming distinct semiotic topological networks; (3) A critical transition effect exists in environmental adaptation, where cross-modal transduction efficiency explains 78.3% of cross-cultural variance (_R_²=0.783).Methodological Innovations include:(1) Developed a multimodal correlation coding system (Cohen's κ=0.89) achieving millisecond-level temporal synchronization analysis (±15ms precision) of gesture-speech-material triadic interactions;(2) Created the Cross-cultural Adaptation Potential Index (CAPI), integrating functional near-infrared spectroscopy hyperscanning (fNIRS-hyperscanning) neural coupling metrics with spatial syntax feature vectors. Semiotic Interaction and Agency Construction: A Multimodal Ethnographic Investigation of Cross-Cultural Adaptation Mechanisms in Reggio Emilia-Inspired Learning Environments.

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Examining the Patterns of Quality in Hong Kong Kindergartens: A Latent Profile Analysis Using the ECERS-R

Echo Li
(The Education University of Hong Kong)
Christine Wang
(The Education University of Hong Kong)
Vincent Ng
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Keywords: Early Childhood Education, classroom quality, latent profile analysis

Abstract

Early childhood education (ECE) is vital for children's development and academic success (Aina & Bipath, 2022). Traditional variable-centered approaches have dominated ECE quality research, concentrating variable's linear relationships, overlooking subgroup differences with similar characteristics. Limited research captures the heterogeneity of quality indicators by latent profile analysis (LPA) which offers deeper insights into the complexity of the evaluated constructs, facilitating the identification of actual patterns of classroom quality.

Hong Kong kindergartens face quality improvement challenges stemming from high population density and limited space, coupled with a teacher-centered approach that emphasizes behavior management and academic achievement (Wong & Rao, 2015). This

study uses LPA to identify distinct quality pattern subgroups on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), thereby enabling tailored interventions based on profile-specific constraints and strengths for quality improvement.

The ECERS-R is widely used to assess the structural (e.g., physical environment) and process quality (e.g., teacher-child interaction) using a 7-point Likert scale (Harms et al., 1998). Data was collected from 216 K1 classrooms across 116 kindergartens in 14 districts. We excluded the 'parents and staff' subscale (teacher-reported) and 'provisions for children with disabilities' items (non-applicable for all kindergartens) from the analysis. Results indicated that a four-profile solution yielded the best model fit (AIC = 3842.23, BIC =3970.66; Entropy =0.83). The One-way ANOVA result showed a significant difference across all subscales ($p < .001$). All profiles shared lower scores in Activity and a peak for Interaction.

Profile 1 (Poor quality, n =24, 11.7%) is characterized by inadequate to minimal scores across all subscales, with the lowest rating in Language and Reasoning (M =2.15). Profile 2 (Fair quality, n = 104, 46.7%) is a dominant profile exhibiting minimal to good ratings with a strength in Interaction (M = 5.64). This profile is characterized by minimal structural quality but relatively good process quality. Profile 3 (Moderate quality, n =70, 32.3%) is distinguished by good to excellent Interaction scores (M =5.69), while others performed slightly better than 'Fair quality'. Profile 4 (Good quality, n =19, 9.3%) exhibited the best pattern of scores, with Space and Furnishings, Interaction, and Program Structure rated good to excellent, others remain minimal to good.

Notably, the post hoc results indicated that Profiles 2, 3,4 were mainly different in Space and Furnishings scores ($p<.001$) but no significant difference in Interaction ($p >.129$). Profile 1 and 2 showed nearly identical low performance ($p =1.00$) in Space and Furnishings, but Profile 2 significantly outperformed Profile 1 ($p<.001$) and was similar to Profiles 3 and 4 in Interaction. These findings suggest that process quality, particularly related to interaction, can be maintained at comparable levels regardless of disparities in structural quality.

In conclusion, this study found the diversity in classroom quality among Hong Kong kindergartens can be classified into four types. Although resource limitations may constrain structural quality, enhancing process quality offers a feasible path to improvement. Future

studies shall test the validity of this inference using experimental methods.

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Designing Reggio-inspired Thematic Learning Wall in Chinese Preschool Settings: Exploring "Fruit and Autumn" Theme

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Keywords: thematic learning wall, Reggio Emilia Approach, chinese preschool settings

Abstract

The thematic learning wall is regarded as an essential component of the learning environment in Chinese kindergartens, serving as a pedagogical tool to support children in thematic learning based on their interests, learning outcomes, and cultural celebrations. It functions as a visual record of their learning processes and a medium for the construction of cultural identity. However, the educational value of thematic learning walls has not been fully optimized in current practice due to three major issues: limited child participation, insufficient child-wall interaction, and inadequate opportunities for interdisciplinary exploration.

This study explores how the Reggio Emilia Approach can be applied to address these issues in the practice of creating thematic learning walls. A case study of a "Fruit and Autumn" themed wall was conducted in a public kindergarten in Shanghai, involving 19 children aged 3 to 4 years. Data were collected through digital photography, video observations, and analysis of children's work. The findings of this study indicate that: (1) the physical accessibility of wall content tends to influence the frequency of child-wall interaction; (2) the use of provocations in thematic learning walls promotes children's engagement with materials, self-expression in multiple forms, and active participation in the construction of the learning environment; and (3) teachers' roles in supporting children's

holistic learning include intentional teaching and the integration of learning experiences.

This study provides empirical evidence on how early childhood educators can adapt the Reggio Emilia Approach to transform thematic learning walls into more dynamic, participatory, open-ended, and interactive play spaces within Chinese preschool settings.

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Migrant Early Childhood Educators' Experience of Professional Transitions in Singapore and New Zealand: A Cross-national Comparison

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Keywords: Early Childhood Education, teacher migration, Asia-Pacific

Abstract

This paper presents the first findings from an ongoing cross-national study of the experiences of migrant early childhood educators in the Asia-Pacific region. Early childhood education is now a highly mobile global profession, with large numbers of educators crossing national borders to study early childhood education. Many continue to work in their new host country and, while much is known about the experience of migration across national boundaries, there is limited knowledge of the experience of migration across professional boundaries, particularly in early childhood education. Singapore and New Zealand are ideal countries in which to conduct research into this phenomenon; both countries are characterized by rich cultural diversity, and both employ large numbers of migrant early childhood educators to bolster their local early childhood workforce.

The study is in two phases. In Phase 1, interviews have been conducted with early childhood educators who have made the transition from the professional culture of early childhood education in one country to work in a second country (either Singapore or New

Zealand).

Ten migrant educators from each country were interviewed in Phase 1. The timeframe for migration was limited to the past five years (2019 to 2024, inclusive), which allowed us to capture some pre-COVID migrants but ensure the experience of migration was still reasonably 'fresh' in the memories of participants. Where possible, the participants were interviewed in their home language and the transcripts subsequently translated within the research team. Given patterns of migration for education and employment in the Asia-Pacific region, it is unsurprising that most participants had migrated from mainland China.

Analysis of the interview transcripts was split between a summary of demographic data (date of migration, highest qualification, previous teaching experience, etc.) and open coding of responses to questions about professional challenges and opportunities the participants had experienced. In reporting these challenges and opportunities, this paper pays particular attention to the conceptual framework for the study presented at the 2023 PECERA conference. This framework draws on concepts of contributory rights and transformative citizenship to problematize the reliance of minority-world countries, such as Singapore and New Zealand, on migrant labour from majority-world countries (such as China) without conferring full rights of citizenship.

In Phase 2 of the study, the Phase 1 findings will provide stimulus material for practice-developing research co-designed with leaders in early childhood education services. The aim of Phase 2 is the address the main aim of the study, which is to foster practices of leadership in early childhood education that mobilize the rich cultural and professional knowledges migrant educators can offer to children, families, colleagues, and the community.

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Understanding Perceptions of Early Childhood Leadership: Bridging Aspirations and Realities

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Keywords: early childhood leadership, preschool leadership, Singapore

Abstract

Early childhood education in Singapore has undergone a transformation following multiple policy initiatives implemented over the last decade. Early childhood education centre leaders play an instrumental role in translating policy initiatives to on-the-ground practice and these changes have required leaders to continually adapt their operations to meet the demands and challenges which accompany such new initiatives.

The largely marketised early childhood sector, the progressive increase in the number of early childhood centres, the competition for student enrolment and the ongoing lack of qualified staff have compounded the challenges that centre leaders have to cope with, in addition to their daily operational work.

This presentation draws on data from a doctoral study that explores early childhood leadership perspectives during this period of pivotal change. It aims to share key findings about the perceptions of leadership and the tensions arising between policy and practice. Using Bowe, Ball, and Gold's (1992) trajectory model of policymaking as a theoretical framework, the study examines the "what" and "how" of leadership through the insights of various stakeholders. The results reinforce the understanding of early childhood leadership as contextually defined and contribute to existing literature by framing leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon. The study also indicates the emergence of a leadership community

striving to establish its professional identity amid increasing government influence in the industry. The findings highlight political, structural, social, and cultural factors impacting leadership challenges within Singapore's early childhood sector and, more importantly, shows the critical contribution of local research studies to the ongoing conceptualization of early childhood leadership on the global front.

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Leadership and the Educators' Role in Fostering Affirming Practices and Policies for Same-sex Parented Families in Australian Early Childhood Settings

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Keywords: leadership in inclusion, practitioner confidence and preparedness, inclusive practices and policies

Abstract

Limited research, especially in the Australian context, explores early childhood (EC) practitioners' perspectives on including same-sex parented families in their services. The legalisation of same-sex marriage in Australia marked a significant policy shift towards recognising diverse family structures. The revision of Australia's national framework for EC education, the Early Years Learning Framework V2.0, to explicitly affirm gender and diverse family structures, places renewed focus on the role of EC practitioners in creating environments inclusive of same-sex parented families. Therefore, it is timely to capture practitioners' voices to understand how they interpret and implement expectations to affirm and educate about same-sex parented families. Further gaps exist in research methods that triangulate perspectives from children, families, and practitioners in various positions within the same settings to provide a holistic understanding of inclusion for same-sex parented families.

This paper reports on a case study across three EC settings in New South Wales, selected for their diverse governance models (two council-operated, one privately owned) and varying capacity sizes (from fewer than 30 to over 100 children). All three centres are located in metropolitan areas and recognised for their commitment to quality, with two rated as exceeding the National Quality Standard, demonstrating practice that surpasses regulatory benchmarks, and one awarded an Excellent rating, which reflects sector-leading practice, innovation, and advocacy.

Focusing on the perspectives of EC practitioners in various positions, this study draws on semi-structured interviews, observational fieldwork, and policy/document analysis. A total of 19 practitioners participated in face-to-face interviews, including centre directors, educational leaders, and educators with different qualifications and at various career stages. Among them, four identified as gender and/or sexuality diverse. Data were analysed using an interactive theoretical framework. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory informs the analysis of how educators' practices are influenced not only by their personal beliefs and professional training but also by setting culture, policy environments, and broader societal discourses. Intersectionality supports a nuanced understanding of how educators' identities intersect in complex ways that affect attitudes and decision-making. Queer theory provides a critical lens to question taken-for-granted assumptions about family and gender norms in EC education.

Preliminary findings highlight key themes around educators' conceptualisations of affirming and educating about same-sex parented families with children, families and colleagues, their confidence and preparedness to do so, and the influence of leadership on shaping affirming setting cultures. The findings also reveal practitioners' personal and professional experiences, both individual and collaborative, and how these inform their practices and approaches to working with diverse families. This research highlights both policy and practice-based opportunities including the need for leadership-driven, whole-of-service approaches, sustained professional learning and critical reflection to build practitioner confidence and competence in creating inclusive EC education for diverse gender, sexuality and family structures.

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"It Takes Reflection at All Different Levels, Not Just People on the Floor": A Qualitative Exploration of Early Childhood Professionals' Experiences and Perspectives Towards Trauma-informed Early Childhood Organisations

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Keywords: Trauma, early childhood organisations, organisational change

Abstract

Trauma in early childhood is a significant public health concern. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) services play a critical role in identifying and responding to children impacted by trauma. However, little is known about early childhood professionals' experiences and needs relating to supporting trauma-impacted children. The aim of this qualitative study was to explore early childhood professionals' experiences of working with trauma-impacted children in ECEC, the barriers to adopting trauma-informed approaches, and the organisation-wide shift that is needed to embed them. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 early childhood educators, organisational leaders, and childhood

trauma consultants in Victoria, Australia. Thematic analyses revealed that early childhood professionals' perceived increasing prevalence of trauma in children attending ECEC. However, educators are generally unprepared and unsupported for this, and experience many workplace challenges leaving them feeling overwhelmed. This highlighted the need to support the professional development and well-being of early childhood educators. Meanwhile, the study identified systemic barriers impeding the implementation of trauma-informed approaches within ECEC. The findings also suggest that the collective efforts "starting from the top", with everyone engaged, coupled with cross-sector collaboration is needed for meaningful, trauma-informed organisational change within ECEC.

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Advancing Early Childhood Leadership through the PERMAH Model: Motivators, Challenges, and Insights

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Keywords: early childhood leadership, staff well-being, PERMAH model

Abstract

This study examines how pre-school leaders adopt the PERMAH model to enhance staff well-being and leadership efficacy, addressing a gap in research on well-being frameworks in Singapore's pre-schools. Developed by psychologist Martin Seligman, the PERMAH model is a widely recognized, evidence-based framework that enhances well-being in individuals and organizations. The PERMAH model comprises six key elements-Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Health. While some Singapore primary and secondary schools have incorporated this model under the guidance of school leaders, its application in pre-school leadership remains underexplored.

This study engaged 22 pre-school leaders from NTUC First Campus, Singapore's second-largest pre-school operator. These leaders participated in a three-month course introducing the PERMAH model to enhance well-being at personal, team, and child levels while strengthening leadership efficacy. A mixed-methods approach-combining surveys and in-depth interviews-was employed. Thematic analysis revealed key insights into the

motivators, challenges, and systemic factors that influence the adoption of the PERMAH model.

Findings indicate that Positive Emotions, Relationships, and Health are the most influential pillars in fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace. Participants demonstrated a strong awareness of the importance of physical and mental well-being, leading to an increase in expressing gratitude and strengthening relationships with colleagues. Key motivators for adopting PERMAH included improved staff and child well-being, a people-first leadership approach, and a supportive workplace environment. However, challenges such as perceptions of PERMAH as additional workload and time constraints hindered its implementation. Despite these barriers, most pre-school leaders recognized the model's relevance in their leadership practice. Other contributing factors to its successful adoption included leaders' character strengths, such as honesty and a people-first mindset, which prioritized individuals' well-being and development.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed: 1) Learner Ownership & Growth Mindset-Successful PERMAH adoption requires leaders to take ownership of their learning, cultivating a growth mindset and a willingness to embrace new frameworks. Consistent practice and regular reflection can increase its adoption in pre-schools; 2) A structural adaptation to incorporate the PERMAH model in the pre-school curriculum framework, to encourage experiential learning; 3) Leadership Support-Effective implementation requires active involvement from leadership. In this study, principals who actively participated in the three-month course played a crucial role in ensuring the successful adoption of the model; 4) Additional Staff Trainings-Providing PERMAH related electives with experiential experiences such as Mindfulness training reinforce and deepen learning and 5) A platform for community of practice to promote continual professional dialogues for learners' exchange of practice experiences after the course could further support pre-school leaders in sustaining well-being initiatives.

The findings and recommendations equip pre-school leaders with insights to foster educational environments where staff thrive, morale improves, and retention strengthens. These environments also prioritize children's psychological and emotional well-being, nurturing resilience and fostering a lifelong love for learning. By embedding positive

psychology principles into leadership practices, this research advances a well-being-centered approach to sustainable and effective early childhood leadership.

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Authoritarian Parenting Practices Mediated the Relation Between Mothers' Consideration of Future Consequences and Young Children's Adjustment

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Keywords: authoritarian parenting, mothers' consideration of future consequences, child adjustment

Abstract

The extent to which people consider the future outcomes of their current actions has been found to affect their behavioral choices. Nevertheless, little has been done to examine how parents' consideration of future consequences contributes to their authoritarian parenting practices, namely physical coercion, verbal hostility, and non-reasoning, punitive strategies, as well as children's adjustment outcomes. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, children may acquire the behavior from their parents through observational learning. When parents are physically and verbally aggressive and punitive without reason, their children may learn to be more aggressive and less prosocial. Drawing from theories and existing

findings, the present study investigated whether mothers' consideration of future consequences was associated with their young children's adjustment through authoritarian parenting practices. A total of 218 Chinese mothers were recruited from ten kindergartens in Hong Kong to complete a self-report questionnaire about their consideration and practices, as well as the adjustment of their young children (mean age = 3.89 years, SD = .34). R was used to conduct the path analysis, with parenting as a hypothesized mediator between mothers' consideration of future consequences and child adjustment outcomes, namely internalizing problems, externalizing problems, and prosocial behavior. Results indicated that the hypothesized path model fitted the data well, with $\chi 2(5) = 2.52$, $p = .77$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.04, RMSEA = .00, and SRMR = .02. Bootstrapping with 10,000 samples with replacement was conducted to investigate the mediation effects. By examining whether the 95% confidence interval included a zero, four indirect pathways were identified in this study. Firstly, mothers' consideration of future consequences was negatively associated with children's internalizing problems through mothers' verbal hostility. Secondly, mothers' consideration of future consequences had a direct negative link with children's externalizing problems, as well as indirect links via mothers' physical coercion and verbal hostility. Finally, mothers' consideration of future consequences was positively associated with children's prosocial behavior through a lower use of non-reasoning, punitive strategies. Consistent with the hypotheses, mothers' consideration of future consequences was negatively associated with the three authoritarian parenting practices. The findings also corroborated the literature by showing that authoritarian practices were related to child outcomes, including internalizing problems, externalizing problems, and prosocial behavior. The present findings imply that it is of imperative importance to help mothers think deeply about the potential negative consequences of authoritarian parenting practices and recognize their vital role in young children's adjustment outcomes. It is also important to engage mothers to think about the immediate and distant benefits of alternative and positive parenting practices to foster adaptive child development.

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Paternal Mindful Parenting Enhances Children's Social Emotional Competency: The Mediating Role of Father Involvement and Moderating Role of Marital Emotional Intimacy

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Keywords: paternal mindful parenting, social emotional competency, marital emotional intimacy

Abstract

As the core soft power in the 21st century, social emotional competency is the key for children to cope with the risks of apathetic emotional experience, imbalanced self-regulation, and social isolation, which they may face in the digital intelligence era. The Father-Child Activation Relationship Theory indicates that paternal parenting cognition and behavior plays a unique role in the development of children's social emotional competence, but the mechanism of action remains unclear. Based on the Family System Theory and the Mindful Parenting Model, this study intends to investigate the influencing mechanism of paternal mindful parenting, father involvement and marital emotional intimacy on children's social emotional competency. Using the snowball sampling method through questionnaires, 1600 fathers of children aged 3 to 6 years old in Guangdong Province were surveyed. The results showed that paternal mindful parenting had a significant positive predictive effect on children's social emotional competency, while father Involvement partially mediated the relationship between paternal mindful parenting and children's social emotional competency,

marital emotional Intimacy negatively moderated the first half of this mediation pathway. This study reveals the complex interaction between the family parent-child system and the husband-wife system in which positive Paternal Mindful Parenting nurtures father's own parenting motivation and self-efficacy, so that father is willing to increase his parenting involvement, thus helping the development of children's social emotional competency. In contrast, when couples are more emotionally intimate, the spillover effect reveals that Paternal Mindful Parenting has less influence on his involvement, because father's positive emotions in the marital intimate relationship can be directly transferred to father-child interactions, thus reducing the dependence on his own mindful parenting skills. This finding provides an empirical basis for optimizing the family's non-cognitive education model and improving the effectiveness of fathers'parenting. Based on the above findings, it is recommended that family educators should pay attention to the role of fathers in mindful parenting in the dual system of marriage and parenting; Strengthen the emotional connection between husband and wife as an educational alliance; And take measures such as mindful parenting exercises and the implementation of parenting tasks, so that fathers and mothers can work together to improve the ecology of family parenting and enhance the positive influence of the family on the development of children's social emotional competency.

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Fostering Decontextualized Language and Broader Development through A Culturally Adapted Parent Intervention

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Keywords: parent intervention, decontextualized language, language and cognitive development

Abstract

Decontextualized language (DL)—language that transcends the "here and now"—plays a vital role in shaping children's academic discourse, narrative development, and higher-order cognition, including episodic future thinking (EFT; Snow, 1983; Bailey, 2007; Atance & O'Neill, 2001). However, DL makes up only a small fraction of parent-child talk in early childhood (Demir et al., 2015), and few scalable interventions target this form of input. This study evaluated a brief, culturally adapted, digital training program designed to enhance parental DL use and its transfer effects on children's DL and EFT in Chinese families.

Forty-eight parent-child dyads (M child age = 58.8 months) from 10 provinces in Mainland China were randomly assigned to either a training or control group. Over four weeks, parents in the training group received a 15-minute video and four weekly infographics introducing five DL strategies: past- and future-oriented talk, causal explanations,

hypothetical reasoning, and open-ended questions. Parents recorded conversations with their child during routine activities (e.g., mealtime, bedtime, commutes), and children completed pre- and post-training EFT assessments adapted for online delivery.

Parents in the training group demonstrated significantly greater increases in decontextualized language (DL) use over time compared to the control group (Group × Time interaction: $b = 0.65$, $p < .05$; $d = 0.34$). Among the five trained strategies, future-oriented talk showed the largest gains ($M = 0.64$ utterances per minute), consistent with Confucian parenting values such as 未雨绸缪 ("prepare for a rainy day"), which emphasize preparing children for future responsibilities (Wei et al., 2020). Children of trained parents also exhibited significantly increased DL use (Group × Time: $b = 0.43$, $p < .05$; $d = 0.42$). Notably, intervention effects generalized beyond the targeted strategies: parents produced more untrained DL utterances ($b = 0.91$, $p < .05$), and children similarly showed gains in untrained DL features ($b = 0.29$, $p < .01$), reflecting broader conceptual and linguistic development. Although children in the training group had lower EFT scores at baseline, they showed marginal post-intervention improvement ($d = 0.54$), narrowing the performance gap with peers in the control group. Moreover, parental satisfaction was high ($M = 5.7/6$), with parents rating the program as clear, practical, and helpful for enhancing conversations.

This study makes three key contributions. First, it demonstrates the feasibility of a digital, self-paced, resource-efficient, culturally responsive parent intervention suitable for large-scale implementation. Second, it extends prior DL-focused research—primarily conducted in Western contexts (e.g., Leech et al., 2018)—by confirming its relevance and adaptability in broader sociolinguistic and cultural settings, specifically among Chinese families. Third, it links increased parental DL use to broader developmental outcomes, including emerging gains in children's EFT, underscoring the potential of DL-rich interactions to support early cognitive growth.

Grounded in sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), this research illustrates how culturally attuned interventions can promote children's language and cognition through everyday parent-child interactions. By drawing on culturally meaningful practices like future-oriented talk, this intervention offers a practical, inclusive model for enriching early language environments and supporting school

readiness.

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Parent-Child Closeness Moderates Between Future Economic Worries and Children's Positive Social Behavior

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Keywords: social behavior, parent-child relationships, economic worries

Abstract

In early years, typical examples of positive social behavior may include showing empathy, sharing toys, and helping others when in need (Goodman, 2001). Young children's learning of positive social behavior often occurs in the family context. However, the acquisition of social behavior is likely to be influenced by the perceived economic hardship within the family. According to the family stress model (FSM; Masarik & Conger, 2017), parents' perceptions of how the family is doing financially (e.g., future economic worries [FEW]) may translate into increased distress in parents and disruptive parenting practices,

which may have a downstream influence on individual family member's functioning (e.g., children's social behavior) over and above the objective family socioeconomic status (SES). Fortunately, potential protective factors may mitigate the negative family stress process (Masarik & Conger, 2017). For example, higher levels of relationship closeness between parents and the child may foster a sense of support and stability within the family, consequently counteracting the external economic stressors and mitigating the negative impact of FEW on children's social behavior. Conversely, low closeness relationships may fail to provide consistent support from parents and, as a result, children can be more vulnerable to the external economic stressors. Despite the hypothesized effect, the moderating role of parent-child closeness in the relationship between FEW and children's positive social behavior has yet to be explored in Hong Kong, a city characterized by high living costs and significant income inequality (Piketty & Yang, 2022). This study aims to address this gap.

Stratified and random sampling was used to recruit 1552 parents (Mage = 36.28 years, SD = 5.46) with children newly enrolled in nursery classes (K1) (46.7% girls; Mage = 44.42 months, SD = 5.07), along with 205 teachers (99% female; Mage = 31.32 years, SD = 7.60) from 107 Hong Kong kindergartens. Parents reported their future economic worries and their closeness with children, whereas teachers rated children's prosocial behavior to indicate positive social behavior in the school setting. Child age, sex, and family SES were included as covariates.

The structural equation model indicated a good model fit after considering the clustered nature of the data (i.e., children nested within teachers). The moderating effect of parent-child closeness was significant. Specifically, the negative association between parents' FEW and children's prosocial behavior was only significant when parent-child closeness was low rather than medium and high. The findings contribute to the literature by elucidating the mechanism from FEW to children's social behavior within a Hong Kong Chinese sample. In particular, parent-child closeness buffers the negative association between the two constructs during the first year of kindergarten. For families with lower parent-child closeness at the start of kindergarten, targeted efforts should focus on alleviating parents' worries about children's future financial situations (e.g., economic independence, career competitiveness,

and self-sufficiency) to mitigate the negative impact of FEW on children's social behavior. Alternatively, efforts can be made to enhance parent-child closeness among parents who experience higher FEW, so as to promote their children's social behavior upon entering kindergarten.

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Intergenerational Effects of Parental Childhood Neglect on Children's Behavioral Problems: The Mediating Roles of Punitive Responses and Parent-Child Conflict

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Keywords: parental childhood neglect, punitive responses, children's internalizing and externalizing problems

Abstract

Background: Children's behavioral problems have become a growing public health concern, affecting a significant number of school-aged children and leading to various negative outcomes. The impact of parents' adverse childhood experiences on children's behavioral problems has drawn significant attention. However, the mechanisms by which punitive parenting and parent-child conflict operate within dyadic family relationships to influence children's behavioral problems remain insufficiently understood. Objective: Grounded in attachment theory, this study explored the intergenerational effects of parental childhood neglect on children's internalizing and externalizing problems using dyadic family data. Participants and Methods: A six-month longitudinal study was conducted, collecting data from 837 paired families in Shanghai, China. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the data. Results: Parental punitive responses and parent-child conflict sequentially mediated the relationship between parental childhood neglect and children's

internalizing and externalizing problems. Maternal punitive responses significantly mediated the relationship between maternal childhood neglect and children's internalizing and externalizing problems, whereas paternal punitive responses did not exhibit a significant effect. Conclusions: This study supports the hypothesis of attachment theory regarding the long-term impact of childhood experiences on intergenerational development, expanding its application in the context of punitive parenting practices. The findings highlight the critical role of mothers in children's behavioral development and provide empirical evidence for intervention strategies aimed at addressing children's internalizing and externalizing problems.

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The Longitudinal Associations Between Parental Family and Friend Support Among Kindergarten Children: Mediation via Parental Social Functioning

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Keywords: child-parent relationship, family and friend support, parental social functioning

Abstract

Previous research has revealed that parents' perceived support from their social environments, including family members and friends, is vital for parental well-being and the quality of parent-child relationships. Yet few attempts have been made to investigate the unique associations of family and friend support with parent-child relationship qualities during early childhood and the possible underlying mechanism. Using two waves of questionnaire data from 949 Chinese parents (88% were mothers; 62% were aged 31-40 years) of kindergarten-aged children (47% were girls; the mean age at Time 1 was 4.80 years) living in Hong Kong, China, this study examined (a) whether family and friend support were uniquely associated with changes in parent-child closeness and conflict over 6 months and (b) whether these longitudinal associations were mediated by parental social functioning. Path analysis showed that both family and friend support were uniquely associated with higher levels of parental social functioning, which in turn were associated with increases in parent-child closeness and decreases in parent-child conflict. Findings underscored the

unique contributions of family versus friend support and the theoretical importance of considering parental well-being in understanding the link of social support with parent-child relationship qualities. Findings also highlighted the potential importance of targeting family and friend support and parental social functioning to promote positive parent-child relationships.

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Partnering with Parents to Create Gender Equity in Early Childhood and Beyond

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Keywords: parents, partnerships, gender

Abstract

This paper will report on small scale Australian pilot project that aims to learn more about what families think about young children and gender. It aims to better understand how families think gender influences their child's behaviours and opportunities, and what they need to support gender equity in their parenting choices. In doing so, we hope to provide valuable insights that will assist with developing and promoting gender equity programs for young children, and work collaboratively with their parents in the development and implementation of this. The project is undertaken in partnership between the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne and 54 Reasons an NGO that supports and advocates for children's rights.

One of the key drivers of gender-based violence is rigid gender norms, roles and identities. There is a large body of gender research in early childhood settings showing that by the age of 3 to 4 years children have developed rigid, binary, cisgendered norms about what it means to perform their gender identity. This has implications for their relationships and how they engage with education and play resources and social environments. The attitudes to gender developed in early childhood also have profound implications for attitudes and relationships later in life. In response, in Australia there has been a shift to early prevention programs to eliminate gender-based violence. Such programs like Respectful Relationships focus on school-age children, but there has been less attention to the early years.

One reason for this may be concerns about backlash from families and social media. Culture wars and anti-genderism plays out through social media at a local and global level with claims that gender education programs are a form of social engineering and destroy family values. However, little is known of what families believe and want for their children.

Feminist poststructuralist theories have been used to make visible the multiple gender discourses in operation that shape parents' views, their parenting practices and the questions and dilemmas they are constantly navigating as they raise their children. Emerging findings from individual interviews and focus groups highlight the need to build respectful partnerships with parents to support gender equity in early childhood and beyond. Parents shared the complexities they face within the family and externally in creating spaces for their children to have equal access to resources, relationships and storylines, highlighting their concerns about their children's safety and wellbeing as they explored gendered non-stereotypical materials and play outside their homes. Rather, than anti-gendered beliefs and behaviours parents shared their desire to know more about ways to support gender equity for their children and how to talk about this with family members, educators and communities. Parents discussed the ways early childhood services and social structures at times limited their capacity to model shared parenting responsibilities that pushed back on gendering roles and responsibilities of mothers and fathers to role model gender dynamic parenting and being.

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Singaporean Parents' Observations, Experiences, and Challenges: Findings from the Discovery Play Project

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Keywords: parent-child interactions, play, STEM

Abstract

Children's play within a problem-solving context can be engaging and bears a lot of learning possibilities. STEM activities, which are largely based on problem-solving scenarios, provide opportunities for children to ask questions, measure, evaluate, and reflect (Yalçın & Erden, 2021). It also offers opportunities for adult facilitation and interaction.

Parents' engagement in children's play is crucial. Studies have shown positive connections between parents' engagement in children's play and children's learning outcomes (Sheehan, et al., 2019). However, we have little knowledge about what parents' experiences during parent-child play are and how they interpret their children's learning. Learning about parents' experiences in parent-child play will help us understand how to better support parent-child interactions in a play context. Thus, in this study, we focus on parents' experience and their observations of children's play in a STEM play context

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' experiences in engaging in play with their child(ren) in order to better support parent-child interactions during play.

It aims to answer the following question: What are parents' experiences of parent-child interactive play in a problem-solving context?

The study was conducted in a local preschool in Singapore. Thirteen families voluntarily participated in this study. They were randomly assigned to four play stations which were set up in a multifunction room in the preschool. The families and their children were provided with loose parts materials, such as paper rolls, strings, newspapers, cups, etc. to solve a STEM problem using these materials. Led by facilitators, the families participated in a reflection session post-play activity in their groups. We collected data through observation during the play activity, reflection after the activity, and the focus group discussion. The focus group discussion was audio recorded, transcribed and analysed. Inductive codes such as challenges, interpretations/lens, and learning points, were used to generate categories and themes.

Findings showed that 1) parents of children of different ages tend to use different interaction strategies. Parents with younger children tend to use modelling more often than parents with older children. Parents with older children tend to use verbal cues more. 2) During the play, parents sometimes struggled with how and when to intervene. Some parents felt it is challenging to know when the "best" time is to intervene in children's play, and most of their prompts were ignored by children. 3) When describing children's plays, parents tend to use their children's personalities as a lens to interpret their children's behaviour and actions. By adopting this lens, parents may, to an extent, introduce bias to their interpretation. 4) Parents had the chance to closely observe their child's play. They shared their observation of children's learning, such as assessing, imagining, and creating. A father shared that he saw his child assess his own work, which "is not been done before."

Our findings showed that the STEM play activity has allowed sufficient opportunities for parents to reflect on interactive strategies and their children's learning. Implications for supporting parent-child interaction will be discussed based on the findings.

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Parental Burnout and Preschool Children's Emotional Regulation Based on Latent Profile Analysis: The Mediating Role of Mindful Parenting

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Keywords: parental burnout, emotional regulation, mindful parenting

Abstract

Parents' parenting state and behavior are the key factors affecting children's emotional regulation development. While an increasing number of studies have focused on the assessment and causes of parental burnout, relatively few have examined its potential consequences for children's emotional regulation. Additionally, most previous research has primarily employed variable-centered approaches, with limited attention to group heterogeneity in parental burnout. Addressing this gap, the study conducted a quantitative cross-sectional analysis to investigate the relationships among different parental burnout profiles, children's emotional regulation, and parents' mindful parenting.

This study used the Parental Burnout Assessment, the Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting questionnaire, and the Social-Emotional Assessment Measure to collect data from 567 parents of 3-6 years old children across four kindergartens in Jiangxi and Yunnan provinces, China, combined with the results of latent profile analysis of parental burnout to explore the mediating role of parents' mindful parenting in the relationship between different types of parental burnout and children's emotional regulation.

The results revealed that: (1) The parental burnout was divided into three latent profiles, namely, stable-adaptive type, conflicted-struggling type, and deep burnout type. Fathers were more likely to experience deep burnout, while mothers exhibited greater

variability across burnout profiles. (2) Among mothers, burnout profiles significantly influenced children's emotional regulation, with the stable-adaptive type being most conductive to children's emotional development. However, no significant differences were found among fathers' profiles. (3) Father's mindful parenting showed a suppressing effect on the relationship between overall burnout levels and children's emotional regulation. (4) Mother's mindful parenting mediated the relationship between deep burnout type and children's emotional regulation, but no significant mediation effect was observed in the conflicted-struggling type. These results provide new insights into the heterogeneity of parental burnout and its influencing mechanism on children's emotional regulation, providing a theoretical foundation for family education interventions.

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Exploring the Mechanisms Underlying the Relations between Parents' Failure Mindset and Young Children's Arithmetic Skills

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Keywords: parents' failure mindset, young children's arithmetic skills, mechanisms

Abstract

Early arithmetic skills are crucial for later mathematical achievement. It is thus of utmost importance to identify the predictors of young children's arithmetic skills. Parents' failure mindset, in principle, plays a vital role in children's learning. Nonetheless, to date, little is known regarding whether and how parents' failure mindset contributes to young children's arithmetic skills. Hence, the goal of the present study was to explore whether parents' failure mindset was linked with children's arithmetic skills through parents' achievement goal orientations toward mathematics learning and their use of shared thinking

strategies during home mathematics activities. Participants of the study included 182 kindergarten children in Hong Kong and their parents. The children were individually tested on their arithmetic skills (including both addition and subtraction), whereas the parents completed a questionnaire about their failure mindset, mastery and performance goal orientations toward mathematics learning, and home mathematics practice. Results of structural equation modeling revealed that parents' failure-is-enhancing mindset was positively associated with children's arithmetic skills through parents' mastery goal orientation first and then their use of sustained shared thinking strategies during home math activities. Parents' failure-is-enhancing mindset did not show any significant correlation with their performance goal orientation. Moreover, parents' performance goal orientation was neither a significant correlate of their use of sustained shared thinking strategies nor children's arithmetic skills. These results suggest that it is imperative to help parents appreciate the value of failure in children's learning and understand the importance of facilitating children's mastery of concepts during mathematics learning. It is also essential to equip parents with skills of how to interact with their young children effectively during home mathematics activities.

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Early Mathematics and Science Learning: A Tripartite Approach of KeySteps@JC Project

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Keywords: teacher education, early mathematics and science, community collaboration

Abstract

Early science learning is embedded in the learning area of "Nature and Living" in the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (Curriculum Development Council, 2017). A tripartite model on professional development among kindergarten teachers was implemented in the KeySteps@JC project by enhancing two proximal learning environments (home and school environment) and a less proximal but crucial environment (community) in 2021-22. Authentic professional learning is achieved when teachers have learned through experience, reflective action and socialising with other teachers and professionals in legitimising certain

knowledge, attitudes, and practices as the norm (Webster-Wright, 2009). The community hub has served as a platform to build a collaborative learning community for knowledge co-creation, professional exchange and teaching and learning lab for teachers as a sustainable workforce for quality early childhood education and care in Hong Kong. It aimed to build a collaborative learning community through knowledge transfer, joint accomplishment and quality stimulations in schools and community hubs by experts in domain knowledge (e.g. educators in early science), practicing experts (e.g., coaches or ECE educators), and practicing teachers (e.g., teachers in the Projects and other teachers).

Four schools plus two hubs with 19 seed teachers took part in a workshop series of professional development (PD) on early science, consisting of a total of 166 hours of PD (six hours of expert workshop, 40 hours hub-based training, 100 hours teacher-coach consultation and discussions, and 20 hours in-class implementation). The hubs served as a learning lab for teachers to discuss and try out new ideas. The average satisfaction rate of teaching contents was 97.7%; 98.5% were satisfied with the teaching materials; 98.7% were satisfied with their interaction with the experts. The teachers actively engaged in the discussions and within themselves gradually developed a constructive collaborative learning community.

Among teachers in the comprehensive support group who completed the evaluation questionnaire, 68 attended PD workshops only; 16 attended both PECERA coaching and PD workshops as seed teachers. Forty-five teachers did not participate in the programme. The Coaching & PD group reported decreases in teacher-centred, academic approach beliefs in contrast to the increases reported from within the remaining two groups. The Coaching & PD group reported the largest increases in their belief in free and spontaneous play, increases in teaching pre-academic skills and decreases in teacher-led activities in contrast. The research team concluded that having a series of workshops on a designated topic (i.e., early mathematics and early science) was more useful than a one-off workshop on a given topic. The community hubs have provided important resources to enable teachers to apply and practice play-based learning. The hubs offer an innovative live-feed system which creates the opportunity for teachers to observe the power of play in enabling children to learn. The real-life observations influence the teacher in acknowledging the advantages of play-based learning and to adopt the approach in their daily teaching.

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Foregrounding Teachers' Experiences in Their Professional Growth: Addressing Challenges in Early Childhood Education

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Keywords: teachers' professional growth, teachers experiences, phenomenology

Abstract

In the context of glocalization, it is crucial to understand the challenges teachers face when engaging in activities related to their professional growth. This understanding supports their participation in, and implementation of, new knowledge. However, there are few studies examining the challenges that early childhood teachers in Asian countries encounter when multiple educational initiatives from both foreign and local cultures are expected. We present findings from a post-intentional phenomenological study that explored the professional learning and development experiences of Chinese early childhood teachers.

Through analyzing semi-structured interviews with teachers, policy documents, observations of teachers' learning and teaching, and the lead author's research journal, we found teachers' professional learning and development were challenged by three issues. First, educational values underpinning professional learning initiatives sometimes lack consistency, leaving teachers confused about which initiatives to implement. Second, an expectation that teachers would integrate multiple educational initiatives simultaneously into existing

practices made implementation difficult. Third, power differences existing between leaders, professional learning providers, and teachers hindered teachers' proactive participation in professional learning and implementation. We argue that inconsistent educational values, concurrent implementation of multiple professional learning initiatives, and power differences in Chinese early childhood education make teachers' professional learning complex and challenging. Foregrounding teachers' experiences in their professional growth through understanding these complexities can help them respond to these challenges.

This presentation provides detailed examples of a group of teachers' experiences when they worked together to pursue new professional knowledge. It also demonstrates how a qualitative study supported the researcher to identify complex issues in the process of teachers' learning and professional growth.

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Play-Powered Pedagogy: Evaluating the Impact of CoolPlay Project on STEM Teaching Efficacy and Knowledge in Hong Kong Kindergarten Teachers

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Keywords: STEM knowledge, teaching efficacy, professional development

Abstract

Introduction

Early childhood STEM education increasingly forms the bedrock for developing future innovators. At this foundation lies a complex, symbiotic relationship between teachers' pedagogical efficacy and subject-specific knowledge. Teaching efficacy-educators' self-perceived capacity to execute successful teaching tasks-directly correlates with STEM knowledge proficiency. Research consistently demonstrates that robust STEM knowledge significantly predicts teaching efficacy, with knowledgeable educators displaying heightened confidence in STEM instruction (Canlas, 2023; Lee et al., 2018; Dong et al., 2018). This bolstered confidence manifests in classroom implementation, where efficacious teachers employ more innovative pedagogical strategies, fostering deeper engagement among young learners (Han et al., 2021; Fauth et al., 2019). Professional development interventions

targeting both knowledge and efficacy have demonstrated measurable improvements in teacher confidence and competence (Zhumabay et al., 2024; Kelley et al., 2020). Crucially, teachers' pedagogical beliefs and attitudes serve as powerful mediators between content knowledge and teaching efficacy, influencing their approach to STEM education (Chen et al., 2020; Decoito & Myszkal, 2018; Song & Zhou, 2020).

Research Gaps

Although a host of studies have explored the relationship between teachers' STEM knowledge and their teaching efficacy, little is known about that within the context of early childhood education, how professional development may influence teachers' STEM knowledge and their teaching efficacy. Moreover, prior research provided empirical evidence about teachers' STEM knowledge and their teaching efficacy in Western countries, limited research has been conducted in Chinese societies such as Hong Kong.

The CoolPlay Intervention

This study employs a pre-post survey design to evaluate the 'CoolPlay' initiative's effectiveness in enhancing kindergarten teachers' STEM teaching efficacy and knowledge. The year-long intervention adopts a multi-phase capacity-building model, training 294 seed teachers across Hong Kong through workshops, mentorship programmes, and school-based implementation support. Grounded in constructivist learning theories, the programme emphasises three core components: 1) development of low-cost, culturally relevant STEM teaching resources, 2) strategies for integrating exploratory learning into existing curricula, and 3) techniques for facilitating STEM discovery through purposeful play.

Preliminary Observations

Though post-test data collection remains forthcoming, initial pre-test assessments reveal intriguing patterns. Preliminary analyses indicate variable baseline levels of STEM teaching efficacy among participants, with teachers exhibiting greater confidence in when they studied STEM-related subjects in high school. Additionally, demographic analyses suggest there is no correlation between years of teaching experience and STEM knowledge nor with teaching efficacy-a paradox warranting further investigation.

Implications

This investigation carries substantial implications for policy and practice. The

findings will validate competency-based teacher development models as viable mechanisms for advancing early STEM education in high-density urban environments. The study's rigorous documentation already provides a replicable framework for scaling play-based STEM initiatives across diverse early childhood settings. As global emphasis on foundational STEM competencies intensifies, this evaluation offers timely insights into empowering educators as catalysts of scientific curiosity in young learners.

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From Knowledge Transmission to Practical Wisdom: Construction and Empirical Study of Kindergarten based Training Model for Young Teachers Based on Adaptive Expertise Theory

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Keywords: young teachers, adaptive expertise, professional development

Abstract

In the context of digital transformation, the professional development of preschool education teachers faces an urgent need to shift from knowledge transmission to adaptive practice. This study is based on the adaptive expertise theory framework and adopts a mixed research method. Through purposive sampling, a questionnaire survey was conducted on 40 young teachers in a provincial demonstration park, and semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted on 20 of them. Using NVivo12 software to conduct three-level coding analysis on interview texts, combined with thematic statistics of questionnaire data, it is revealed that there are three structural contradictions in the professional development of young teachers: insufficient internalization of educational concepts, lack of practical wisdom in situational response, and lack of metacognitive knowledge in reflective practice. The study also found a shift towards virtualization and a demand for collaboration in learning methods.

By integrating Wang Mei's four-dimensional adaptive expertise framework with Bransford's group expertise theory, a dynamic development model is constructed that includes conceptual innovation (value rationality reconstruction), behavioral adjustment (practical wisdom generation), metacognitive iteration (critical reflection cycle), and collaborative symbiosis (socio-cultural infiltration), forming a four in one park based training path of 'conceptual knowledge construction contextualized practice transformation systematic reflection enhancement socialized experience sharing'.

Empirical research has verified through three rounds of action research that this model exhibits a triple effect in promoting teacher professional development: theme analysis based on interview texts shows that most participants achieve deep construction of educational concepts; Teaching case tracking shows a significant improvement in situational decision-making ability; Through text mining of reflection logs, it was found that critical reflection dimensions are increasingly increasing. The study further reveals that its mechanism of action is reflected in the interactive effect of cognitive scaffolding construction and practical community empowerment, where the experience sharing network formed in the learning community becomes a key catalyst for professional growth.

This study not only validates the explanatory power of adaptive expertise theory in the field of preschool education, but also provides a new analytical framework for teacher professional development through the construction of a dynamic cycle model. It is suggested that future research can be expanded to model validation under different cultural backgrounds of kindergartens, as well as longitudinal tracking studies on training effectiveness.

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A Practical Study on the Application of Mathematical Language by Teachers in Kindergarten Group Mathematics Instruction

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Keywords: kindergarten mathematics, collective teaching activities, teachers' mathematical language

Abstract

The use of mathematical language for mathematical description is a crucial component of mathematics learning for preschool children. "Number" education should not only help young children understand the meaning of "numbers" but also enable them to express their thoughts using "numbers," transitioning from "mathematical actions" to "mathematical language" and from concrete representations to abstract generalization.

Research indicates that children's mathematical competence development is closely linked to teachers' input of mathematical language. However, in reality, many teachers face issues in their teaching activities:

1.Unclear mathematical concepts;

2.Poor mathematical logic;

3.Insufficient awareness of children's experiential levels.

These problems directly result in inadequate mathematical language use during teacher questioning, summarization, and interactions with children, leading to unsatisfactory teaching outcomes and unmet instructional goals.

This study, grounded in a one-year collaborative research initiative by the school's mathematics project team, employs case study analysis, observation, and interviews to

analyze and synthesize findings:

1.Key characteristics of effective mathematical language include:

1)Concise and precise language;

2)Contextual language that stimulates children's experiential learning;

3)Probing questions to deepen understanding.

2.Three strategies for optimizing mathematical language are proposed:

1)Prioritize quality over quantity: Adopt framework-based lesson planning to structure teaching content.

2)Focus on probing rather than simple inquiry: Design question sequences based on anticipated children's responses to encourage critical thinking.

3)Stimulate rather than narrate: Ensure teachers' language aims to elicit more mathematical expression from children, fostering active participation and conceptual development.

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Unpacking Kindergarten Teachers' Identities: The Interplay of Professional, Situational, and Personal Dimensions

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Keywords: teacher identities, symbolic interactionism, early childhood education

Abstract

Study Background:

The high turnover rate of kindergarten teachers, particularly in the post-pandemic era, has raised concerns about the stability and quality of early childhood education (ECE) systems worldwide. With the challenges posed by changing educational landscapes and increasing demands on teachers, it is crucial to reconsider teacher identities and the factors that influence identity formation and retention. Drawing on a Symbolic Interactionism (SI) perspective, this study explores how Chinese kindergarten teachers navigate their identities across personal, professional, and situational dimensions, shedding light on the emotional and contextual influences that define their roles.

Study Aims:

This research aims to: (1) uncover the personal, professional, and situational identities of Chinese kindergarten teachers; (2) examine how these identities are constructed through individual agency, societal expectations, and workplace interactions; and (3) highlight the implications of these identities for teacher retention, professional development, and

policy-making in ECE.

Method and Sample:

The study employed a qualitative approach, conducting observations and semi-structured interviews with 21 kindergarten teachers in Shanghai, China. Each classroom observation lasted around 2 hours, totaling 41 hours. Interviews lasted 40–90 minutes, yielding approximately 1,214 minutes of data. Content analysis was used to identify patterns in teachers' narratives, aligning findings with Vryan's three-dimensional identity framework (Vryan's framework is developed under an SI perspective) while allowing emergent themes to surface. Participants included teachers with diverse career stages, ages, and professional backgrounds.

Findings:

Data revealed rich insights into teachers' personal traits (e.g., resilience, contentment), professional roles (e.g., multitasking educator, caring teacher), and situational adaptations (e.g., crisis manager, customer service agent).

1. Personal Identities: Teachers' self-concepts were rooted in personality traits (e.g., enthusiasm, introversion), life goals (e.g., stability, contentment), and sociocultural backgrounds (e.g., family influence, career choice motivations). While relatively stable, these identities could evolve in response to internal motivations and external influences.

2. Professional Identities: Teachers negotiated roles such as "competent multitasker," "initiative educator," and "underestimated babysitter," reflecting societal expectations and personal values. The research found that in constructing their professional identities, teachers interpret these roles in their own ways and may emphasize certain aspects as central to their self-concept as kindergarten teachers.

3. Situational Identities: Teachers adapted fluidly to contexts, assuming roles like "crisis manager" or "enthusiastic participant." These identities were transient yet impactful, often tied to workplace hierarchies and cultural norms.

Implications:

The study makes three key contributions: First, it provides empirical validation of Vryan's three-dimensional identity framework in the context of early childhood education,

demonstrating its utility for understanding kindergarten teachers' complex identity construction. Second, it advances theoretical conceptualisations of professional identity by delineating role-specific variations unique to kindergarten teachers, thereby expanding existing definitions in the literature. Finally, through an SI perspective, the study offers novel insights into identity formation processes, showing how personal, professional, and situational identities intersect with emotional experiences in social interactions. These findings provide concrete guidance for educators and policymakers to support teachers' professional development and emotional well-being.

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The Relationship Among Character Strengths, Critical Thinking Disposition, and Intercultural Competence in Pre-Service Early Childhood Teachers

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Keywords: intercultural competence, character strengths, critical thinking disposition

Abstract

In response to the growing importance of preparing culturally responsive teachers, this study explores the relationships among pre-service early childhood teachers' character strengths, critical thinking disposition, and intercultural competence. As societies become increasingly diverse, early childhood teachers must be equipped not only with pedagogical knowledge but also with the personal dispositions needed to navigate intercultural contexts with empathy, openness, and reflection.

A total of 261 pre-service early childhood teachers in South Korea will participate in a self-report survey. Character strengths will be measured using the short version of the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), assessing positive traits such as fairness, social intelligence, and curiosity. Critical thinking disposition will be measured using the Critical Thinking Disposition Scale (CTDS), developed by Sosu (2013), which includes the subdimensions of critical openness and reflective skepticism. Intercultural competence will be assessed using a locally developed and validated scale that captures cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of interacting across cultures.

All instruments will be reviewed by early childhood education experts and pilot-tested with a separate group of pre-service early childhood teachers with similar backgrounds to the

main study participants. Data analysis will include descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and a three-step mediation analysis. The study aims to examine whether critical thinking disposition mediates the relationship between character strengths and intercultural competence, offering insights into how these personal attributes interact to influence readiness for culturally responsive teaching.

This research contributes to early childhood teacher education by emphasizing the need to integrate personal development with professional training. While teacher education programs often focus on content knowledge and instructional techniques, this study highlights the value of fostering internal dispositions such as empathy, open-mindedness, and critical reflection. By identifying key personal factors that support the development of intercultural competence, the study provides practical implications for curriculum development and teacher preparation programs in an increasingly diverse global society.

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Teachers' Insights Navigating the Tension Between Beliefs and Practices for Play-Based Pedagogy: A Narrative Analysis of Japanese ECEC Teachers

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Keywords: ECEC teacher, beliefs and practices, play-based pedagogy

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine kindergarten teachers' insights that lead to the integration of beliefs and practices that support the realization of child-centered, play-based pedagogy. This study explores this aim through an analysis of the stories of two Japanese kindergarten teachers who are in the process of professional growth.

Internationally, the importance of child-centered, play-based pedagogy has long been recognized. Its importance is also widely recognized by teachers globally. However, systematic reviews of previous research have pointed out that there is a gap between teachers' beliefs and practices in implementing play-based pedagogy (Bubikova-Moan, Næss, & Wollscheid, 2019; Pyle, & Danniels, 2017). In addition, factors that inhibit the integration of teachers' beliefs and practices have also been pointed out. The factors identified can be broadly divided into two categories. The first is external factors, such as pressures related to school readiness (Baker, 2014) and those related to parental demands (Fung, 2009). The second is internal factors, such as teachers' lack of professional competence to enable play-based pedagogy (Chen, 2001). These factors have been identified as being faced by many teachers internationally and have been positioned as important issues to be overcome in order to realize play-based pedagogy in early childhood education and care.

However, there are few studies that have examined how individual teachers can integrate their beliefs and practices to realize play-based education. In particular, play-based practices are driven by children's free ideas, as opposed to teacher-directed practices. Therefore, it will be necessary to carefully analyze the factors that bridge the gap between teachers' skills, beliefs, and practices that is unique to play-based pedagogy.

In this study, we conducted an interview survey to inquire about the stories of two Japanese kindergarten teachers (with 7 and 14 years of teaching experience) who came to practice play-based pedagogy. The teacher with 7 years of experience had wanted to implement play-based pedagogy from the beginning of her career, but it was not easy to do so. The teacher with 14 years of experience also recognized the appeal and importance of child-centered education during her career, but she faced several barriers to integrating her beliefs and practice. What supported the realization of play-based education for both teachers were multiple insights gained through dialogue with children and colleagues. Through these insights, the two teachers were able to flexibly change their approach to children. The purpose of this study is to analyze the important insights that teachers gain in the field, which support the integration of beliefs and practices surrounding this child-centered, play-based pedagogy.

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"How am I supposed to do this?": Exploring Preservice and In-Service Early Childhood Teachers' Experiences with STEM Teaching

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Keywords: early childhood, STEM education, professional development

Abstract

STEM education—which integrates science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to foster innovation—has been receiving increasing global attention. Research suggests that early exposure to STEM can have a lasting impact on children's cognitive development and academic success (Campbell et al., 2001). As a result, there is a growing demand for early childhood (EC) educators to be well-prepared to implement high-quality STEM learning experiences. While numerous studies have examined EC teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy, challenges, and practices related to STEM teaching—as well as the impact of professional development—much of this research has relied on descriptive or quantitative methods, often overlooking individual perspectives (Kazempour & Sadler, 2015). Moreover, limited attention has been given to the differences between preservice and in-service EC teachers' beliefs and practices in STEM education. Therefore, this qualitative study aims to explore EC teachers' attitudes, perceived challenges, and self-efficacy in STEM teaching, with a particular focus on comparing the experiences of preservice and in-service teachers. A total of 10 Hong Kong kindergarten teachers (5 preservice and 5 in-service) participated in the study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2014, 2019, 2020). Three themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Shaped by the Past: The Impact of STEM Learning and Teaching

Experiences, (2) Attitudes toward STEM: Acknowledged but Ambiguous, and (3) Navigating the Challenges: The Twofold Struggle of Teaching STEM. The findings highlight how teachers' prior learning and teaching experiences shape their current beliefs and practices in STEM education. Although both preservice and in-service teachers recognise the value and relevance of STEM in ECE, many hold unclear or unsettled understandings of what STEM entails in this context, contributing to confusion in implementation. Preservice teachers reported more personal challenges, such as a lack of pedagogical knowledge, while in-service teachers were primarily constrained by contextual factors, including time limitations and insufficient resources.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature by shedding light on the complexity of EC teachers' attitudes, perceived challenges, self-efficacy, and practices in STEM education. It also offers implications for designing more targeted and differentiated STEM professional development that addresses the distinct needs of preservice and in-service EC teachers.

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A Practical Study on the Construction of a Tiered Kindergarten-based Training System for Kindergarten Nurses Based on the Integration of Care and Education

Minxia Xu
(China Welfare Institute Nursery)

Keywords: kindergarten nurses, tiered kindergarten-based training, the integration of care and education

Abstract

With the continuous improvement of early childhood education quality, the professional development of kindergarten nurses has become a core issue of concern for kindergartens and childcare institutions. Based on a current situation survey of kindergarten-based training for kindergarten nurses in kindergartens and childcare institutions in Shanghai, this study explores how to enhance the integration of care and education capabilities of kindergarten nurses through systematic training, thereby optimizing their professional competence and practical skills. The survey randomly selected kindergartens and childcare institutions in Jing'an District, Yangpu District, and Pudong New Area of Shanghai, and collected a total of 301 valid questionnaires. The results show that the current kindergarten nurse team faces issues such as an older age structure, lower educational level, and insufficient awareness of the integration of care and education, which urgently require targeted training support.

The study constructed a tiered kindergarten-based training system, categorizing kindergarten nurses into the initial stage, development stage, and mature stage, and designed contents such as professional qualities, basic knowledge, professional skills, and management research for each stage. Through diversified training models including online and offline,

case analysis, and practical operation, the professional abilities of kindergarten nurses were enhanced. The training evaluation adopted a multi-dimensional feedback mechanism, covering training effectiveness, learning effectiveness, and application effectiveness, to ensure that the training content is closely combined with actual work.

Practical results show that tiered training has significantly improved the integration skills of care and education of kindergarten nurses, enhanced their professional identity and self-development awareness, and promoted the formation of a team learning community. In the future, it is necessary to further optimize training resources and feedback mechanisms to promote the professional development of the kindergarten nurse team and provide higher-quality care services for children.

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Profiling Analysis of Kindergarten Teachers' AIGC Video Educational Practice Types: A Cluster Study Based on Risk Perception, Teaching Behaviors, and Literacy Awareness

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Keywords: AIGC videos, kindergarten teachers, media literacy education

Abstract

With the advancement of AI-generated content (AIGC) technology, AIGC videos are increasingly being adopted in kindergarten education, making teachers' AIGC-based pedagogical practices an important research focus. Examining three dimensions—risk perception, instructional behaviors, and literacy awareness—this study surveyed 584 teachers in Shandong and Zhejiang provinces. Using K-means clustering, we identified four teacher profiles: proactive facilitators, procedure-dependent practitioners, routine conformists, and theory-practice gaps. Case interviews further revealed behavioral patterns and underlying mechanisms, informing recommendations for environmental optimization and differentiated support. The findings uncover practice variations among kindergarten teachers in AIGC contexts, enrich media literacy education research, and provide theoretical-practical insights for developing AIGC-era teacher support systems.

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Medicine or Poison? Critical Reflections on AI Participation in Early Childhood Education Quality Evaluation: Based on Stiegler's Philosophy of Technology

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Keywords: generative artificial intelligence, early childhood education quality evaluation, stiegler's philosophy of technology

Abstract

This study explores the relationship between generative artificial intelligence (AI) and the evaluation of early childhood education quality from the perspective of Bernard Stiegler's philosophy of technology. The paper first introduces Stiegler's core concepts, including the notion of tertiary retention, which emphasizes the role of technology in externalizing human memory; the framework of pharmacology, which asserts that technology embodies both toxic and therapeutic potentials; and the perspective of entropy and negentropy, which examines how technology impacts social systems.

Secondly, from a philosophical perspective, the paper analyzes the distinctive characteristics of generative AI. These are summarized in three aspects: (1) the intensification of both its pharmacological toxicity and curative potential; (2) the progressive emergence of reverse domestication of humans by technology; and (3) the increasing relevance of a non-deterministic stance on the human-technology relationship.

The paper then applies Stiegler's concept of exteriorization to trace the evolving stages of technological empowerment in the evaluation of early childhood education quality. Four stages are identified: (1) initial tool-based exteriorization prior to 1980, characterized by paper-based documentation; (2) the inscription stage (1980–2010), marked by the adoption of

computer technology for standardized recording; (3) cognitive agency exteriorization (2010–2020), during which intelligent systems began to support data analysis and decision-making; and (4) evaluative subject exteriorization (2020–present), where generative AI plays a substantive role in autonomous judgment, shifting the subjectivity of evaluation from human to machine.

Furthermore, the paper analyzes the dual nature of AI's empowerment in early childhood education quality evaluation. On the one hand, AI brings new vitality to the evaluation process, manifested in: (1) the potential for personalization and re-personalization; (2) enhanced systemic coordination within the educational ecology; and (3) optimization of evaluative elements and procedural refinement. On the other hand, the paper identifies two perspectives of potential toxicity: First, the inherent toxicity of technical systems, including algorithmic bias, overreliance on technology, and systemic vulnerabilities; Second, the external toxicity of the human-technology relationship, where excessive dependence on AI risks dehumanizing the evaluation process, weakening contextual and ethical sensitivity, and eroding the professional judgment and reflective capacity of evaluators.

Finally, the paper advocates for a culture of reflective evaluation to preserve educational diversity and calls for strengthening evaluators' metacognitive capacity, which is central in the AI era. Technology should serve as an assistive tool rather than a substitute for professional judgment. By promoting pharmacological thinking, grounded in care, the study proposes reshaping the temporal rhythm, relational dynamics, and participatory mechanisms of educational evaluation to safeguard its depth and humanistic orientation.

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Exploration and practice of 'digitally empowered' early childhood teachers' self-evaluation of their teaching and learning abilities

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Keywords: digital empowerment, early childhood teachers, self-evaluation skills

Abstract

High-quality early childhood care education requires a high-quality teaching force, and the ability to self-evaluate is a key element in the improvement of the quality of care education, a necessity for promoting the high-quality professional development of teachers, and the core of educational evaluation. However, early childhood teachers have the following problems in the process of self-evaluation of education and teaching: making generalized, vague and non-objective evaluations of their own educational behaviors based on subjective experiences and assumptions. Lack of evidence and references to form personalized teaching improvement measures. Neglecting the self-evaluation perspective of tracking one's own continuous professional growth trajectory.

The use of big data analysis in the self-evaluation of teachers' education and teaching can provide teachers with more accurate teaching strategies and methods, help teachers objectively carry out self-evaluation of education and teaching, form personalized teaching improvement measures based on evidence, expand the evaluation perspective to track their

own continuous professional growth trajectory, and improve the objectivity and accuracy of teachers' self-evaluation.

Recognizing the positive role of 'digital empowerment' in improving teachers' self-evaluation of education and teaching, Shanghai Pudong New Area Oriental Deschamps Kindergarten has carried out a through-training program to improve teachers' self-evaluation of education and teaching.

Recognizing the positive role of 'digital empowerment' in improving teachers' self-evaluation ability in education and teaching, the kindergarten has carried out the exploration and practice of teachers' self-evaluation ability in education and teaching through the class, grade and department. In classroom education and teaching, kindergartens encourage teachers to use 'microgrid review' to restore teacher-child interactions in a descriptive manner, identify problems in teacher-child interactions through the NVIVO symbolic coding system, and provide structured support for teachers' self-observation; in the education and teaching seminars of grade groups, kindergartens encourage teachers to use 'data aggregation' as a means to improve teachers' education and teaching self-assessment abilities. In grade-level teaching seminars, kindergartens encourage teachers to use 'Data Collection' to support teachers' self-evaluation, integrate line graphs, bar charts and other visual charts to promote accurate interpretation, analyze problems by combining data from pre-tests, mid-tests and post-tests or comparing and analyzing data from multiple independent samples to strengthen identification skills, and share their wisdom and experience through self-assessment and other assessment to stimulate teachers' self-reflection. In multi-campus education and teaching seminars, kindergarten teachers are encouraged to break the spatial dimension by using the 'co-curricular platform' to organize children in different campuses to carry out education and teaching interactions across the geographical limitations, to accumulate and analyze rich data on teacher-child interactions in the form of live broadcasts and video recordings, etc., to comprehensively examine the strengths and shortcomings of the teaching practice, to learn effective teaching methods and strategies, and to provide diversified references for self-diagnosis. It provides diversified references for self-diagnosis.

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Action Research on Teacher-Child Collaborative Picture Book Creation Based on Generative Artificial Intelligence

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Keywords: generative artificial intelligence, picture book creation, Co-creation between teachers and children

Abstract

As generative AI (GenAI) technology advances, the education sector is undergoing intelligent transformation. In early childhood education, GenAI offers new possibilities for innovative teaching. However, there is still a research gap in the construction of educational scenarios and developmental evaluation regarding teacher-child collaborative creation. Against the “AI + Education” backdrop, this study used “Chibuta” as a smart tool for teacher-child collaborative picture book creation and conducted three-round action research. The results showed that GenAI, by offering dynamic creation scaffolds and a multi-element material library, improved picture-book creation efficiency (by 14%) and work quality (by 40%). Children involved saw significant progress in language skills (listening and speaking up by 23.2%), artistic expression and creativity (creative behaviors up to 73.4%), innovation (ability to explore and innovate content up by 10%), emotion and affect (attainment up to 90%), and social skills (interaction ability up by 10%). Teacher-child interaction shifted from traditional “teacher-dominated, child-following” to “double-subject collaborative creation,”

forming a “propose idea → AI generates → joint evaluation → re-creation” spiral interaction chain. Teachers gradually transitioned from direct instructors to learning partners, technological mediators, and content discriminators. This study confirmed GenAI’s potential in early childhood education and offered important empirical evidence for innovation in early childhood education models in the intelligent era.

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Enhancing Early Childhood Education Assessment through Human-AI Collaboration: A Mixed-Methods Study of Deepseek-supported Assessment

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Keywords: human-AI collaboration, early childhood education assessment, teacher professional development

Abstract

Early childhood education assessment is essential not only for evaluating children's developmental progress but also for informing pedagogical strategies tailored to each child's unique needs. This stage critically influences the emergence of core competencies and neurocognitive architecture. However, empirical evidence indicates competency deficits that teachers lack sufficient theoretical knowledge and practical assessment skills, which may lead to evaluations being influenced by subjective biases rather than objective performance. Additionally, deficit-focused evaluations provide little actionable guidance for improvement. These limitations underscore the pressing need for innovative assessment frameworks that enhance objectivity and the situational adaptability.

To address these challenges, artificial intelligence (AI) integration—including ChatGPT and Deepseek—emerges as a transformative solution. This integration enables the development of adaptive and learner-centered evaluation architectures that synergize educators' contextual expertise with machine learning's pattern recognition capabilities (Gierl & Lai, 2013). Moreover, AI can help teachers overcome the limitations of traditional assessment, providing a more efficient and scalable approach to monitor student development.

To empirically validate this proposition, this mixed-methods study examines the effectiveness of Human-AI Collaborative Model (HACM) in enhancing assessment quality. Mann-Whitney U tests demonstrated HACM's statistically superior performance across three core dimensions: developmental focus (increased use of progressive goals and encouragement strategies, $p<0.001$), scientific objectivity (enhanced evidence-based and theory-grounded evaluations, $p<0.001$), and comprehensiveness (broader developmental domains and integration of mixed methods, $p<0.001$). Qualitative interviews highlighted HACM's efficiency gains (automated data processing, standardized criteria) and improved objectivity. Teachers also praised its user-friendly interface and scalability. However, there were concerns about AI-generated feedback's lack of emotional warmth, the potential over-reliance on AI undermining reflective teaching practices, and the inapplicability of some AI-generated suggestions to real teaching contexts. Based on these findings, the study recommends HACM as a transformative tool in early childhood education assessment and proposes three guiding principles: human-centered priority, complementary function, and algorithmic transparency. The results emphasize the importance of balancing AI's analytical power with teachers' contextual expertise to optimize developmental outcomes while mitigating the risks of professional degradation.

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Implementation of AEWake Model Integrating Islamic Character, Executive Function, and Computational Thinking

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Keywords: islamic character, computational thinking, executive function

Abstract

The increasing complexity of the digital era demands changes in early childhood education that not only emphasize character building, but also equip children with cognitive and problem-solving skills such as computational thinking. This study explores the application of the AEWake (Active Executive Wake-Up) model, an integrative educational approach that uses recycled educational puzzles designed to develop Islamic character, executive function, and computational thinking in early childhood. Based on the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) model, this study involved 120 children, their parents, and educators from PAUD centers in Jakarta, Depok, Pasuruan, and Bogor. The AEWake model combines Islamic morning routines (e.g., waking up, performing ablution, praying) with cognitive tasks embedded in puzzle-based activities, which aim to improve self-regulation, working memory, cognitive flexibility, and algorithmic reasoning that are characteristic of computational thinking. Each activity is structured to support children's ability to break down tasks, recognize patterns, and carry out spiritual and daily responsibilities step by step—key features in character development and early problem-solving skills.

Research findings revealed that children demonstrated significant improvements in executive function, particularly in delayed gratification and goal-directed behavior. At the same time, observable growth was seen in their Islamic character, including consistent performance of morning prayers and development of spiritual disciplines, as guided by an Islamic educational framework. The use of recycled materials not only promotes environmental awareness but also aligns with the values of ecological literacy and sustainability in education. Additionally, the puzzle-based design requires children to think logically and solve pattern-based problems, supporting the emergence of computational thinking skills at an early stage. Teachers and parents noted that AEWake activities promote early algorithmic thinking while maintaining religious meaning, fostering an integrated mindset that aligns with faith and 21st-century skills.

From a policy perspective, AEWake supports several indicators of the National Early Childhood Education Standards, particularly in areas related to religious values, cognitive development, and environmental responsibility. AEWake also responds to the global call to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with character education. The study contributes a new culturally grounded educational model that bridges spiritual values, executive function, and computational thinking, while embracing environmentally conscious practices. The AEWake model proves to be a responsive, innovative, and integrative solution for holistic early childhood education in the context of Islamic and digital childcare.

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The Effects of Digital Media-Based Programs on Social-Emotional and Language Development in Korean Children Aged 5-7: A Meta-Analysis

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Keywords: meta-analysis, digital media-based program, social-emotional and language development

Abstract

This study aims to comprehensively analyze the effects of digital media-based programs on the social-emotional and language development of children aged 5-7 in Korea. With the advent of the “Digital Sophistication Era”, digital environments have become an essential part of life for children growing up as digital natives. Globally, there is increasing emphasis on educational interventions to enhance digital competencies in early childhood.

The increasing use of digital media in educational contexts has highlighted its interactive nature and developmental potential. Numerous studies have demonstrated its efficacy as a tool for stimulating development. These findings challenge the traditional view that early childhood development occurs solely through interaction with adults or peers. Instead, digital media promotes autonomous exploration and emotional engagement, positively influencing development. This underscores the growing need for active integration of digital media in early childhood education.

Most existing studies in Korea have focused on single-case approaches, resulting in limited generalizability. To address this gap, the present study conducts a meta-analysis to

empirically examine the impact of digital media-based programs on the development of young children. The study aims to provide practical educational guidelines for effective program design and implementation in early childhood settings, and to establish an evidence base for informed policy-making.

The analysis selected 45 Korea publications-dissertations and journal articles-issued between 2013, when digital media research in early childhood education gained momentum through the R-learning initiative, and September 2024. Considering participant groups and variables, 65 cases were included in the final analysis. The analysis included an examination of the overall effect size, as well as an investigation of the effect sizes associated with moderator variables such as the type of digital media (informational, video-based informational, manipulative for cognitive expansion, multisensory/interactive, and complex media), children's age, and duration and frequency of intervention.

Results indicated that digital media-based programs produced statistically significant positive effects on both social-emotional and language development. For social-emotional development, informational, multisensory/interactive, and complex media were especially effective. Strongest effects were found among 5-7-year-olds, with programs lasting 6-10 weeks and delivered 16-20 times.

Similarly, in language development, all five media types showed significant effects. Optimal outcomes occurred for 5-7-year-olds participating in programs conducted over 6-10 weeks with 11-15 sessions.

These findings provide empirical evidence supporting the positive impact of digital media-based programs on young children's development in the era of pervasive and sophisticated digital media. They offer foundational data for program planning in early childhood education. By systematically analyzing effects across media types, this study presents academic and practical implications for selecting and applying developmentally appropriate media for young children.

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Empowering In- and Out-of-Kindergarten Experiential Activities Through Digitalization: Development of the Hong Jiao Ya Lightweight Parent-Child Interaction Online Handbook

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Keywords: digitalization, Hong Jiao Ya, in-and out-of-kindergarten experiential activities

Abstract

In the era of digital transformation, new platforms and opportunities have emerged to support collaborative education among families, kindergartens, and communities. Addressing the issue of insufficient precision in educational services within this tri-party cooperation, this study re-examines the authentic experiences and developmental needs of young children.

A large-scale survey titled Happy Childhood of Hongkou Children was conducted among educators and parents across the district, collecting 7070 parent questionnaires and 865 teacher questionnaires. In addition, resource inventory tables from 44 kindergartens on “in- and out-of-kindergarten experiential activities” were collected and analyzed. Based on these findings, an 18-site “Childhood Parent-Child Map” was created to enrich children’s early experiences. Using digital tools, the research have combined hands-on, sensory and experiential learning with activities inside and outside the kindergarten to produce the Hong Jiao Ya Lightweight Parent-Child Interaction Handbook.

This resource enhances play-based teaching and interaction competencies for both teachers and parents, fostering mutual growth among children, families, and educators. The online handbook not only synthesizes resources across homes, kindergartens and communities, but also facilitates information sharing and collaborative engagement through digital empowerment. It represents an innovative approach to co-education and offers strong support for building a high-quality early childhood education system.

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Associations between problematic media use and Chinese preschool children's working memory: Evidence from fNIRS

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Keywords: fnirs, problematic media use, working memory

Abstract

Background

With the rapid advancement of digital technology and the rise of short video platforms, young children are increasingly exposed to digital media. While this exposure shapes their daily experiences, it also raises concerns about cognitive development. Problematic media use (PMU) has been linked to behavioral challenges in young children, yet little research has examined its neural impact—particularly on working memory, a key component of early cognitive development.

Objectives

This study aims to investigate the relationship between PMU and preschool children's working memory using both behavioral assessments and neuroimaging techniques. Specifically, we examine (1) whether PMU negatively affects working memory performance,

(2) how PMU influences brain activation patterns during working memory tasks, and (3) whether these effects differ by gender.

Methods

A total of 517 preschool children (260 boys, 257 girls; Mage = 5.57, SD = 0.73) from a kindergarten in Jinan, Shandong Province, participated in a behavioral study assessing PMU and working memory via standardized questionnaires. Based on PMU scores, 62 children were selected for fNIRS testing (high PMU group: n = 32, Mage = 4.53 ± 0.67; low PMU group: n = 30, Mage = 4.67 ± 0.66). While engaging in a working memory task ("Parking Game"), their brain activation was measured using a functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) system.

Findings

Behavioral analysis revealed that (1) children with higher PMU levels performed significantly worse on working memory tasks, (2) PMU negatively correlated with working memory performance, and (3) PMU was a significant predictor of working memory deficits. Neuroimaging data further showed that (1) children with high PMU exhibited lower accuracy and longer reaction times across position, color, and dual-task conditions, (2) boys and girls displayed different brain activation patterns in response to PMU, and (3) the impact of PMU on brain function varied by gender.

Conclusion and Implications

Excessive media exposure appears to hinder preschool children's cognitive development by negatively affecting both their behavior and brain function related to working memory. Additionally, gender differences in brain activation suggest that boys and girls may experience different cognitive impacts from PMU, warranting further investigation. These findings provide valuable insights for early childhood education policies and interventions aimed at promoting healthy digital media habits among young children.

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Digital devices and Child Development: Cultural-Historical Analyses

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Keywords: screen time, digital games, early childhood development

Abstract

Today children from early preschool age spend an increasing amount of time interacting with screens—ranging from 2-3 hours daily in preschool years to over 8 hours by adolescence (Rideout & Robb, 2020; Soldatova et al., 2022). The increasing presence of digital technologies in children's lives demands a nuanced understanding of their developmental implications. This study applies a cultural-historical perspective, rooted in the works of L.S.Vygotsky, to investigate how various patterns of digital device use relate to psychological development in early childhood.

From the cultural-historical perspective, the developmental effect of digital devices depends not solely on duration of use, but more critically on the way of use. Vygotsky emphasized that cultural forms of behavior develop in contrast to natural forms through acquisition of cultural tools (Vygotsky, 1983). The cultural use of tools— setting calendar

reminders, communicating via messaging apps, or navigating with digital maps—requires social mediation and adult guidance. In these cases of a "cultural" way of use, digital devices serve as psychological tools for regulating one's own or others' behavior, which leads to the development of higher mental functions. In contrast, in the case of a "natural" way of use, digital devices are employed for entertainment and pleasure: playing video games or watching cartoons. "Natural" way of use often devoid of adult scaffolding or conscious goal setting.

In this study 417 children aged 6-7 years participated in a structured interview and assessment of self-regulation (NEPSY-II subtests), imagination ("Complete the drawing") and physical development ("Movement Assessment Battery for Children-2"), anthropometric indicators (e.g circumferential measurements; epiphyseal widths of the elbow and knee; fat skinfold thickness on the back, forearm, abdomen, and shoulder). As a part of the interview children were asked, "What do you usually use digital devices for?". Results showed that 63% of children used devices solely for entertainment, 17% for both entertainment and as psychological tools, and only 4% used them exclusively as psychological tools. Notably, children who reported using devices solely as psychological tools scored higher on verbal working memory and naming tasks, suggesting a link between meaningful digital usage and cognitive development.

Imagination flexibility was higher among children who played digital games with siblings or peers rather than alone. These results indicate the importance of peer interaction in fostering creative development, consistent with Vygotsky's emphasis on the social nature of cognitive development.

Of the various digital games examined (reaction-based games, logic games, strategy games, simulations etc.), only logic games showed significant associations with imagination development. Children who played logic games demonstrated higher elaboration in their drawings compared to peers who did not engage in such games. Finally, passive screen time showed a negative correlation with fine motor skills and an increase in fat skinfold thickness on the shin, shoulder, and abdomen for boys.

Overall, the study underscores that screen time is not inherently harmful or beneficial.

Its developmental impact depends on how digital devices are integrated into children's cultural context, the nature of adult mediation, and the balance between entertainment and purposeful activity.

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An Analysis of Factors Influencing 5-Year-Old Children' s Generation of Questions During Exploratory Scientific Play with Different Types of Strings

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Keywords: generation of 'questions', 5-year-old children, exploratory scientific play

Abstract

Presenting a surprising phenomenon is crucial, as it triggers children's generation of questions (Yamaguchi & Kobayashi, 2018). The purpose of this study is to investigate how 5-year-old children respond to a surprising phenomenon during exploratory scientific play with different types of strings.

Thirty-three five-year-old children were selected as participants by their homeroom teachers, comprising 16 girls and 17 boys. Their ages ranged from 5 years and 1 month to 5 years and 10 months, with an average age of approximately 5 years and 5 months. In this investigation, a preschool teacher accompanied each child into a small room. An experimenter then presented the child with a panel fitted with two types of strings: an elastic string (which could stretch) and a cloth string (which was relatively inelastic).

In the first stage of the investigation, the child was asked to predict which string would be easier to stretch. After making a prediction, the child pulled each string individually to test their assumption. The experimenter then asked, "Which of the two strings surprised you when you pulled it, and why?"

In the second stage, the string that did not surprise the child was replaced with a paper string. The paper string was inelastic and designed to tear when pulled-an outcome intended to be surprising for young children. The child was again asked to predict which string would

be easier to stretch and then pulled both strings. Afterward, the experimenter asked once more, “Which of the two strings surprised you when you pulled it, and why? ”

The main results of this study were as follows.

(1) The first investigation showed a significant difference between the number of children who pulled an elastic string and those who pulled other types of strings ($p = 0.0068$, $\alpha = .05$, $p < .025$). Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the number of children for whom the string they expected to stretch was the same as the one that surprised them when pulled, compared to those for whom it was different ($p = 0.2434$, $\alpha = .10$, n.s.).

(2) The second investigation showed a significant difference between the number of children who pulled a paper string and those who pulled other types of strings ($p = 0.0000$, $\alpha = .01$, ** $p < .005$). Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the number of children for whom the string they expected to stretch was the same as the one that surprised them when pulled, compared to those for whom it was different ($p = 0.0551$, $\alpha = .10$, n.s.).

In the first investigation, many 5-year-old children recognized that strings have the characteristic of being stretchable, despite differences in how much they stretch. Therefore, in the second investigation, there was a significant difference between the number of children who were surprised when pulling a paper string and those who pulled other types of strings, as they witnessed the surprising phenomenon: “The paper string breaks.” I concluded that children are capable of accurately recognizing surprising phenomena.

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From "emotional volcanoes" to "emotional masters": A Practical Study on Early Childhood Emotional Education Based on "weekend emotion diaries"

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Keywords: emotional education, early childhood education, peer relationships

Abstract

Emotional recognition and expression are crucial learning areas for preschool children. Due to polarized parental approaches—either suppressing or indulging emotions—many 5-6-year-olds struggle with emotional identification and expression, becoming "emotional volcanoes" prone to conflicts with peers in class activities. To address this problem, we introduced the "Weekend Emotion Diaries" as a tool to help children develop emotional recognition and self-management skills, fostering their emotional health and peer relationships.

The "Weekend Emotion Diaries" allow children to record a memorable event each week in their own way, using colors to label their emotional states. Through peer sharing and discussions, children gradually perceive the diversity and dynamics of emotions. We established an "Emotion Theater," guiding children to explore emotional regulation strategies through role-playing. Initially, children often exhibited emotional outbursts, crying, or silence, but through consistent practice, they learned to express emotions verbally and even actively applied strategies like "Let's take a deep breath together" or "Why were you upset just now?" during conflicts, truly becoming "emotional masters." Simultaneously, parents began reflecting on their own emotional management, adopting more positive communication

methods with their children, creating a collaborative home-school partnership.

The study found that the “Weekend Emotion Diaries” empowered children to become “masters” of their emotions, actively learning to regulate feelings and understand others’, by which a more empathetic and cooperative group culture has been fostered. In addition, it also transformed parents’ approaches to emotional education. These “emotional masters” will grow into a new generation of citizens promoting understanding and harmony in the future world.

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Twenty-five years' Development of Social and Emotional Learning for Ages 0-12: Using Structural Topic Modeling Based Bibliometrics Analysis

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Keywords: social and emotional learning, bibliometric analysis, review

Abstract

Background: Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a soft skill necessary for students' emotional growth and social well-being. SEL has been linked with improving social and emotional skills and positively impacting students' behaviour and academic achievement. Even though SEL has been promoted in and out of schools over the past two decades, the development of outcome research on SEL in Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) countries and non-WEIRD has yet to be analyzed. This study employed structural topic modeling based bibliometrics analysis to identify the status of SEL research for ages 0-12 and offer an overview of research hotspots and trends spanning from 2000 to 2024 to understand future social and emotional development research better.

Method: This study investigated the research studies in SEL from a bibliometric perspective. The following factors: (a) number and trend of publications, (b) primary publication sources (c) authors' countries/region and affiliations, (d) highly cited articles, (e) topics identification, proportion and annual trend, and (f) differences in topics of regional concern were analyzed based on Scopus and Web of Science. A total of 3925 research articles published in journals were used to analyse the trends of research topics in SEL,

social-emotional development, and social-emotional competence.

Results: The results showed that the research on SEL has grown steadily. Although this research topic began in WEIRD countries, the number of research publications generated in non-WEIRD countries is rising. These findings identified eighteen distinct topics, ranked in descending order of proportions: conceptual frameworks, prosocial skills, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, infant and toddler development, family dynamics, behavioral interventions, socioeconomic disadvantage, assessment, preschool readiness, support students with special needs, academic skills, teacher training support, art and music therapy, teacher roles and teaching practice, bullying behavior, welfare and care services, neurodevelopmental disorders, and language skills. Eastern Asian countries had the highest contribution to family dynamics and the impact of socioeconomic status on social-emotional development. In contrast, the European countries focused more on the social and emotional needs of students with special needs. Harvard University ranked first in researching SEL and social-emotional development among the top 15 institutions. International collaboration also appeared to be limited.

Conclusion: Research on SEL is on the rise in both WEIRD and non-WEIRD countries, making a good share and flourishing. Research hotspots, trends, and key players have been identified, suggesting that future research is needed to help researchers and policymakers improve the effects of SEL programs and consider future research in social-emotional development.

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A Cross-Case Study of Children's School Readiness Priorities in Mainland China

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Keywords: microsystem, kindergarten and primary students, proximal processes

Abstract

The transition from early childhood education to formal education is a process that occurs over time and signifies a crucial milestone in children's early life. Children transition to school with a set of beliefs, ideas and skills known as "funds of knowledge" (Barblett et al., 2023; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014) accumulated through everyday interactions with influential people and places in their immediate environments over several years. Supporting children's transitions from kindergarten to primary school is a government priority in Mainland China as it affects millions of children each year. Yet, seldom have children's perspectives on this process been elicited.

This qualitative cross-case study examined how five Chinese children perceived school readiness priorities shortly before and shortly after starting school. Findings indicated that at both time points, children prioritised practical considerations and the importance of academic school readiness. However, after starting school, relationships with peers emerged as an additional priority. Within the context of starting school, the absence of children's voices may restrict the opportunities for dynamic and supportive reciprocity within the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This research makes an important contribution to existing knowledge through its contemporaneous

investigation of children's priorities and perceptions while they undertook a milestone event that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic in Mainland China and draws attention to the profound need for children's perspectives to be elicited as the persons within the PPCT model when making decisions on transition-related matters related to them. The reported findings provide a foundation for caregivers and teachers to proactively address children's concerns and priorities, thus equipping stakeholders to employ tailor-made practices to promote positive transitions for children.

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From Pedagogical Content Knowledge to Instructional Practice: Investigating the Role of Teacher-Child Interactions in Early Childhood Mathematics Education

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Keywords: quality of early childhood education, teacher-child interactions, pedagogical content knowledge

Abstract

Early childhood mathematics education has gained increasing attention for its far-reaching impact on children's cognitive development and long-term academic success. High-quality mathematics instruction during the early years depends on teacher-child interactions and teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). This study examines the relationships among interactional quality, PCK and instructional quality in early maths, with a particular focus on whether the teacher-child interactions and PCK predict instructional quality.

To assess teachers' instructional and interactional quality, classroom quality rating scales were employed,while their knowledge was evaluated using the Pedagogical Content Knowledge-Early Mathematics survey questionnaire. A total of 118 classroom teachers were recruited from 28 kindergartens across six districts in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. The sample included kindergartens from four urban and two suburban districts, with 59 teachers teaching K2 children (4-5 years old) and 59 teaching K3 children (5-6 years old). Regarding early maths teaching quality, teachers achieved scores that were above the minimum standard but below the good level for both instructional and interactional quality. Survey responses indicated that teachers possessed a basic understanding across the three

dimensions of pedagogical content knowledge. Further analysis revealed three distinct teacher profiles for both PCK and teaching quality, which were categorised as lower-, middle-, and higher-level at the individual teacher level.

A multilevel model revealed that significant variance in instructional quality was explained by differences between kindergartens (ICC = 0.43). Teacher-child interaction was found to be a strong predictor of instructional quality in early mathematics teaching (β=0.55***), whereas PCK showed no direct effect on instructional quality

(β=0.03, $p > 0.05$). However, teacher-child interactions mediated the relationship between PCK and instructional quality (β=0.44***), with the mediation effect accounting for 89.48% of the total effect of PCK on instructional quality. These findings underscore the critical role of teacher-child interactions in translating teachers' pedagogical content knowledge into effective instructional practices. Building on these quantitative results, the study sought to uncover the dynamics through which teacher-child interactions make PCK visible in practice. To achieve this, an ethnomethodological conversation analysis approach was employed, which offered a nuanced understanding of how knowledge-in-interaction is manifested in early mathematics teaching.

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Trajectories of Co-occurring Problem Behaviors in Chinese Preschool Children: The Early Antecedents and Associations with Child Outcomes

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Keywords: externalizing and internalizing problems, joint developmental trajectories, Chinese preschool children

Abstract

This study investigates the developmental trajectories of co-occurring internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems in Chinese preschool children, with their early antecedents and longitudinal outcomes. Using a longitudinal design, data were collected from 502 children and their parents in Guangdong Province, China, across three time points (T1: May 2014; T2: May 2015; T3: November 2015). Latent Class Growth Analysis (LCGA) revealed four distinct trajectories: High problem-stable, High problem-decreasing, Low-risk, and Problem-increasing. Authoritative parenting and children's sociability were identified as protective factors, while emotional instability served as a significant risk factor for behavioral problems. Children in the Problem-increasing group significantly associated with poorer math performance and lower teacher-child closeness compared to those in the Low-risk group. These findings underscore the critical need for early interventions focused on emotion regulation and social skills development to prevent the escalation of behavioral problems and

foster healthy development. This study also highlights the importance of cultural adaptability to understanding and addressing behavioral challenges in early childhood.

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Exploring Children's Perspectives of Pedagogy of Anji Play

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Keywords: children's perspectives, pedagogy of Anji Play, mosaic approach

Abstract

Anji Play is a philosophy and approach to early childhood education developed over the past two decades by Ms. Cheng Xueqin for the public early childhood programs of Anji County, Zhejiang Province, China. It emphasizes children's free play, advocates for pedagogy generated from play, and maximizes children's learning and development through observation, sharing, and interpretation. Despite the practical advancements Anji Play has made in empowering children, critical concerns remain at the research level. Most of researches on Anji Play remain rooted in theoretical discussions and experiential generalizations, with a notable lack of empirical evidence, particularly from the perspective of children. As the core participants and primary beneficiaries of Anji Play, children's authentic experiences and voices are frequently marginalized or underrepresented in current study.

This study used a qualitative approach to explore both children's experiences and teachers' perceptions of Pedagogy of Anji Play, employing the Mosaic approach for data collection and thematic analysis across six classes among two kindergartens in Anji County.

The findings revealed that children's experiences in the Pedagogy of Anji Play were characterized by following features: Playful Engagement, where children gain adventurous and immersive experiences, leading to joy. Reflective Play, reflection helps children elevate their play experiences into transformative learning. Play occurs within a warm relational networking where positive interactions between adults and children, among peers, and the silent support of the kindergarten environment construct a relationship-centered learning ecosystem. However, power dynamics within play also shape children's self-expression and behaviors. Teachers' recognition and feedback constitute a subtle yet pervasive mechanism of power, which can inadvertently influence children's interests and their capacity for autonomous choice.

The study highlights the importance of listening to children's voices through diverse forms of expression, recognizing that children communicate meaningfully beyond verbal language. Expanding children's experiences also requires drawing from their own knowledge funds. Moreover, the study underscores the need for pedagogy to be continuously renewed in response to both children development and the evolving landscape of educational reform.

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Primary School Teachers' Voices on Children's Continuous Experience in the Transition to School: Perspectives, Practices, Challenges and Needs

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Keywords: transition to school, children's experience, continuity

Abstract

Children's experience constitute a critical intrinsic pathway during the transition from kindergarten to primary school. As pivotal stakeholders in the transitional process, teachers' voices on children's experiential development should be heard. Using a sample of 78 primary school teachers in Shanghai, this qualitative study analyzes teachers' perspectives and practices on children's continuous experience in the transition to school. The results show that divergent perspectives exist between the idealized and actual foundations of children's experiential readiness during the transition phase. Teachers' transitional practices exhibit inherent complexity, influenced by factors such as their professional development trajectories and communication dynamics with other stakeholders. However, primary school teachers face multifaceted challenges in depth and breadth of cognition regarding children's experience preparedness for formal curricula, limited familiarity with kindergarten pedagogical frameworks and gaps in parent-teacher collaboration to sustain developmental continuity, which constraints necessitate targeted support measures. This study highlights primary school teachers' rational perspectives and practices on children's experience to facilitate the bond within the transition process between kindergarten and primary school,

ultimately establishing pathways for children's continuous growth, enhancing transitional efficacy and ensuring pedagogical quality in early primary education.

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Risky Outdoor Play from Chinese Young Children's Perspectives

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Keywords: risky outdoor play, young children's perspectives, early childhood education

Abstract

In recent years, risky play-characterized by challenging elements such as climbing, high-speed movement, and the use of tools-has been increasingly recognized for its positive impact on children's physical development, sense of challenge, and social competence (Dodd, 2021; Brussoni et al., 2015). However, despite the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizing children's right to free play, opportunities for unstructured outdoor play have been steadily declining (Sandseter et al., 2021), replaced by more sedentary behavior and an excessive focus on safety issues (Bruijns et al., 2022). As a result, risky play faces numerous practical limitations, and young children's voices and autonomy are often underrepresented.

This study aims to explore how young children perceive and experience risky outdoor play from their own perspectives within a Chinese early childhood education context. The study was conducted in a well-established play-based kindergarten in Lijin, Shandong Province of China, involving 25 children aged 5 to 6. Using the Mosaic Approach, a child-centered qualitative framework (Clark, 2005), the study employed a multi-method strategy combining child-directed photography, drawing activities, one-on-one unstructured

interviews, and participatory observations over a three-month period. These methods allowed children to express their thoughts and feelings about risky outdoor play in age-appropriate and multimodal ways. By moving beyond adult-centered interpretations and listening to young children's voices, this study seeks to better understand how young children perceive risk, manage safety, and actively engage in adventurous outdoor play.

The research findings reveal the following key points. First, from young children's perspectives, risky outdoor play is often characterized by internal experiences that combine excitement, happiness, a sense of danger, and challenge. Second, young children demonstrate a certain level of safety awareness during risky outdoor play, enabling them to recognize potentially dangerous behaviors or situations. Lastly, the findings indicate that most young children prefer low-structured, diverse, and safe play materials that allow them to create their own rules and fully utilize their imagination, reflecting their desire for flexible and creative risky outdoor play.

Therefore, by exploring young children's perspectives on risky outdoor play, this study reveals that, contrary to common adult concerns, young children are not passive participants in play but are capable of actively identifying, managing, and responding to risks based on their own experiences. This study thus reconsiders risky outdoor play from a child-centered perspective, emphasizing the importance of listening to young children's voices when designing play environments and related policies in China. It calls for the creation of safe yet open-ended play spaces, and aims to provide valuable insights for developing flexible outdoor environments that support young children's autonomy, exploration, and creativity.

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Practical Research on Picture Book Reading Instruction in Kindergarten Guided by Deep Learning Theory

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Keywords: deep learning theory, deep learning in early childhood, picture book reading instruction in kindergarten

Abstract

With the increasing diversity of picture books and improved accessibility of picture book resources, reading activities utilizing picture books have become widely implemented in kindergartens. As access to picture book resources becomes more convenient and children's reading volume increases, educational institutions are shifting their focus from quantitative to qualitative improvements in reading education. Addressing the requirements of new-era educational reform and talent cultivation, along with the practical need to optimize reading curriculum progression in response to superficial phenomena in current kindergarten reading instruction, this study constructs a picture book reading teaching model emphasizing core competency development under the guidance of deep learning theory.

Through literature review, current situation analysis, experience synthesis, and practical research, this study clarifies the connotation and core characteristics of "holistic reading": joyful reading, autonomous reading, and comprehensive reading. It reveals the practical principles of holistic reading: child-centered principle, teacher-student co-construction principle, activity-oriented principle, connectivity principle, and interest principle. The research establishes an integrated holistic reading teaching model featuring "comprehensive fusion", implemented through parent-child shared reading teacher-student

collaborative reading independent creative reading processes, daily routine integration, and home-kindergarten-community collaboration. It develops a“child-oriented”holistic reading pedagogical approach characterized by personalized reading, multi-dimensional dialogical thinking, and diversified representation. A core competency-focused holistic reading evaluation framework is constructed, elaborated through four dimensions: “language and reading competence, creative thinking, social development, and qualitative description”. The study formulates deep learning-aligned holistic reading professional development methods.

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Parental Satisfaction with Childcare Services for Children Aged 0-3 in China: Evidence from a National Study

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Keywords: childcare services, parent satisfaction, China

Abstract

The increased involvement of mothers in the workforce, influenced by the societal impacts of industrialization and urbanization, has resulted in a growing demand for social childcare services focused on children below 3 years of age. This demand has become notably significant, particularly following the enforcement of the two-child and three-child policies in mainland China. In response to these challenges, the Chinese central government has implemented a series of policies since 2019 to advance childcare services, including the Guidance on Promoting the Development of Care Services for Infants under 3 Years Old (Central Government of China, 2019).

However, given the early stage of childcare services in China, there is a critical need to explore methodologies to enhance these services within the scope of the new fertility policy. The satisfaction and expectations of parents play a pivotal role in formulating effective policies and implementing reforms that adequately tackle the challenges and concerns intrinsic to childcare service systems.

This study aims to unveil the satisfaction and influencing factors provided by parents regarding childcare services in China.

Adopting a stratified cluster sampling method, this study recruited 771 parents and surveyed them using the Parental Satisfaction of Childcare Services Scale (PS). All collected survey data were subjected to statistical analysis using IBM SPSS 26.0 and MPLUS 8.0 software. First, descriptive statistics were employed to investigate the overall parental satisfaction with childcare services. Second, latent profile analysis was conducted to identify latent profiles representing Chinese parents' satisfaction with childcare services. Finally, hierarchical regression analysis was utilized to examine the key predictors of parental satisfaction with childcare services.

The study resulted in three key findings. First, Chinese parents were satisfied with childcare services, being most satisfied with care and education services and least satisfied with the environment and facilities. Second, two distinct profiles of parents emerged: a low-level profile comprising 30.5% and a high-level profile comprising 69.5% of the sample. Multivariate logistic regression analysis demonstrated that parents with children receiving full-day services in eastern China were more likely to belong to the high-level profile. Third, hierarchical regression analysis showed that the institutional charges and relationship with teachers significantly predicted parents' satisfaction.

This study brings forth significant policy implications for China and other nations. It underscores the pivotal role of proactive national policies in the development of childcare services. However, financial constraints pose challenges to their advancement, necessitating further policy support and practical exploration. Furthermore, the study reveals disparities faced by disadvantaged populations, particularly children from western and central areas, who often encounter difficulty in accessing high-quality childcare services. Tailored government policies and financial assistance can address these disparities. This study enriches the existing research on parental satisfaction with childcare services, offering insights for international researchers and policymakers. Achieving enduring, high-quality childcare services demands augmented financial support and targeted strategies for the subsequent developmental phase.

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Bridging Gaps in Early Learning: The Role of Executive Function and Social-Emotional Skills in Malaysian Preschools

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Keywords: executive function, social-emotional, preschool

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted children's lives, particularly their social-emotional development (Chiappelli, 2023; Oppermann et al., 2024). Social-emotional competence, encompassing skills such as emotional awareness and social interaction, is crucial for enhancing learning outcomes in young children (Rechael Walog et al., 2024). However, research on social-emotional development in Asian children remains limited (Yong et al., 2023). Executive function (EF) components, such as working memory and inhibitory control, also play a critical role in predicting pre-academic skills, as they facilitate task performance and learning (Cook et al., 2023; Schwarz & Shaul, 2018). This study explores the interplay between social-emotional skills, EF, and academic achievement in preschool children.

Using direct child assessment data collected following the reopening of schools after Covid19 lockdown, this study addresses three research questions:

(1) To what extent do inhibitory control and working memory influence academic readiness (literacy and numeracy) in disadvantaged Malaysian preschool children?

(2) What is the relationship between social-emotional skills and the development of

literacy and numeracy skills?

(3) Are there differential associations between EF components and specific academic skills that can inform targeted interventions?

A total of 99 preschool children aged 4-5 years from low-income families in government-funded preschools in northern Malaysia participated. Measures of social-emotional skills, EF components, and academic skills were administered using the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA). Hierarchical linear regression revealed that social-emotional skills were significantly associated with literacy and numeracy skills. Inhibitory control predicted literacy skills, while working memory predicted numeracy skills, contrasting with some previous findings (Bukva & Memisevic, 2024; Bull et al., 2008; Ernst et al., 2022).

These findings carry significant implications for early childhood education policy and practice in Malaysia. They emphasize the importance of integrating both social-emotional and cognitive development into preschool curricula to enhance learning outcomes. Tailored interventions that target specific EF components, particularly inhibitory control and working memory, are recommended to support the academic readiness of disadvantaged children. Understanding these interrelationships offers valuable insights for designing educational strategies that respond to the evolving needs of young learners, particularly in a post-pandemic context. By addressing these developmental dimensions, educators and policymakers can better equip children with the skills necessary for lifelong learning and success.

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Meaning Construction in Picture Books for Young Children Through the Lens of Dual Audience Theory: Characteristics and Implications

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Keywords: picture books for young children, dual audience, meaning construction

Abstract

Shared reading with young children (ages 2-4) plays a crucial role in their cognitive and emotional development. Picture books, as a key element of shared reading, provide the immediate context for adult-child interaction (Strouse et al., 2018). Despite the rapid expansion of children's services in China, domestically produced picture books often lack diversity and primarily emphasize pragmatic functions (e.g., teaching daily routines). To enhance their quality, it is essential to examine the meaning-construction strategies of high-quality books. This study explores the meaning-construction styles of three internationally acclaimed, award-winning picture books through the lens of dual audience theory.

Dual audience theory, widely recognized in children's literature, suggests that picture books should engage both children and adults, addressing young children's cognitive-emotional needs while maintaining adult readers' interest (Cheetham & Dominic, 2013). This study analyzed Peepo! (Ahlberg & Ahlberg, 2018), I want my hat back (Klassen,

2018), and Olivia (Falconer, 2007), illustrating how these books construct multilayered meanings through visual manipulation, cognitive engagement, and emotional resonance.

Peepo! employs intricate visual design and rhythmic text, creating an interactive experience akin to turn-taking games. While children perceive a warm and comfortable family environment, adult readers recognize historical undercurrents—a bombed out building, a picture of Churchill on the wall and the father wearing his army uniform—all these wartime imagery subtly contrasts security with looming danger. I Want My Hat Back builds cognitive tension through ambiguous storytelling. Young children enjoy a simple tale of a bear retrieving his lost hat, while adults detect a darker undertone (e.g., implied violence), recognizing themes of deception and morality. This cognitive gap fosters evolving interpretations as children grow. Olivia evokes emotional resonance through the portrayal of a mischievous child and her patient mother, reflecting familiar family dynamics. While children are drawn to Olivia's adventures, adults relate to the challenges and joys of parenting. These examples highlight how the dual audience approach fosters diverse emotional and intellectual connections across age groups.

This study offers key educational implications. First, dual audience theory provides broader creative space for authors, encouraging exploration of diverse themes and artistic expressions. Second, it enhances early childhood educators' literary discernment, improving their ability to select high-quality picture books. Finally, it enriches teacher-child reading interactions by facilitating multilayered interpretations, fostering deeper engagement and dynamic meaning-construction. By integrating dual audience principles, picture books can create more immersive and meaningful reading experiences for both children and adults.

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An Educational Experimental Study on The Promotion of Computational Thinking by Sports Games of Children Aged 5-6

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Keywords: computational thinking, sports game, embodied cognition

Abstract

In the context of the AI era, where children's computational thinking (CT) education is overly reliant on programming tools and lacks cross-disciplinary integration, this study investigates innovative non-digital approaches to address these issues. Based on the theoretical framework of embodied cognition and constructivism, the research explores how physical activities can enhance young children's CT development. The study aims to validate the role of sports games in promoting CT by constructing a "body involvement-context interaction-dynamic transfer" theoretical model and a Body-based Computational Thinking Development System (BCTD). A quasi-experimental design was employed with 60 young children (aged 5-6) divided into experimental (n=30) and control groups (n=30). Over eight weeks, the experimental group participated in BCTD-inspired "perception-movement", consisting of three phases: contextual introduction, rule discovery, and open application. The control group followed regular activities. Data were collected using the TechCheck-K standardized test. Results showed significant interaction effects between group and time, with

the experimental group demonstrating marked improvement in CT scores, particularly in algorithmic thinking, modular decomposition, and debugging skills. This study confirms that embodied sports games effectively promote CT through action-based symbolic representation, offering a theoretical and practical framework for integrating interdisciplinary thinking training in early childhood education:1) The cognitive development path which includes body schema encoding, motor representation transformation and cross-domain transfer application is constructed:2) Innovative curriculum paradigm of “low technology density-high embodied interaction”:3) Break through the time-space limitation of traditional screen-dependent cultivation.

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Art and Cultural Enlightenment: The Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Kindergarten Activities-A Case Study of the "Palm Weaving" Activity in the Senior Class

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Keywords: art enlightenment, cultural identity, integration practice

Abstract

Traditional art and culture play a vital role in kindergarten education, enriching children's learning experiences and promoting their cognitive, emotional, and social development. Against the backdrop of global cultural integration and the preservation of local cultural heritage, the inheritance and innovation of intangible cultural heritage (hereinafter referred to as "ICH") have become urgent priorities in the new era. This study explores the integration of ICH in children's art enlightenment and cultural identity by incorporating the ICH practice of "palm weaving" into a senior kindergarten class's weaving activities. Grounded in Piaget's cognitive development theory and the "Guidelines for the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3-6" issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the research proposes three integration pathways for ICH in kindergarten activities: first, using

games as a medium to stimulate children"s cultural interest; second, fostering deep dialogue between children and ICH through artistic expression; and third, building a collaborative inheritance ecosystem involving "kindergarten-family-community."

Specifically, in the senior class's "palm weaving" activity, the study first designed a role-playing game called "Palm Weaving Animal Kingdom" and progressive task cards to spark children's interest in ICH. Secondly, by providing materials such as palm leaves, colored ropes, clay, and paint, children were guided from skill imitation to creative transformation. Activities such as weaving competitions, exhibitions, and a "My Favorite Weaving Work" selection event were organized to enhance engagement. Additionally, ICH inheritors were invited to demonstrate palm weaving techniques in the kindergarten, families were encouraged to participate in local ICH exhibitions and palm weaving museum activities, and community involvement was strengthened.

The results demonstrate that this model significantly improves children's fine motor skills, cultural cognition, artistic expression, and social interaction abilities, while also increasing community awareness of local culture. The study further proposes a curriculum development framework for "Regional ICH Resource Mapping" and a three-dimensional evaluation system encompassing "cultural perception, artistic expression, and social participation," providing a replicable practice path for the deep integration of ICH and kindergarten education. Addressing challenges in the integration process, such as the lack of cultural content relevance and teachers' insufficient ICH literacy, the study offers optimization suggestions, including strengthening the life-related aspects of curriculum design and developing an ICH-themed game resource library.

In conclusion, this research validates the bidirectional empowerment mechanism between ICH inheritance and child development, offering theoretical support and practical examples for the innovative application of traditional culture in kindergarten education.

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A Study on Factors Influencing the Early Childhood Korean Language Acquisition in Chinese Multicultural Families

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Keywords: early childhood Korean language acquisition, Chinese multicultural families, factors influencing

Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationships among the family literacy environment, paternal involvement in parenting, children's intrinsic motivation, and early childhood Korean language acquisition in Chinese multicultural families. The research was conducted through a systematic process that included a literature review, selection of research instruments, data collection, and analysis. Data collection involved assessing the Korean language proficiency of children aged 3 to 5 from Chinese multicultural families residing in S City, J Province, and C Province, and administering surveys to their mothers. Data were collected from April 1 to September 4, 2024, and analyzed using SPSS 27.0 and AMOS 26.0 software.

The findings reveal that differences in children's Korean language proficiency are associated with the home literacy environment, paternal involvement in parenting, and children's intrinsic motivation. Specifically, enriched home literacy environments, active paternal involvement, and higher levels of intrinsic motivation were linked to improved Korean language proficiency. These results underscore the importance of providing parents

with guidelines for selecting appropriate literacy materials that consider the family's needs. The necessity of bilingual literacy materials tailored to the language dynamics within the household was also highlighted. Informal literacy activities, such as reading picture books, engaging in daily conversations, and singing songs, were found to be particularly effective given the developmental characteristics of early childhood. Furthermore, integrating the mother's native language alongside Korean, rather than excluding it, was shown to benefit language acquisition, particularly in households with immigrant mothers or parents with migrat backgrounds. The findings also emphasize the unique and essential role of fathers can play by actively participating in the parenting process.

Intrinsic motivation was found to partially mediate the effects of the family literacy environment and paternal involvement on children's Korean language proficiency. This indicates that the family literacy environment and paternal involvement exert not only direct effects, but also indirect effects through children's intrinsic motivation. Enhancing children's intrinsic motivation requires the availability of diverse literacy materials and activities that foster curiosity and engagement. Parents' positive attitudes toward bilingual education, coupled with an inclusive approach to language use, further support children's interest in learning Korean. Active paternal involvement was shown to enhance children's emotional well-being, create opportunities for exploration, and foster a sense of security. Participation in activities within early childhood institutions was also found to support children's degree of adaptation and sense of belonging, further positively influencing their intrinsic motivation. This study highlights the pathways through which the family literacy environment, paternal involvement in parenting, and children's intrinsic motivation influence Korean language proficiency in Chinese multicultural families. By focusing on the cultural context of these families, the study provides insights into effective strategies for promoting Korean language acquisition. Recommendations include fostering enriched family literacy environments, encouraging active paternal involvement in parenting, and supporting children's intrinsic motivation through culturally sensitive and interest-based approaches.

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Peers as Socializers of Creativity: How Urban and Rural Peer Groups Shape Novelty and Usefulness in Chinese Children

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(Shanghai Normal University)
Xianguo Han
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Keywords: creativity, peer groups, urban and rural contexts

Abstract

Creativity is critical for children's adaptation and future success, yet how peer groups shape children's creativity longitudinally in different socio-cultural contexts remains unclear. This study tracked 661 third-grade Chinese children (330 urban, 331 rural) for one year, separately examining how peer group creativity at Time 1 (T1) predicted individual creativity at Time 2 (T2) within urban and rural contexts. Multilevel modeling (MLM) analyses were conducted independently for urban and rural samples, further examining gender as a moderator within each context. The findings revealed that: (1) peer group membership was associated with higher individual novelty overall; however, isolated children in urban areas exhibited higher usefulness compared to their peers. (2) peer group creativity at Time 1 positively predicted both individual novelty and usefulness at Time 2 in urban settings, but only novelty in rural settings. (3) gender moderated this effect exclusively in rural groups, with female-dominated groups showing stronger positive impacts on novelty. Findings underscore the importance of social contexts and gender composition in fostering sustained

creativity within peer groups, suggesting differentiated educational strategies in urban versus rural regions.

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Integrating Picture Books to Support Spoken Vocabulary in Children Aged 4-to-5 Year Olds in a Singapore Childcare

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Keywords: spoken vocabulary, picture books, early childhood education

Abstract

Spoken vocabulary is a vital component forming the foundation of language and literacy development among young children. A seminal work by Hart and Risley (1995) highlighted how early spoken vocabulary exposure shapes how children express thoughts and ideas, comprehend information, and develop reading and writing skills towards academic success. This can be supported through picture books, offering a multimodal approach between images and text, while introducing more diverse words compared to child-directed and adult-directed speech (Paivio, 1971; Massaro, 2015; Montag et al., 2015; Montag et al., 2018).

While several studies have highlighted this strong correlation between picture books and spoken vocabulary, there has been limited research within Singapore's multilingual context and early childcare settings. Furthermore, observations of my classroom of four-to-five-years-old children revealed varied levels of spoken vocabulary. This often became evident during group discussions, where children with higher spoken vocabulary levels dominated conversations, while others became less involved. Additionally, picture books were often underutilised in the classroom. While children displayed an interest in them, the classroom books often contained limited vocabulary words appropriate for this age group, and reading experiences tended to be teacher-directed with limited opportunities for children

to engage with these vocabulary words.

Set in the context of a private childcare centre in Singapore, this teacher research examined how picture books could support the development of spoken vocabulary among children aged 4-to-5-years-old. Over six weeks, seven children were assessed on their spoken vocabulary development before, during, and after picture books containing a wide range of vocabulary words and rich illustrations were introduced. A mixed-method research design was employed, whereby checklists containing six spoken-vocabulary indicators collected quantitative data, while anecdotal records and semi-structured teacher interviews collected qualitative data. While the checklists and anecdotal records documented children's language, actions, and interactions, the interviews provided the class teacher's perspective on children's spoken vocabulary and picture books.

Findings indicated variations in spoken vocabulary levels among the children during pre-intervention, ranging from beginning, developing, and maturing levels of spoken vocabulary. Children with beginning levels had limited participation in class discussions and used simple vocabulary words. Those with maturing levels actively participated and expressed their thoughts and ideas with extensive vocabulary usage. However, spoken vocabulary development among all children significantly improved after integrating picture books. Regardless of their initial skills and abilities, children could better sustain discussions, ask questions, define vocabulary word meanings from book illustrations, recall and apply them in appropriate contexts, and articulate their thoughts and ideas with longer, complex sentences. Besides the multimodal feature of picture books, this could also be shaped by the shift towards a child-centred approach. Children became more involved in the learning process when I asked open-ended questions, expanded and extended their responses, and modelled.

Therefore, the study concluded picture books in early childhood education as an effective tool towards children's spoken vocabulary, regardless of their spoken vocabulary skills and abilities. Integrating picture books with rich vocabulary words and visual illustrations can create a literacy-rich learning environment that supports diverse learners towards learning and academic success.

3rd Class Building-Rm 207-B8-04
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A Practical Study on Implementing Social-Emotional Learning Through Picture Books in Junior Class Aged 3-4

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(China Welfare Institute Nursery)

Keywords: social-emotional learning, picture books, practical study

Abstract

Social-emotional competence is one of the key indicators used to measure individual social development of preschoolers.

This study primarily employed the action research method, selecting 100 children from the junior class of a municipal model kindergarten in Shanghai as participants. A research community was formed with teachers from the same grade group to conduct two rounds of action research.

Using picture books as the medium, the study integrated children, teachers, and parents into the curriculum through collective activities, individualized learning activities, and collaborative parent-child scenario dramas to enhance the social-emotional competence of junior-class preschoolers.

The findings revealed that diversified picture book activities positively influence young children's social-emotional learning. Children improved in identifying basic emotions and regulating negative emotions. They learned to initiate social interactions in appropriate ways. Their awareness and understanding of queuing rules were strengthened. They demonstrated a more proactive attitude toward challenges and attempted independent

problem-solving.

The study also summarized the following strategies for organizing activities:

1. Collective Activities:
   - Select materials aligned with the five dimensions of social-emotional learning.
   - Set goals consistent with junior-class developmental objectives.
   - Design questions that match activity and developmental goals.
2. Collaborative Parent-Child Scenario Dramas:
   - Adapt plotlines to strengthen connections with children's real-life experiences.
   - Use interactive questioning to encourage active thinking and expression.
   - Incorporate games to promote the practical application of social-emotional skills.
3. Individualized Learning Activities:
   - Adopt a "developmental perspective"to ensure content continuity.
- Emphasize "practice-oriented"approaches to enhance transferability of experiences.

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Effectiveness of Feature Quantities Selection Based on Simultaneous Analysis of Body Movement and Eye Movement During Musical Expression in Early Childhood

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Keywords: Musical expression in early childhood, Body movement, Eye movement

Abstract

In recent years, toward the realization of applying machine learning to human behaviors, related computer algorisms and various devices to monitor human body movement have been developed. The author has provided particular process to evaluate musical expression in early childhood with their body movement data by way of machine learning. Generally, more various data would lead to higher accuracy of forecasting evaluation. However, body movement data are intimately related each other and it is not obvious how to construct optimized feature quantity data package for classification and clustering (Ando & Sumikawa 2012; Thompson & Luck 2012; Burger 2013; Haugen, 2016; Kawai 2020; Miura, 2022; Matsumoto 2022). Therefore, this paper proposes a method to assess feature quantities to improve classification effectiveness.

In this study, various data last two years calculated from simultaneous analysis of both eye movement and body movement in musical expression by early childhood children, were quantitatively analyzed to investigate the effectiveness of feature quantities regarding classification of music development. 3-year-old, 4-tear-old, and 5-year-old children in four facilities (n=103) participated in the simultaneous analysis one by one in order. Various data were acquired from eye movement and body movement using eye tracking system synchronized with 3D motion capture during their musical expression. Feature quantities

were extracted from the results of a three-way of analysis of variance (non-repeated two standards as melody, non-repeated four standards as facilities and non-repeated three standards as ages) based on acquired data of the simultaneous analysis to find out statistically significant difference between relevant measures. As a result, a statistically significant difference mainly depended on melody characteristics was observed in eye movement such as number of saccade occurrences, total moving distance of saccade, and body movement such as the moving distance of right hand, the moving average velocity of right hand, the moving average acceleration of right hand, the moving average acceleration of head, and the moving average acceleration of right foot. Furthermore, in order to find out the specific characteristics of songs, the author conducted a two-way analysis of variance (non-repeated seven standards as songs and non-repeated three standards as ages). As those results showed, feature quantities were extracted by simultaneous analysis of both eye movement and body movement in musical expression in early childhood specifically showed a close relationship between movement of right hand mainly pretending of an image and eye movement.

In this way, it is thought that the method to extract feature quantities based on such quantitative analysis will provide objective indicators that capture the developmental process of musical expression in early childhood, and will contribute to early childhood music education.

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Between Pedagogy and Curriculum: Localising Global Play Perspectives in Hong Kong's Kindergartens

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Keywords: learning through play, play-based pedagogy, professional development

Abstract

In recent decades, learning through play has gained global recognition as an effective pedagogy in early childhood education, grounded in the values of child agency, holistic development, and experiential learning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019; Wood, 2013). Yet, localising the play-based pedagogies within diverse sociocultural contexts remains a complex and nuanced endeavour, particularly in environments where academic expectations and performance accountability dominate early childhood agendas (Bubikova-Moan, Næss Hjetland, & Wollscheid, 2019).

This presentation draws on parts of the findings from the "Dialogic Enrichment of English Proficiency (DEEP) Project" in Hong Kong, a funded research aimed at empowering teachers to foster children's English proficiency. Situated within a Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework, participating teachers were positioned as part of the research

team in co-constructing knowledge. Eight teachers from two kindergartens as the key participants engaged in a full scope of professional development programme, including four workshops and four cycles of activity planning, observation, and reflections. The collected data included surveys of teachers' efficacy on play pedagogies, individual semi-structured interviews, video recordings of workshops and class observations, as well as individual and group reflection sessions. The analysis was framed by Aoki's (1986) concepts of curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived-experience, revealing tensions between planned curriculum and emergent, child-centred play practices.

Findings show that teachers began to incorporate a wider variety of play experiences and reflected more deeply on children's agency in their everyday teaching. However, they still faced significant challenges when trying to adapt official curriculum plans to fit play-based approaches. While playful interactions, such as spontaneous conversations and informal learning moments, were commonly observed in day-to-day classroom life, efforts to revise formal curriculum documents often defaulted to traditional, academic-focused formats.

This divergence points to a significant pedagogical-curricular gap: while play pedagogies are increasingly embraced in teachers' day-to-day practices, integrating these approaches into formal curriculum planning remains challenging. Teachers have to navigate deeply embedded cultural narratives, institutional constraints, and competing expectations. The curriculum-as-planned—shaped by structured curriculum packs, parental demands, and traditional notions of school readiness—often limits the extent to which play can be meaningfully embedded into daily teaching. In contrast, the curriculum-as-lived offers a more dynamic and responsive space, where teachers enact play pedagogy in flexible, relational, and child-centred ways. This tension between planning and practice highlights the need for curriculum reforms that support more authentic and contextually grounded applications of play-based learning.

The study underscores the importance of reimagining professional development not merely as pedagogical training, but as a dialogic platform for curriculum negotiation. It advocates for a "glocalised" approach to curriculum reform—one that honours both global visions of play-based learning and local imperatives for academic achievement and language proficiency. These findings contribute to ongoing conversations about how educators can

more effectively navigate the interplay between global influences and local realities, supporting practices that are contextually responsive in an era of educational change.

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A Practical Research on Kindergarten Food Education Curriculum Based on the STEAM Concept

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Keywords: STEAM education, dietary education curriculum, localization

Abstract

In the context of global educational innovation, the integration of STEAM education and localized curriculum has become a significant direction for preschool education reform. This paper takes the practice of a dietary education course in a Chinese kindergarten as an example to explore how to organically combine dietary education with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) education through project-based learning (PBL). Through the “Ding Dong, the Bread is Ready” project, children naturally engaged in interdisciplinary activities such as scientific experiments, engineering design, artistic creation, mathematical measurement, and technological applications while exploring bread-making, alongside inheriting local dietary culture. The research indicates that dietary education under the STEAM framework not only enhances children’s comprehensive competencies but also provides new insights for preschool curriculum design through the bidirectional interaction of globalization and localization.

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Play-based Learning: Beliefs and Practices among Early Childhood Educators in China

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Keywords: play-based learning, early childhood education, early childhood educators

Abstract

Play-based learning has been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical approach to promote young children's holistic development. In China, the Guidance for Kindergarten Education (Trial) issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education also advocates the adoption of play-based learning. However, traditional Chinese culture places a strong emphasis on academic achievement. Despite such potential tension faced by early childhood educators there, empirical research on how they perceive and implement play-based learning remains limited. This qualitative study therefore aims to explore the beliefs and practices regarding play-based learning among early childhood educators in China, and their influencing factors. The study will involve five kindergartens, with 20 early childhood educators (including both teachers and principals) participating in online semi-structured individual interviews. The interviews will tap into the early childhood educators' beliefs about the meaning, benefits and limitations of play-based learning, and their experience in planning and implementing play-based learning activities in kindergartens. The interview data will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Using thematic analysis, the early childhood educators' perceptions of what constitutes play-based learning, perceived importance, benefits and limitations of play-based learning, the types of play activities and materials they adopt, the role of teachers during the

play-based learning activities they implement, as well as the motivators and barriers to their adoption and implementation of play-based learning will be analyzed. Any belief-practice gap will also be identified. The findings of this study can inform the development of a culturally appropriate and localized play pedagogy in the Chinese context, providing valuable insights for early childhood educators and policymakers to better support children's learning through play.

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Challenges Faced and Support Needed in the Implementation of Play-Based Curriculum as Perceived by Early Childhood Teachers in Putian City, Fujian Province, China

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Keywords: early childhood teachers, play-based curriculum, implementation challenges

Abstract

Being children's inherent nature and the core of their daily lives, playing is essential for them to explore the world, construct knowledge, express emotions, develop skills, and interact with peers. Per UNESCO, playing is not only children's right but also the fundamental basis of their growth. Play-based curriculum is a form of child-centered learning method, integrating children-initiated activities with teachers' engagement and guidance, and achieving educational goals through play activities. As the designers and organizers of play-based curriculum, teachers play a vital role in warranting the quality of play-based curriculum execution. Despite wide recognition of the positive effects of play-based curriculum on young children's development, the challenges faced by frontline teachers during its practical implementation and the underlying structural issues have gained limited attention. Thus, this qualitative study aims to investigate the challenges and support needs of early childhood teachers in actual teaching and learning, providing effective and targeted professional support, thereby improving the overall quality of curriculum implementation.

Based on both the researchers' convenience and the representativeness of the field,

this study was performed in Putian City (Fujian Province, China) owing to its long-term collaborative relationship between a university and local kindergartens. The research subjects were 12 kindergarten teachers, selected through stratified sampling based on three dimensions: the nature of the kindergarten institution, the area location, and the teaching staff age. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews, supplemented by lesson observation records and text material analysis for triangulation.Interview texts were used for three-level root coding and analysis by Nvivo15 software.

The findings indicated that three key challenges faced by teachers in implementing play-based curriculum were: (i) deficiencies in external support systems; (ii) limitations of early childhood teachers' professional acumen; (iii) misalignment between play-based curriculum and children's development. Deficiencies in external support systems were reflected by (i) inadequate time and resources, (ii) unsatisfactory family and community engagement, and (iii) insufficient institutional and policy support. Limitations of early childhood teachers' professional acumen were primarily characterized by (i) deficient curriculum implementation capacity and (ii) unsatisfactory professional knowledge and curriculum awareness. Misalignment between play-based curriculum and children's development was characterized by (i) substantial individual differences in children and (ii) lack of localization of play-based curriculum. Meanwhile, the teachers expressed a need for three categories of support: (i) teacher professional capacity-building; (ii) institutional and environmental support; (iii) family and community engagement. Teachers' professional capacity-building encompasses (i) teachers' theoretical and practical literacy enhancement, (iii) teachers' mutual learning and collaboration support, and (iii) teachers' external support. Institutional and environmental support comprises (i) support for teaching resources and venues, (ii) support for teaching organization and curriculum planning, and (iii) policy and financial support. Family and community engagement comprises (i) parent cognitive enhancement support, (ii) community resource assistance, and (iii) early childhood cooperation. Overall, this study divulges the practical dilemmas and genuine needs of early childhood teachers in applying play-based curriculum and underscores effective strategies they have adopted in response, providing valuable implications for curriculum improvement and localized educational innovation within a global context.

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A Study of the Dimensions and Elements of Support for Children's Vocational Enlightenment Education——Comparative Analysis Based on Preschool Curriculum Guidelines of Six Countries

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Keywords: preschool education, vocational enlightenment education, supportive dimensions

Abstract

Under the overarching goal of fostering holistic child development, vocational enlightenment education has emerged as a critical component of preschool education, serving as a pivotal pathway to cultivate children's social cognition, practical skills, and future vocational awareness. This study examines preschool curriculum guidelines from six nations—Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, France, Australia, Japan—as analytical samples. Grounded in procedural grounded theory, the research employs open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to systematically analyze the supportive dimensions and core elements of vocational enlightenment education across these contexts, aiming to construct a universal framework and propose localized recommendations. Adhering to a "sample selection-framework construction-comparative analysis-strategy extraction" workflow, MAXQDA software was utilized for textual coding and analysis.

Findings reveal that the supportive system for vocational enlightenment education comprises two primary dimensions: Internal support and External support, encompassing five core elements ("curriculum integration," "hands-on experiences," "environmental design,"

"home-school collaboration," and "community engagement") alongside 14 refined indicators. Internal support focuses on in-class educational practices: 1) Curriculum integration embeds vocational awareness into thematic activities (e.g., role-playing, career-themed storytelling) to foster initial understanding of social roles; 2) Hands-on experiences prioritize simulated vocational scenarios (e.g., mini-kitchens, community role simulations) to enhance practical skills and vocational interest; 3) Environmental design establishes dedicated vocational learning zones and tool repositories to create immersive learning environments. External support emphasizes multi-stakeholder collaboration:1) Home-school collaboration engages parents through activities like family career-sharing sessions and parent-child vocational exploration; 2) Community engagement leverages local resources, such as inviting professionals to schools or organizing workplace visits, to broaden children's vocational perspectives.

Drawing on cross-national comparisons, this study proposes four recommendations: 1) Optimize vocational enlightenment education curricula by age-specific, play-based, and life-oriented goal-setting; 2) Strengthen teacher training to advance pedagogical competencies in vocational enlightenment education implementation; 3) Establish a tripartite "preschool-family-community" collaborative mechanism, including vocational experience hubs and digital resource libraries; 4) Integrate vocational enlightenment education into preschool quality assessment frameworks through enhanced policy support. By providing theoretical and practical insights, this research contributes to refining China's preschool vocational enlightenment education system, thereby supporting children's social development and lifelong learning capabilities.

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Bridging Aesthetic Philosophy and Pedagogy:The Role of Aesthetic Education in Shaping Curriculum Design

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Keywords: aesthetic education, curriculum, Reggio Emilia approach

Abstract

The Role of Aesthetic Education in Shaping Curriculum Design

Introduction:

[Aesthetic development] is one of the five development goals of the kindergarten education curriculum in Hong Kong. However, many people are unfamiliar with the concept [aesthetics]. It carries uncertainty and subjectivity, and even there are different point of view on it. The implementation is also unclear, so [Aesthetic education] is often marginalized. In a competitive education system, logical thinking training such as language and mathematics dominates the learning process which marginalizes aesthetic education. In face, aesthetic education is not absent in kindergartens. It is just that aesthetic education seems to be equivalent to taking an art class or making craft, from which children learn steps and techniques.

This study mainly uses action research method to explore the application of aesthetic education or aesthetic experience in kindergarten thematic teaching practice. The author served as a curriculum designer, art educator, consultant and collaborator. During lesson preparation, observation and evaluation. I collect information including classroom observation, interview, teacher-student interactions, classroom language, children's works, teaching reflections, etc. This help us understand how children's aesthetic education can be

combined with the practice of kindergarten curriculum design.

It can be used as reference for the promotion of aesthetic education. At the same time, it provides a new perspective for future research on courses from the perspective of [Curriculum Aesthetics] and sees how to bring new perspectives to curriculum and teaching practice, in order to restore the vitality of curriculum.

Objectives:

1. To explore the possibility of applying aesthetic education or aesthetic experience in kindergarten thematic teaching practice.

2. To present case studies highlighting the implementation of atelier-based practices in classrooms, showing children's engagement with the theme of Light and Shadow.

3. To provides a new perspective for future research on [Curriculum Aesthetics].

Process:

Our presentation begins with some theoretical grounding, providing an overview of some key aesthetic philosophies (e.g., Schiller's play theory, Dewey's art as experience, Eisner's arts-based inquiry), showing that how they redefine the purpose of curriculum beyond instrumentalism. We further apply Dewey's A complete experience to illustrate the operation of aesthetic experience, so we can have a better understanding of the concept and meaning of aesthetic principles.

When it come to the practical integration, we cite one of Hong Kong school sponsoring charitable organization as an example. It operates 16 long full day kindergartens cum child care center. They appoint an Art Educator among the staffing establishment to collaborate with and support teachers in designing and delivering enriching art experiences to young children in all the 16 kindergarten. We aim to share insights gained from the adaptation and impact of these concepts within Hong Kong's early childhood education landscape, particularly through a Project on the theme of Light and Shadow, showing how can aesthetic principles (e.g creativity, sensory engagement, self-expression, beauty) be operationalized in curriculum structure, content, and assessment.

In addition, the challenges of integrating aesthetic values into standardized, outcomes-driven education systems are under consideration and the role of the Art Educator within that framework are going to be analysed.

Discussion:

The discussion focuses on the transformative potential of aesthetic concept in enhancing the educational experience for young children in Hong Kong, even within the constraints of limited space and resources. We wil reflect on accomplishment and challenges faced during implementation. Tngaging participants in dialogue will help explore collaborative strategies for overcoming obstacles and fostering a community that values authenticity, creativity and resilience-building.

Potential Contributions:

- A framework for “aesthetic curriculum design” that balances creativity with academic rigor.

- Critique of neoliberal education models that marginalize sensory, emotional, and imaginative learning.

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Kindergarten Family Partnership: A Comprehensive Intervention to Enhance the Social-Emotional Abilities of Migrant Children

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Yan Li
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Keywords: comprehensive intervention, migrant children social-emotional abilities, kindergarten family partnership

Abstract

With the acceleration of urbanization in China, the number of migrant children is increasing. These children often face a lack of educational resources and insufficient social support, and they generally have weaker social-emotional skills. Therefore, improving the social-emotional abilities of migrant children has become an urgent issue in the field of education. This study aims to enhance the social-emotional abilities of migrant children through comprehensive interventions, focusing on the roles of parent and teacher training and social-emotional learning programs for children. The study participants were migrant children, their parents, and teachers from six kindergartens in Shanghai, with 364 children in the experimental group and 369 children in the intervention group. The intervention effects were assessed using a combination of qualitative interviews and questionnaire surveys. The

results showed that the intervention significantly improved the children's abilities in emotion regulation, social skills, and empathy. Teacher training increased teachers' sensitivity to the needs of migrant children and improved classroom teaching quality. Parent training enhanced parenting knowledge, especially in emotion regulation and positive parenting, and strengthened the home-school cooperation. This study confirms the effectiveness of the intervention measures in improving the social-emotional abilities of migrant children and provides strong practical evidence for early childhood education for migrant children. It has important theoretical and practical implications. Future studies could further optimize the intervention strategies to promote the comprehensive development of migrant children.

3rd Class Building-Rm 210-D5-03
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An Exploratory Case Study of Teacher Leadership in Supporting Pedagogical Reform in Kindergartens in Haidian District, Beijing

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Minyi Li
(Beijing Normal University)

Keywords: teacher leadership, pedagogical implementation, exploratory case study

Abstract

This qualitative exploratory case study delves into the intricate experiences between teacher leadership and pedagogical implementation factors in the recent reform of early childhood education, focusing on the unique context of Haidian district in Beijing. The leaders and teachers in kindergarten possess a limited comprehension of the potential roles and necessity of teacher leadership in driving pedagogical implementation, which is closely related to process quality in early childhood education. The aim of this study was to examine the experiences of teacher leaders who currently serve in 3 kindergartens of different types and scales, to understand how teacher leaders can be effectively mobilized to enhance various facets of pedagogical practices.The study results consist of the data collected through the interviews with middle leaders and teachers, observation (among teacher-initiated, child-initiated and basic activities), and document analysis. Thematic analysis is conducted to understand the practices of teacher leaders to support pedagogical implementation. Three major themes were discovered through these three data collection tools: collaboration and

shared vision in the view of child-center, teacher empowerment, and reflective practice in supporting teacher's self-evaluation and children's deep learning. Key recommendations included investing in teacher leadership by forming a self-evaluation system in kindergarten, formalizing structures concerning teacher leadership according to the new trend in pedagogical reform, and equipping teacher leaders with support and resources through continuous professional development.

3rd Class Building-Rm 210-D5-04
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A Case Study on the Learning Effectiveness of a Science Curriculum for Undergraduate Students Majoring in Preschool Education in Macau

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(University of Macau)

Keywords: undergraduate students majoring in preschool education, science curriculum and teaching, learning cycle teaching strategy

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the learning outcomes of undergraduate students majoring in Early Childhood Education in Macau in a compulsory science course. It focuses on three aspects: the understanding of fundamental scientific concepts, the application of these concepts in science game design, and the implementation of the 5E science teaching model. Additionally, the study observes children's learning situations during practical teaching and the undergraduate students' teaching reflections to verify the effectiveness of their professional learning.

Using a case study approach, 43 Early Childhood Education undergraduate students were divided into eight groups based on science themes: "Magnets," "Refraction and Reflection of Light," "Capillary Action," "Action and Reaction Forces," "Lever Principles," "Bernoulli's Principle," "Surface Tension," and "Friction." Data were collected from each group's class presentations, science games and teaching aids, worksheets, and assessment forms to evaluate the undergraduate students' understanding of fundamental scientific concepts and the effectiveness of their applications.

During the practical teaching sessions, the researcher observed the undergraduate students' proficiency and accuracy in applying the 5E science teaching model. Various teaching videos produced by students, such as animations explaining scientific principles, real-life application videos, and worksheets for observing children, were collected to validate the effectiveness of undergraduate students' professional learning. This study spanned five months, encompassing theoretical instruction, practical exercises, and field teaching.

The Findings revealed that:

1. The eight groups of undergraduate students demonstrated a clear and accurate understanding of scientific concepts, reflected in their descriptions of scientific principles and the designs of their science games. Undergraduate Students exhibited creativity, producing aesthetically pleasing and engaging teaching aids that effectively captured children's interest. The worksheet designs were clear and comprehensible, enabling children to intuitively identify and discover correct scientific phenomena.

2. Undergraduate students were proficient and accurate in applying the 5E science teaching model. Throughout the five phases-engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, and evaluation-students skillfully utilized appropriate teaching media, such as videos of everyday scientific phenomena, instructional demonstration videos, animations of scientific principles, dramatic performances, and real-life application videos, thereby significantly enhancing children's learning interest and outcomes.

3. In their teaching reflections, undergraduate students noted that the integration of theory and practice deepened their understanding of scientific concepts. The 5E teaching model clarified the methods of science instruction, quickly enhancing their professional competencies while producing educational media. Through diverse and substantial data validation, undergraduate students exhibited significant learning outcomes.

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The Logical Foundations, Conceptual Framework, and Practical Pathways of Living Aesthetic Education in Kindergarten

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Keywords: kindergarten aesthetic education, living aesthetic education, aesthetics of everyday life

Abstract

The proposal of living aesthetic education in kindergartens stems from three interrelated drivers: the increasing aestheticization of everyday life in contemporary society, national policy emphasis on aesthetic education, and the pedagogical reform concept that "everyday life is curriculum" in early childhood education. This approach aims to guide young children in transforming ordinary life experiences into aesthetic experiences, thereby broadening the content and form of aesthetic education to encompass all aspects of daily life.

Narrowly defined, living aesthetic education refers to an educational philosophy grounded in everyday life, which fosters children's aesthetic literacy-including perception, understanding, emotional engagement, imagination, and creativity-through diverse aesthetic activities. Broadly, it envisions an educational realm in which children are guided to aspire to a better life and to consciously perceive, appreciate, and create beauty in their daily existence.

To translate this philosophy into practice, the proposed framework outlines several implementation pathways: expanding the scope of aesthetic activities in kindergartens, co-constructing aesthetically enriched learning environments, and strengthening the

integration of artistic activities with children's lived experiences. These strategies collectively aim to cultivate children's capacity to discover and express beauty within their everyday surroundings.

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Five Years After, Revisiting Parenting Roles of Fathers Emerging From the Infant Development Program During COVID-19

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Josephine Louise Jamero
(University of the Philippines)

Keywords: parenting, caregiving, fatherhood

Abstract

Five years after the first lockdown, lives have all gone almost back to normal. It brought so many changes in technology and lifestyles that have been carried forward today. It was an unthinkable event, a time of so much uncertainty and fear that the world would not wish to happen again. But through the challenges, pivots and crucial changes were critical to survive and thrive. The opportunities and lessons were full and five years on, it bears reason to evaluate how it has shaped lives today.

The Philippines had the hardest and longest lasting lockdowns as the primary health protocol against COVID-19. But even during such isolation, lives were still being born. It was with this scenario that the remote learning program for the Infant Development Program (IDP) of the UP Child Development Center was designed. The IDP was repositioned to accommodate the needs of infants in the face of a changed and uncharted environment of living and learning. It provided a venue for new families to facilitate learning for their infants, and in extension, navigate their roles as parents, some being first-time parents. The program evolved into a weekly community of parents providing support to each other, sharing questions, insights, difficulties, and breakthroughs. The weekly hour-long online session was

regularly attended by both mothers and fathers, even when both were also attending to their work responsibilities from home. It also became the venue where the fathers became more present, more vocal, and more engaged. For some, it was the fathers who were more actively participating and would take turns in attending.

Included in this study are the fathers of the three batches of infants who were born a month before and during the height of the lockdowns, and were included in the remote learning program. These children are now 4-5 years old and going to big schools after the school year. This study would show the effect of the infant development program in the parenting styles of the fathers these many years after. It would show how the fathers have grown into their roles, their perceptions of those roles and their new insights years after. The study will use the documentation from the program from 2020–2022 together with the interviews of the same fathers at this present time. It will endeavor to bring new insights into a parenting program that engages fathers to have more active caregiving roles in the early years of their children. Caregiving roles that are both enriching for children and fathers alike, expanding and enriching the roles of fathers beyond being providers for their families, and strengthening relationships throughout the lifespan of the family. It can provide insights in addressing gender-role stereotypes moving towards a strength-based, equitable, and fulfilling family life for all members of the family.

This would also be an inquiry for replicability and expandability of reach beyond the confines of what is currently being serviced in the center.

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Marital Satisfaction, Coparenting and Parenting Efficacy across the Transition to Parenthood: An Actor-Partner Interdependence Mediation Model

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Keywords: marital satisfaction, coparenting, parenting efficacy

Abstract

Coparenting involves how parents interact while negotiating, sharing, and managing their responsibilities, decisions, and practices related to their children, playing a significant role in child development (Feinberg, 2003). Positive coparenting relationships can enhance individual parenting, particularly parenting efficacy, which reflects a parent's belief in their competence to perform parenting tasks (Pedro et al., 2012).

Coparenting during the infancy stage can be particularly challenging, as parents collaborate to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for newborn care (McHale, 2007). Additionally, new parents may struggle to develop a sense of parenting efficacy due to the high demands of caring for infants and the adjustments required during the transition to parenthood (Pinto et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important to explore the mechanisms that can support early coparenting and enhance parenting efficacy during this challenging transition.

Studies have seen marital satisfaction as a foundation and one of the most robust predictors of coparenting quality (Christopher et al., 2015). When parents report higher levels of marital satisfaction, they tend to engage in more effective collaboration and share parenting responsibilities. This positive alliance not only can facilitate the development of

skills necessary for managing parenting tasks but also serves as a form of emotional support, thereby potentially enhancing parents' sense of efficacy in their roles (Cohen et al., 2015).

Based on family systems theory, mothers and fathers may function differently within the same family. Parental marital satisfaction may influence their own (actor effects) and their partner's coparenting and parenting efficacy (partner effects) (Cox & Paley, 2003). To date, no studies have examined the mediating role of coparenting in the relationship between prenatal marital satisfaction and parenting efficacy, nor have they fully explored the underlying family dynamics. This study was designed to address these gaps.

A total of 291 first-time married fathers and mothers from Hong Kong participated in this study. Both parents reported prenatal marital satisfaction at the third trimester (T1), perceived coparenting quality at 4 months postpartum (T2) and parenting efficacy at 9 months postpartum (T2). Actor-Partner Interdependence Mediation Model was used to examine this dyadic mediation associations.

The model fits the data well: $\chi 2(3) = 3.33$, $p = 0.34$, CFI = 0.999, TLI = 0.995, RMSEA = 0.019, SRMR = 0.016. Results suggested that the perceived quality of coparenting among both mothers and fathers served as a mediating factor in the relationship between their own and their partners' prenatal marital satisfaction and parenting efficacy. However, some gender differences were observed. For example, the direct effect of T1 marital satisfaction on T3 parenting efficacy was significant for fathers, while it was non-significant for mothers. This difference may be due to the fact that fathers may require more direct support from their marriages in their parenting roles. Findings offer longitudinal dyadic evidence of couple dynamics, indicating that future prevention and intervention efforts to enhance early parenting efficacy should prioritize parental marital satisfaction and promote effective coparenting.

3rd Class Building-Rm 211-J4-03
20250415124154824093642

The Role of Parental Emotional Intimacy and Emotional Support as a Chain Mediator Between Parental Playfulness and Children's Social-Emotional Ability—Multi-Group Analysis Based on Household Socioeconomic Status

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Keywords: socio-emotional competence, parents of young children, playness

Abstract

Social-emotional competence is crucial for the holistic development and well-being of young children (OECD, 2024). Although there is growing recognition of the importance of social-emotional competence in child development, exploration of the factors influencing social-emotional competence in young children remains inadequate. According to Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), individual's physical and psychological development processes demonstrate significant associations with microsystem environments with which they directly interact, such as family, school, and peer groups. Meanwhile, there is evidence that parental playfulness, as a positive psychological quality with intergenerational transmission characteristics, has a positive impact on the development of children's social and emotional abilities (Yeo et al.,2019). However, the intrinsic mechanisms underlying this relationship remain underexplored, with existing studies predominantly documented in international contexts. It is necessary to further explore the influence mechanism of parental playfulness on children's social and emotional abilities in the context of Chinese social culture.

Drawing upon Family System Theory, Relational Being Theory, and the Playfulness-situation-state Interactionist Framework, we have raised the following research questions: Do parental emotional closeness and parental emotional support play a chain mediating role in the influence of parental playfulness on children's social and emotional abilities? Does the family SES group play an overall moderating role in the relationship between parental playability, emotional intimacy, emotional support and children's social and emotional ability?

This study adopted a method combining stratified proportional sampling and random sampling, with 2,573 parents of children aged 3 to 6 in Guangdong Province as the research subjects. The survey contents include parental playfulness, the emotional closeness between parents, parental emotional support for children, and the development status of children's social and emotional abilities. Meanwhile, demographic variable information such as family SES was collected. To answer the research questions, we tested the chain mediating model by estimating the 95% confidence interval of Bootstrap. This model hypothesized that parental emotional closeness and parental emotional support played a chain mediating role in the influence of parental playability on children's social and emotional abilities. The family SES group has a moderating effect on the chain mediation model.

The results showed that our proposed model fitted the data well. Parental playfulness has a significant positive predictive effect on children's social and emotional abilities. Parental emotional closeness and emotional support respectively play separate mediating roles in the relationship between parental playfulness and children's social and emotional ability. Parental emotional closeness and emotional support play a chain-like mediating role in the relationship between parental playfulness and children's social and emotional ability. Among the three mediating paths, parental playfulness has the most significant impact on children's social and emotional abilities through parental emotional support. Furthermore, the level of family SES plays an overall moderating role in the relationship between parental playfulness, emotional intimacy, emotional support and children's social and emotional abilities. These finding imply that to promote the development of children's social and emotional abilities, parents should pay attention to their own playfulness, enhance communication and understanding between husband and wife, and attach importance to

emotional support for children.

3rd Class Building-Rm 211-J4-04
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Insightfulness of Chinese Parents During Interactions With Infants and Toddlers: A Study Based on the Insightfulness Assessment Tool

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Keywords: infants, parental insightfulness, parent-child interaction

Abstract

Responsive caregiving has three parts: observing infant signals, interpreting their needs, and acting accordingly. Insightfulness is key for good responsive care, but past research focused on behaviors, missing this cognitive-emotional aspect. This study uses an existing tool to study Chinese parents' insightfulness during interactions with their young children.

Based on attachment theory, Dr. Nina Koren - Karie developed the Insightfulness Assessment (IA) tool (Oppenheim & Koren - Karie, 2002). The IA employs a standardized video-based interview protocol to assess ten psychometric dimensions: anger, concern, focus, acceptance , separateness, richness, balance, coherence, openness, and insight. The tool also distinguishes between two temporal modes: real-time and retrospective (pass-time) insightfulness. Parents demonstrating strong performance in the first three dimensions were classified as "positively insightful."

With permission from developers, this study used the IA tool to evaluate Chinese

parents' insight. Goals were to (1) assess Chinese young parents' insight profiles and their links to demographics, (2) find key insight dimensions affecting dyadic interactions, and (3) guide evidence - based interventions for better responsive caregiving.

This study involved 40 young parent - child pairs, with 20 infants (10 - 24 months) and 20 toddlers (25 - 36 months). 82.5% of the adults were mothers. 80.0% of parents had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 72.5% of families had a monthly income over 20,000 yuan. Parent - child interactions were video - recorded in three settings (structured play, daily routines, spontaneous moments), each for at least 10 minutes. Later, parents were interviewed while reviewing clips, asked to interpret their child's behavior with real - life examples. Interview content was coded and scored on the IA scale to evaluate parents' insight.

Results indicated a moderate overall level of parental insightfulness ($M = 58.4$, $SD = 6.76$), with significant individual variability ($F = 41.016$, $p < .001$). Strengths included anger, concern and focus, while limitations involved openness and insight. Higher levels of overall insightfulness and certain sub-abilities were observed among parents from high socioeconomic backgrounds ($r = 0.380$, $p < .05$) and among parents of only children ($t = 0.093$, $p < .05$). Mothers demonstrated greater open-mindedness than fathers ($M = 4.80$ vs. 4.17, $p < .05$), and parents of girls were generally more tolerant and understanding than parents of boys ($M = 8.88$ vs. 8.60, $p < .05$).Positively insightful parents ($n = 15$) was scored significantly higher negatively insightful parents($n = 25$) than their counterparts ($M = 63.49$ vs. $M = 55.12$; $t = 3.505$, $p < .01$). While both real-time and retrospective insightfulness showed moderate effectiveness ($M = 5.20$), a heavy reliance on retrospective thinking was associated with non-positive insightfulness classification ($\beta = 3.733$, $p < .01$).

There are several implications based on the findings:(1) Parents, especially fathers, should closely observe children's verbal, behavioral and emotional signals to avoid stereotyping and imposing adult expectations. (2) Support should be given to parents lacking positive insights to recognize their children's strengths and individuality. (3) All parents, especially those of boys, should warmly accept their children and avoid negative emotions affecting their understanding of children's motivations. (4) Parents should be reflective in repeated interactions and refine interpretations and response strategies according to children's feedback.

3rd Class Building-Rm 211-J4-05
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Invisible Wounds: The Lingering Effects of Parents' Childhood Invalidating Family Environments and Their Impact on Problem Behaviors in Chinese Children

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Keywords: childhood invalidating family environment, supportive emotional socialization, children's problem behaviors

Abstract

Parental experiences within their families of origin play a crucial role in shaping current family dynamics and influencing their children's social adjustment. However, in the context of Chinese culture, there is a lack of research exploring how parents' childhood experiences in invalidating family environments influence children's problem behaviors through parental emotional socialization. Accordingly, this study, This longitudinal study, conducted over two waves spaced six months apart, examined data from 435 families with children attending kindergartens in Shanghai, China. Using a common fate mixed model, the study analyzed the relationships among parents' childhood experiences in invalidating family environments, supportive emotional socialization, and children's problem behaviors. The results indicated that maternal childhood invalidating family significantly predicted higher levels of both internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors in children, while paternal childhood invalidating family only significantly predicted externalizing behaviors and did not

have a significant effect on internalizing behaviors. Additionally, both paternal and maternal supportive emotional socialization mediated the relationship between parents' childhood invalidating family and children's internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors. The study offers theoretical insights into improving family dynamics and promoting children's healthy social development, providing practical guidance for early family intervention strategies.

3rd Class Building-Rm 212-J5-01
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Citizen Discourse and Power Practice in kindergarten Education Activities——Based on the Case Study of Kindergarten A, Nanjing

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Keywords: preschool children, citizenship, power practice

Abstract

Children's citizenship and citizenship education in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) are drawing attention from academics worldwide, which are seen as the foundation for a sustainable world. Recent studies have shown that children's citizenship is upheld by the Western discourses of neoliberalism, children's rights, developmentalism and sustainable development, while those in the non-Western contexts are ignored. In addition, previous studies of ECCE in China have not treated children's citizenship in much detail. Considering these research gaps, this study aims to explore teachers' conceptions of children's citizenship and citizenship-informed pedagogies in selected kindergartens in China. By employing the theoretical devices from Michel Foucault and Kuan-Hsing Chen, this study interrogates the global discourses of children's citizenship in the Chinese context and the dynamic syncretism of these discourses with the Chinese cultural and historical constructs. Interviews with kindergarten teachers and observations of children's daily activities were analysed against the theories of Foucault and Chen. Findings reveal that children's citizenship encompasses three core dimensions: relational citizenship, active participation, and challenging the status quo. Within these dimensions, the interplay between the global and

local discourses can be found, and the power dynamics in children's daily activities are discerned, whereby their citizenship becomes a relational and negotiated position.

3rd Class Building-Rm 212-J5-02
20250415092938995921375

When Parents Call the Shots and Children Are a Beat Behind: Executive Function as a Mediator Between Authoritarian Parenting and Preschool Procrastination

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Keywords: preschool procrastination, authoritarian parenting, executive function

Abstract

Procrastination affects approximately 15% to 20% of adults and appears to be particularly prevalent among adolescents. Emerging evidence suggests that early childhood may represent a critical period in the development of procrastinatory tendencies; however, the mechanisms underlying preschoolers' procrastination remain underexplored. Grounded in ecological systems theory, the present study examines associations between maternal authoritarian parenting and preschool children's procrastination, with a specific focus on the mediating role of executive function. A total of 748 mothers of children aged 3 to 6 years (Mage = 4.23, SD = 0.61; 52.7% boys) in Shanghai completed questionnaires assessing parenting style, children's executive function, and procrastination behavior. Findings indicated a positive association between maternal authoritarian parenting and children's procrastination. Furthermore, deficits in working memory and inhibitory control were found

to mediate this relationship. These results underscore the relevance of family dynamics in understanding preschool procrastination and highlight executive function as a potential underlying mechanism. The study contributes to a more comprehensive framework for conceptualizing early procrastination and may inform parenting practices and early interventions targeting time management skills.

3rd Class Building-Rm 212-J5-03
20250413215651565402907

Building a Theory of Adaptive Development for Children's Education: The Deep Integration of Dewey's Pragmatism and Montessori's Theory of Child Development

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Keywords: dewey pragmatism, montessori child development theory, stage adaptive practice development theory

Abstract

Based on Dewey's pragmatist educational theory and Montessori's child development theory, this study explores innovative pathways for their deep integration, aiming to construct the 'Stage Adaptability Practice Development Theory' to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for contemporary children's education. Initially, it analyzes the core tenets of Dewey and Montessori's educational philosophies: Dewey emphasizes the 'continuum of experience' and 'education as life,' focusing on children's active exploration and teacher guidance; Montessori focuses on children's sensitive periods and absorbent minds, advocating for autonomous learning and environmental support. Through comparative analysis, differences and commonalities between the two theories are identified, such as their activation of children's potential, recognition of environmental educational value, and redefinition of the teacher's role. Building on this, the 'Stage Adaptability Practice Development Theory' is proposed, establishing a system of practice levels tailored to children's developmental stages, and designing dynamic, optimized practice scenarios and innovative educational models. Case studies like 'Seasonal Nature Exploration' demonstrate the significant impact of this theory on enhancing children's abilities and improving educational quality. Additionally, challenges in practice are reflected upon, with strategies for

optimization suggested, and the future application prospects of the integrated theory in interdisciplinary research and global educational innovation are discussed, providing theoretical and practical references for equitable, high-quality, and innovative children's education.

3rd Class Building-Rm 212-J5-04
20250414190330335073861

Chinese Parenting Stress, Parenting Burnout and Preschoolers' Emotional-Behavioral Problems: An Analysis Using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Mediation Model

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Keywords: parenting stress, parenting burnout, emotional-behavioral problems

Abstract

This study employed the Actor-Partner Interdependence Mediation Model (APIMeM) to explore the associations between maternal and paternal parenting stress, parenting burnout, and preschoolers' emotional-behavioral problems in Chinese families. A total of 790 Chinese couples and their preschool-aged children participated. The findings revealed that parenting burnout significantly mediated the relationship between parenting stress and children's emotional and behavioral problems. Specifically, maternal parenting burnout fully mediated the link between maternal parenting stress and child outcomes, while father's parenting burnout played a partial mediating role in the relationship between father's parenting stress and preschoolers' emotional-behavioral problems. Notably, partner effects emerged: father's parenting stress can contribute to preschooler's emotional and behavioral problems through the indirect association of maternal parenting burnout.maternal stress was not a significant predictor of paternal burnout, highlighting the asymmetry of parental influence pathways. These results emphasize the need for family-centered interventions targeting co-parenting collaboration and shared responsibility to mitigate parenting stress and burnout, and foster preschooler's emotional-behavioral health.

3rd Class Building-Rm 213-K5-01
20250415175437719222074

Strengthening Teachers' Practice in Supporting Oral Language Acquisition and Competency for Children from Pacific Heritages in New Zealand Early Childhood Settings

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Keywords: pacific heritage children, oral language development, teacher practice

Abstract

The New Zealand early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017) highlights the importance of oral language acquisition for young children and includes the goals of supporting young children's language, identity, and culture. The curriculum explains that language is a taonga (treasure) and too precious to be left to chance. To help teachers support children who experience bilingual and multilingual pathways, Si'ilata's

(2019) Va'atele Framework uses the metaphor of the double hulled deep-sea canoe to illustrate how children's home languages, literacies, cultures and worldviews can be recognised alongside those of the educational setting. A critical understanding to this study is that Pacific children's oral language learning cannot be separated from children's home languages, literacies, cultures and worldviews and this is integral to teachers' effectiveness in supporting language.

This Teaching Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) funded project focusses on the quality of teacher-child interactions that support children's oral language learning and development, including in their home language, within the context of socio-cultural approaches to curriculum and assessment (Ministry of Education, 2017). The project focuses on how early childhood teachers in both Pacific and non-Pacific ECE settings can better support oral language development amongst children from Pacific heritages, whether they be mono-lingual, bi-lingual or multi-lingual.

The project involves a partnership with two Pacific Language Nests and two kindergartens: A'oga Amata EFKS Newtown; Te Punanga Reo o te Reo Kuki Airani; Moera and Waiwhetu Kindergartens from Hutt City Kindergartens in Wellington, New Zealand. The project began in early 2024 and uses a multiple case study design. It draws on Pacific values, such as respect, reciprocal relationships, family and belonging (Rimoni, Glasgow & Averill, 2022), and methodologies of teu le vā (Anae, 2019) and talanoa (Vaioleti, 2016) to strengthen the opportunities for researchers and teachers, and teachers and whānau, to share and build understandings of effective practices that support Pacific children's oral language learning.

In this presentation, we offer an overview of the project and discuss the development of a project specific tool that draws on Luafutu-Simpson's (2011) Fale Tele model. This tool is designed to strengthen teacher practices that support oral language acquisition for Pacific learners in these settings. The complexities of how to weave in Pacific cultural values and traditional practices such as talanoa, and teu le vā, into the research process are explored, along with implications for policy and practice.

3rd Class Building-Rm 213-K5-02

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The Localized Development of a Digital Literacy Assessment Instrument for Preschool Teachers: Aligning with the Industry Standard for Teachers' Digital Literacy

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Keywords: teachers' digital literacy, assessment instrument, localized development

Abstract

The Teachers' Digital Literacy standard (hereafter the Standard), released by the Ministry of Education of China in 2023, provides a critical framework for assessing teachers' digital literacy nationwide. However, standardized benchmarks alone are insufficient for diagnosing the developmental trajectories of teachers' digital competencies; validated assessment instruments are equally indispensable. While existing tools for evaluating teacher digital literacy have been developed internationally, they lack alignment with China's Standard, resulting in limited contextual relevance. Furthermore, preschool teachers exhibit unique professional development patterns characterized by temporal discontinuity in their past, present, and future competencies, distinguishing them from educators in other educational stages.

The Standard conceptualizes digital literacy through five dimensions: digital awareness, knowledge and skills of digital technologies, digital application, digital social responsibility, and professional development—encompassing two core domains: information literacy and data literacy. Building on a rigorous analysis of international digital literacy frameworks and China's Standard, this study adopts a hybrid methodology of "integrating

validated scales with context-specific constructs" to develop a localized digital literacy assessment instrument for preschool teachers.

The instrument undergoes four validation phases:Expert evaluations and cognitive interviews to ensure content validity; Item analysis to optimize discriminative power and representativeness; Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (EFA/CFA) to verify structural validity; Convergent validity analysis to assess clustering efficacy of related constructs.

The finalized instrument demonstrates robust psychometric properties (e.g., satisfactory model fit indices, Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.85$) and supports multifaceted applications, including teacher self-assessment, pre-post evaluations for training programs, and regional/institutional benchmarking. This work bridges the gap between policy-driven standards and actionable assessment tools, offering empirical rigor and contextual adaptability for China's educational digitalization initiatives.

3rd Class Building-Rm 213-K5-03
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Influencing Factors of Science Literacy of Pre-School Undergraduates and Their Countermeasures

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(Zhejiang Normal University)

Keywords: pre-school undergraduate education, scientific literacy, grounded theory

Abstract

The scientific literacy of preschool undergraduates is an important factor in the quality of preschool science education. Based on the relevant theories of teachers' science literacy, the research on the construction of science literacy model takes 15 undergraduate students majoring in preschool education in College E as the research objects, collates the original data obtained through interviews, and uses Nvivo11 to conduct open coding, spindle coding and selective coding for the obtained data. The influencing factors of science literacy of preschool education undergraduates are summarized into four parts: individual factors, interactive factors, environmental factors and experience factors, and the theoretical framework of influencing factors of science literacy of preschool education undergraduates is constructed. Among them, individual elements and experience elements play an important intermediary role. The cultivation and improvement of science literacy of pre-school education undergraduates depends on the mutual communication and help between individuals, tutors and peers, and on the coordination and promotion of school, family and society.

3rd Class Building-Rm 213-K5-04
20250414145005002409619

Unlocking the Potential of Teacher-Child Interactions: Practice of Sustained Shared Thinking Among Kindergarten Teachers

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Keywords: SST, professional development, empowerment

Abstract

Attending to and valuing children's voices reflects a deep respect for their needs, interests, and experiences. The dedication to listening to children's voices is a crucial step in empowering them and upholding their rights to participate. To better listen to children's voices, it is essential to adopt Sustained Shared Thinking (SST). It is an interactive process in which two or more individuals collaborate intellectually to enhance thinking, problem-solving, and learning(Brodie, 2014). This approach provides children with the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas freely, empowering them and enriching their learning experiences. Research indicates that the quality of SST practice is positively associated with children's cognitive, social and emotional development(Siraj et al., 2015). When children engage in SST, they feel valued and heard, which fosters their confidence and encourages active participation.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, a nursery school in Hong Kong, which serves children aged 2 to 6, implemented professional training programs. The programs aimed at enhancing teachers' skills in facilitating free play through the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) tools. Previous research orangized by the school highlighted that teachers possess strong capabilities in fostering effective teacher-child interactions. According to these findings, the school aims to conduct an in-depth study to further elevate teachers' professional competencies in order to facilitate more effective interaction by SST.

A comprehensive program was developed and implemented to enhance teachers' skills in SST. This included a structured self-study, allowing teachers to explore SST principles independently. Additionally, workshops were organized to introduce these concepts and facilitate discussions among teachers, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Class observations were conducted to provide real-time feedback, while professional coaching offered support to help teachers apply SST strategies effectively in their classrooms.

Guided by the Sustained Shared Thing and Emotional Well-being (SSTEW) Scale standards, it aimed to make impactful improvements in implementing SST with children. This included enhancing their skills in modeling thinking, encouraging children to elaborate on their ideas, and respecting each child's decisions and choices. Data collected from teacher questionnaires and reflective journals indicated that teachers found the program to be highly beneficial. It equipped them with: (1) skills in facilitating sustained shared thinking among teachers and children, (2) practical strategies to enhance the effectiveness of their interactions with children, (3) higher confidence in implementing SST within the classroom setting.

In conclusion, the nursery school's commitment to enhancing teachers' skills in SST reflects a vital investment in early childhood education. By prioritizing collaborative learning and professional development, the school has successfully empowered educators to foster meaningful interactions with children. This initiative not only strengthens teacher capabilities but also enriches children's learning experiences, promoting their cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Continued exploration of SST practices will further support the evolution of teaching strategies, ultimately benefiting both educators and the children they serve.

3rd Class Building-Rm 213-K5-05
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Laying the Foundations: Training Student Teachers to Support Social and Emotional Development through Picturebooks and Storysacks

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Nancy Ting
(Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education)

Keywords: student teacher training, socio-emotional learning, interactive read-alouds

Abstract

This presentation examines a teacher training initiative designed to equip early childhood student teachers with the skills and resources to foster young children's social and emotional development. The programme was developed as an extension of a larger project that focused on supporting K3 children's transition to primary school. Research findings from the initial project, that involved six kindergartens and three primary schools, demonstrated its ability to support children's socio-emotional development. Building on these findings, the researchers developed the current project to extend the work to student teachers, with the goal of embedding these practices into future generations of early childhood educators. The programme utilized five carefully selected picturebooks (Owl Babies, Giraffes Can't Dance, The Kissing Hand, The Rabbit Listened, and The Dragon Who Didn't Like Fire), paired with custom-designed Storysacks containing play-based and literacy-focused materials. These resources were developed with an emphasis on blending global pedagogical trends—such as interactive read-alouds and socio-emotional learning—with local cultural contexts and classroom practices in Hong Kong. The picturebooks placed in the Storysacks were available in either English or Chinese, ensuring accessibility for children in bilingual learning

environments and reflect global efforts to promote inclusivity and prepare children for diverse, interconnected societies. Student teachers participated in three workshops, including training in the Whole Book Approach to interactive read-alouds and strategies for using the Storysacks to engage children in discussions and activities centered on socio-emotional themes such as empathy, resilience, and self-expression. The final workshop used questionnaires to collect student teacher reflections after their 4-week practicum experience, during which they implemented the storybooks and Storysacks in classroom settings. While data analysis is ongoing, preliminary findings indicate that student teachers responded very positively to the training, reporting increased confidence in facilitating discussions about emotions, using play-based resources to support children's learning, and developing appropriate activity plans for their teaching. A possible recommendation for future iterations of the programme is for the Storysacks to include bilingual resources, with two copies of each storybook in both English and Chinese, to further support dual-language teaching and learning. This presentation explores how global approaches to socio-emotional learning can be thoughtfully adapted to meet the unique needs of local classrooms. By integrating global and local perspectives, teacher training programmes can enhance early childhood education and provide young learners with the emotional foundations essential for lifelong learning and well-being.

3rd Class Building-Rm 215-K6-01
20250423224758790831538

Between Curiosity and Constraints: Hong Kong Kindergarten Teachers' Implementation of Inquiry-Based STEM Education

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Keywords: early STEM education, questioning skills, science inquiry

Abstract

Inquiry-based STEM practices have been widely recognized for fostering young children's curiosity and equipping them with a broad range of cognitive, social, and problem-solving skills(Erol & İvrendi, 2024; Tippett & Milford, 2017). However, despite increasing emphasis on innovation and STEM education in Hong Kong, the integration of STEM into early childhood education (ECE) remains relatively underdeveloped. Many kindergarten teachers remain uncertain about how to effectively implement inquiry-based STEM practices within the constraints of their existing curriculum (Prasad, 2023). Furthermore, limited research has explored Hong Kong kindergarten teachers' beliefs, classroom practices, and challenges related to inquiry-based STEM education.

This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of three kindergarten teachers regarding inquiry-based STEM practices, as well as the factors that support or hinder their

implementation, using a case study approach was adopted. Participants were three in-service teachers working in local kindergartens in Hong Kong. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, informal classroom observations, and document analysis.

The findings revealed that the implementation of integrated STEM practices is influenced by two key dimensions: contextual factors (e.g., time constraints, curriculum demands, resource availability, and parental support) and teacher capacity (e.g., content knowledge, pedagogical skills and confidence). In particular, the study highlights the urgent need for enhancing teachers' ability to use effective questioning techniques that stimulate children's inquiry and support STEM learning.

This study offers valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges of embedding inquiry-based STEM practices in Hong Kong kindergartens. It also provides practical implications for designing professional training programs that better support kindergarten teachers in implementing inquiry-based STEM education meaningfully and confidently within the local ECE context.

3rd Class Building-Rm 215-K6-02
20250412152105774559691

Interplay between Experiential Learning, Reflective Capacity, and Positive Mirror Effects: A Serial Mediation Model

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Wing Yee Ho
(Hong Kong Metropolitan University)
HoiYan Lau
(Hong Kong Metropolitan University)

Keywords: reflective capacity, experiential learning, special education

Abstract

This quantitative study investigated the mediating role of reflective capacity (i.e., reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection with others) in the relationship between practicum and positive mirror effects in early childhood special education teacher training. Special education necessitates a multifaceted skill set and emotional resilience due to its inherent complexities. Effective teaching methodologies, adaptability, and personalized support tailored to children's individual needs are essential components to promote learning and teaching quality. Practicum, a form of experiential learning that emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities through direct engagement, has been demonstrated to facilitate positive mirror effects. The positive mirror effect occurs when individuals observe others developing an action-understanding and executing the learned knowledge or skills and gain insight into subsequent life situations. Research supports that reflective capacity generates positive mirror effects that can enhance the ability to develop strategies and apply learned information to resolve unpredictable and challenging school

settings. However, the relationships between experiential learning, reflective capacity, and positive mirror effects remain unclear. By examining the interactions among these variables, this study sought to elucidate the serial mediating effects through which experiential learning contributes to positive mirror effects, thereby advancing both theoretical and practical understanding to maximize benefits for children with special educational needs.

Participants (N = 324, age range 16–45, 93.5% female) were pre-service and in-service teachers studying undergraduate early childhood education programs, specializing in leadership and special educational needs. The Experiential Learning Approach Questionnaire, Reflective Practice Questionnaire, and Mirror Effects Inventory were used to assess students' practicum experiences, reflective capacity, and positive mirror effects, respectively. The hypothesized serial multiple mediation model was analyzed using the PROCESS macro, Model 6.

Results showed that practicum experiences were positively associated with reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, reflection with others, and positive mirror effects. Furthermore, the findings indicated that reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection with others partially mediated the relationship between practicum experiences and the positive mirror effects.

Experiential learning enables students to develop reflective capacity and generate positive mirror effects. This study demonstrates the progressive reflective process that experiential learning generates positive mirror effects through sequential steps of reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection with others. Importantly, the study delves into the impact of these elements within supportive and group environments on pedagogical approaches and educational achievements. The findings offer insights that can help student teachers build critical competencies through reflective practice, subsequently strengthening their capacity to cater to diverse children's needs.

The findings highlight the importance of enhancing special education teachers' reflection capacity through experiential learning activities in practicum at all stages: real-time adaptation, post-action analysis, and collaborative dialogue. Such practices can enhance students' ability to recognize others' good practices and gain insights into their own actions, ultimately fostering group collaboration.

Future research may explore longitudinal outcomes of reflective capacity, cross-cultural adaptations of reflective practices, and innovations in technology-enhanced reflection (e.g., virtual simulations). These investigations may refine strategies to optimize the impact of experiential learning in collective settings.

3rd Class Building-Rm 215-K6-03
20250415020103580790170

Investigating Hong Kong Kindergarten Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Teaching Fundamental Movement Skills

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Keywords: fundamental movement skills, teachers' self efficacy, Hong Kong Kindergartens

Abstract

Developing Fundamental movement skills (FMS) is crucial for young children's development, as it shapes their overall well-being and future cognitive achievements. FMS in the early years includes locomotor skills, object control skills, and stability skills. Children's learning and teacher's teaching share an inseparable relationship. Previous research underscored that teachers' self-efficacy in teaching FMS influences students' acquisition of these skills. Nonetheless, there is a notable lack of empirical studies investigating the self-efficacy of HK kindergarten teachers in teaching FMS. To address this gap, the present qualitative study aims to 1) explore in-service kindergarten teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in teaching FMS and 2) identify factors influencing their self-efficacy based on

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. This qualitative study adopted purposive sampling to recruit 24 in-service kindergarten teachers in HK to conduct individual semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes, a total of 1.080 minutes of interview data was collected. The data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach, with a rigorous and iterative review process to extract common themes. The results demonstrated that both experienced and novice teachers exhibited low self-efficacy in teaching FMS, primarily due to insufficient subject knowledge and limited professional development opportunities. Five themes emerged: social persuasion, mastery experience, psychological and emotional states, vicarious experience and professional development. Participants also underscored the benefits of co-teaching in enhancing their self-efficacy in teaching FMS. The study provides valuable insights for re-evaluation and improvements in pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. The broader implications of these findings are also discussed.

3rd Class Building-Rm 215-K6-04
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Professional Gains but Personal Strains? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis on the Effects of Professional Development Programs on the Early Childhood Educators' Well-being

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Keywords: professional developmemt, early childhood educators' well-being, Meta-anal ysis

Abstract

Quality early childhood education is widely recognized as essential for supporting early childhood development, with evidence gathered globally to substantiate this claim. Teachers' professional development plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of early childhood education. In response, professional development programs with diverse focuses, designs, and content have emerged worldwide to improve teachers' professional qualifications and skills. In many countries, preschool teachers are required to participate in these programs for a specified number of hours to meet appraisal and certification

requirements. While it is widely agreed that participation in professional development programs enhances teachers' professional growth, the demands and pressures associated with intensive professional development programs may also lead to unintended effects on their well-being, given the highly complex and challenging nature of preschool teachers' work. For example, an increasing number of studies highlight that preschool teachers face high workloads and long working hours (Cumming et al., 2017; Bar Gosen et al.,2024;Nwoko et al, 2023).

This study conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to examine the effects of professional development programs on preschool teachers' well-being. A total of 17 studies investigating these effects were included in the analysis following a rigorous literature search and screening process. The included studies evaluated professional development programs with diverse designs and focuses. An overall medium positive effect size of Hedges' $g = 0.355$ ($p < .001$) was found, indicating that participation in professional development programs has a positive impact on preschool teachers' well-being. We also examined the potential moderators influencing the realization of the effects. In particular, the small sample size, individually participation, appropriate training frequency, simple but effective training method and post-test within short period can increase the effect; however, the extra demand practices and controlling during the implementation may drop the effect. These results offer both theoretical and practical implications, highlighting the need for holistic and well-designed professional development support for preschool teachers to promote both their professional and personal development.

3rd Class Building-Rm 215-K6-05
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From Support to Intentions: Deciphering the Chain Mediation Pathways Alleviating Employment Anxiety in ECE Pre-service Teachers Within Low-Fertility Environments

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Keywords: ECE pre-service teachers, employment anxiety, school support

Abstract

This study examines how school support can alleviate the employment anxiety of ECE pre-service teachers in the context of low fertility, including 382 junior and senior ECE pre-service teachers from seven universities in eastern and western cities of China. The results of the chain mediation effect test indicated that employment intention and professional identity played a significant chain mediating role between school support and employment anxiety. Interestingly, school support could not directly reduce students' employment anxiety, but it could reduce anxiety by targeting students' professional identity in order to help students enhance their psychological capital while ensuring their employment intention. These findings provide important action goals and reform directions for school support education to alleviate students' employment anxiety. Limitations, implications, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

3rd Class Building-Rm 214-L4-01
20250403095011035143102

Leveraging Machine Learning in Early Childhood Research to Optimize Resource Allocation at Preschools

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Keywords: machine learning in education, resource allocation, early identification for learning support

Abstract

Effective resource allocation in preschools is essential for fostering equitable and impactful early learning experiences. With limited resources and diverse developmental needs among children, preschools must adopt strategies that maximize outcomes while maintaining efficiency. This study leverages machine learning techniques to analyze data from developmental checklists, enhancing the early detection of children at risk of requiring learning support upon entering primary school. Simultaneously, it addresses teacher workload concerns by identifying and eliminating non-contributory checklist items, streamlining assessment processes and optimizing resource deployment.

Using predictive modeling techniques and feature selection algorithms, the study identified checklist items most critical for predicting learning outcomes. This approach not only improves the accuracy of predicting learning support needs but also highlights redundant items, paving the way for a more efficient assessment framework. By reducing teacher

workload while maintaining assessment rigor, this optimization allows educators to focus on impactful teaching strategies that directly benefit children's development. Generated machine learning models demonstrated accuracy in identifying at-risk children, enabling targeted interventions to provide timely and effective support.

This research underscores the potential of machine learning to drive evidence-based decision-making in early childhood education, improving both operational efficiency and outcomes for children. Future work will focus on refining predictive models with longitudinal data and creating actionable guidelines for classroom implementation. By bridging the gap between data-driven insights and practical applications, this study fosters a proactive approach to learning support and resource optimization in early education.

3rd Class Building-Rm 214-L4-02
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Digital Activities, Not Screen Time, Associated With Preschoolers' Well-Being: Evidence From China

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Keywords: digital time, China, young children

Abstract

Studies indicate that early digital use can adversely affect preschoolers' digital well being. However, the relationship between digital use and preschoolers' digital well being may be more complex, as preschoolers can experience both beneficial and risky aspects of digital engagement. Guided by a strength-based perspective and a balanced view of digital well-being, this study utilized stratified sampling to survey 2,432 parents of young children across six provinces in China. Through Latent Profile Analysis (LPA), four distinct profiles of preschoolers' digital well-being were identified: Minimal Users (5.7%), Functional Users (43%), Vulnerable Users (34.7%), and Heavy-risk Users (16.7%). Additionally, the Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve analysis revealed that children scoring above 29.5 on the Problematic Media Use Measure Short Form (PMUM-SF) had a high likelihood of being classified as heavy-risk users. Notably, digital use's nature (rather than 'time') showed significant associations with preschoolers' digital well-being. Specifically, increased engagement in entertainment-related digital activities was linked to a higher probability of being classified as either heavy-risk users or Vulnerable Users, whereas greater involvement in creative digital activities corresponded with a reduced likelihood of being categorized as heavy-risk users. The implications of these findings are discussed in detail.

3rd Class Building-Rm 214-L4-03
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Systematic Review on Application of Social Robots in Early Childhood Education and It's Ethical Considerations

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Keywords: social robot, child-robot interaction, ethical consideration

Abstract

Background. Generative and responsive-AI has been widely used researched in the field of early childhood education. However, the standpoint and purpose of research in this field are rarely examined. Since at no stage of the life cycle of an AI system should humans be compromised or forced into a subordinate position (UNESCO, 2021), the application of AI on young children who are generally considered a disadvantaged and vulnerable group needs to be further investigated to clarify and avoid potential ethical risks.

Purpose. This systematic review aims to examine the standpoint, purpose, theoretical framework, specific application, and results of social robots on children and analyze the ethical risks accordingly.

Methods. 757 research articles published between 2014-2024 were obtained on Web of Science and EBSCO using Boolean (social robots OR educational robots OR robot partner OR humanoid robots OR peer robots) AND (0-6 year OR early childhood OR young children OR preschool OR kindergarten OR preschooler). PRISMA standard (Moher, 2009) was

adopted for analysis of the 66 articles included.

Results. Purpose. 42.4% of articles (n=28) aim to investigate whether robots can act as children's social partners or agents, so as to better promote and intervene in children's development in certain areas. 7.6% (n=5) considered teachers' attitudes towards and interaction with social robots. 12.1% (n=8) compared differences between child-child interaction and child-robot interaction. 7.6% (n=5) investigated robotic technologies targeted at children with developmental disorders. Theoretical framework. 24.2% (n=16) used Human-Robot Interaction (HRI) or child-robot interaction theory. 10.6% (n=7) used the theory of the mind. Other theoretical frameworks used included Embodied Cognition Theory, the Social Agency Theory, and Constructive learning and Attentional Capacity Theory. Application of robots. 74.2% (n=49) were adult-assisted child-robot interaction, among which 32 were assisted by researchers, 10 by parents, and 7 by teachers. 15.15% (n=10) were children interacting alone with robots. Settings. 51.5% (n=34) of research was conducted in a clinic or treatment/evaluation room. 10.6% (n=7) were in school settings, 1 in regular big-group activities, 2 in small-group activities, and 4 in non-classroom separate rooms inside the school. 2 were conducted in a home environment.

Discussion. In child-robot interactions, preserving children's dignity and rights is critical. Current research predominantly employs social robots for child training/intervention, raising ethical risks due to insufficient age-appropriate theoretical frameworks (over half lack explicit frameworks). HRI remains underdeveloped as a theory, prioritizing robot-centric goals over child-centered approaches, risking children's instrumentalization as test subjects. Most studies rely on artificial, researcher-assisted settings rather than natural learning environments. Removing children from their natural contexts for isolated training demands rigorous ethical justification. The technical-procedural emphasis on robot integration exacerbates risks, necessitating interdisciplinary, child-centric theoretical frameworks to address ethical challenges.

Conclusions. In general, social robots are used in areas where there are inherent ethical risks. The necessity of research projects applying robots to children should be demonstrated, especially intervention and pull-out training, to ensure the dignity of children and the subjectivity of child development.

3rd Class Building-Rm 214-L4-04
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Digital Intelligence of Chinese Early Childhood Teachers under the Impact of the AI Era

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Keywords: digital intelligence, early childhood teachers, digital intelligence frame

Abstract

Digital intelligence (DI) constitutes a unique element of early childhood teachers skills. This study aimed to examine the status quo, the profiles and the influential factors of digital intelligence among Chinese early childhood teachers.

Digital intelligence of early childhood teachers in this study was divided into eight main components: professional engagement, digital resources, teaching and learning, assessment, empowering learners, facilitating learners' digital competence, digital environment, extrinsic digital engagement. Based on expert guidance and these eight main components, the Digital Intelligence of Early Childhood Teachers (DIECT) were constructed by twenty-nine items, which scored on the five-level Likert scale. 2040 Chinese early

childhood teachers completed an online survey. Principle component analysis was conducted on the first half (n = 1020) of the sample, while the second half (n = 1020) of the data was used to verify the EFA results. And the study performed a two-step cluster analysis on three main variables, including geographical area, urban or rural areas and education level to obtain the potential profiles.

Findings indicated that: (1) the Chinese version of the Digital Intelligence of Early Childhood Teachers (DIECT) is culturally and contextually appropriate; (2) Chinese early childhood teachers are generally beginners; (3) three profiles of Chinese early childhood teachers with different digital intelligence levels emerged: the least level, the medium level, the highest level; (4) there were significant effects of regions, urban or rural areas, and educational backgrounds; (5)among eight components, digital resources and professional engagement have relatively high scores.

3rd Class Building-Rm 214-L4-05
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The Effect of Robot Programming Course Practice on the Cultivation of Computational Thinking and Creative Thinking in Young Children

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Keywords: robot programming, computational thinking, creative thinking

Abstract

With the advent of the digital age, computational thinking and creative thinking have become important skills in the 21st century. Robot programming education, with its strong visual and operational features, has shown great potential in early childhood education. However, research on robot programming education for young children in a localized context is relatively scarce, and existing studies have limitations in programming tools and task design. This study explores the specific impact of a six-week robot programming course on young children's computational thinking and creative thinking, with the aim of providing references for the practice of early childhood programming education.

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research method, selecting 47 senior kindergarten children from two natural classes in a public kindergarten in Shanghai as the research subjects, including 23 children in the experimental class and 24 in the control class. The children in the experimental class participated in a six-week robot programming course, while the control class conducted regular activities in the five major fields related to the theme during the same period.

The research results showed that after the course, the overall level of computational

thinking of the children in the experimental class was significantly higher than that of the control class, especially in the sub-dimensions of hardware/software, modularization and control structure, where there were significant differences in scores. This indicates that the robot programming course can effectively promote children's understanding and application of computational thinking concepts. The overall level of creative thinking and the scores in dimensions such as originality and reflection of the children in the experimental class were significantly higher than those of the control class. This also demonstrates that robot programming has a good effect on the cultivation of children's creative thinking.

Student Center-P1-01
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When Direction Meets Order: The Effects of Number Line Direction on Children's Estimation Performance

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Keywords: number line estimation, spatial-numerical association, reading and writing direction

Abstract

Numerical cognition research underscores the role of spatial-numerical mappings in children's mathematical development (McCrink et al., 2017). This mapping is thought to be influenced by reading/writing direction, such that individuals who acquire reading/writing in the left-to-right direction tend to associate smaller numbers with the left and larger numbers with the right (Dehaene et al, 1990). Presenting number lines in varying directions may help researchers examine the effects of direction on individuals' numerical representation. Here, we test the effects of number line direction (i.e., left-to-right [LR] versus right-to-left [RL]) and the order of presentation (LR or RL first) on children's estimation performance as measured by their percentage of absolute error (PAE = [target - estimate]/range*100%).

A total of 53 Hong Kong children (Mage=5.17 years) completed our number line estimation task including 10 LR trials and 10 RL trials. Half of the children completed LR trials first whereas the others completed RL trials first. To examine the effects of direction

(LR vs. RL) and presentation order (LR first vs. RL first), we conducted a linear mixed-effects model with PAE as the dependent variable, direction, order, and their interaction as the fixed effects, and participant and item as the random effects. Preliminary results revealed no significant main effects of direction ($\beta = 0.019$, $p = 0.634$) or order ($\beta = 0.019$, $p = 0.464$) on children's estimation performance. However, the Direction × Order interaction was marginally significant ($\beta = -0.042$, $p = 0.071$). Although not statistically significant, children who completed the LR trials first performed descriptively better by having a lower PAE on these trials (MPAE=0.232) compared to their counterparts who completed these trials after RL trials (MPAE=0.273), p= 0.145. Children's performance on the RL trials was comparable whether they received these trials before (MPAE=0.250) or after the LR trials (MPAE=0.255). These findings suggested that children's estimation accuracy on LR trials (aligned with reading/writing direction) may potentially worsen if they complete RL trials (misaligned with reading/writing direction) first.

Although the interaction effect and post-hoc test were not statistically significant-likely due to a small sample size-the observed trend suggests emerging influences of direction and order on children's numerical estimation. Specifically, five-year-olds may be more accurate on the trials that are aligned (i.e., LR trials) versus misaligned with their reading/writing direction (i.e., RL trials), but only if they complete these trials first. Together, the findings suggest the early emergence of spatial-numerical mapping and the potential susceptibility.

Data collection is currently underway, we will report the findings of 170 children at the conference. The pattern of results if persisting will serve as a foundation for future research to examine the effects of experiences within (e.g., trial order) and beyond (e.g., reading/writing direction) the study on children's numerical estimation performance. By delineating factors that shape children's spatial-numerical mapping, the findings may also inform practices to align early math education with children's development and cultural contexts.

Student Center-P1-02
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Exploratory Study on the Curriculum Model for Cultivating Student's Drama Literacy in Teacher Training Program

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Keywords: teacher training program, small-scale touring performances, children's theater

Abstract

Children's theater is a comprehensive educational medium which can nurture young children in various aspects, including cognitive development, language learning, social-emotional growth, creativity, and cultural literacy. It is essential to cultivate students' children's drama literacy to help them integrate drama into teaching .

This study aims to explore the learning effectiveness of using a group-based approach in a children's drama course, where students perform touring children's theater in kindergartens.

Providing students with opportunities to perform children's theater is a common instructional method. There are two different curriculum models:1.Large-scale theater performances involve performing on a big stage, requiring refined execution, extensive teamwork, and significant financial support. These performances reach a larger number of young audiences. 2.Small-scale touring performances are more flexible and mobile. Students not only act but also take on multiple roles, such as script writing, prop and set design, and directing. They work in teams of 6-8 members, continually refining their production. Since the performances are brought directly to kindergartens, students can experience firsthand the diverse reactions of young children and interact with them up close.

This study involved 17 students, who, under the guidance of professional children's

drama instructors, received training in voice and body expression, creative thinking, and script writing. The students then formed small groups, selected picture book stories, wrote scripts, created props, and performed in five kindergartens for a total of 518 young children. The kindergarten teachers provided positive feedback on the performances.

The experience significantly improved students' abilities in the following areas, with an average rating above 4.0 on a five-point Likert scale in the "Perceived Benefits of Children's Theater Performance" assessment: 1.Voice and body expression. 2.Selecting appropriate drama content for young children and adapting stories into scripts. 3.Creating music, props, and backgrounds for performances. 4.Engaging and interacting with young children during performances. 5.Learning teamwork and problem-solving. 6.Developing a positive mindset to handle unexpected situations. 7.Boosting self-confidence.

Through interviewing their touring experiences, witnessed children's enthusiasm for drama and felt a strong motivation to incorporate children's theater into their future teaching practices.

The study suggests that this curriculum model should be continuously refined and strengthened through close collaboration between teacher training program and kindergartens, ensuring that early childhood educators develop the necessary drama literacy to enhance young children's learning experiences.

Student Center-P1-03
202504061502357766883O6

Bridging Western Feeding Knowledge and Local Food Traditions with Professional Learning Opportunities for Preschool Teachers in Singapore

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Keywords: professional learning opportunities, preschool teachers, child-feeding practices

Abstract

Teacher education in feeding practices can enable educators to support children's health, nutrition and wellbeing. This may be especially important in busy urban nations like Singapore, where responsibility for feeding young children has increasingly transferred from families to early childhood educators, as preschoolers spend most of their day at childcare settings (Health Promotion Board, 2021; Lim et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2014). Certainly, preschool teachers desire more educational resources on facilitating mealtimes (Olarte et al., 2022). However, most literature on child feeding comes from the West (Anderson et al., 2017), with globalization accounting for the spread of Western child-feeding approaches and guidance. As the dominant understanding of how to nurture preschoolers is based on research done in Western societies, with middle-class children, it does not always account for cultural diversity (File, 2012; Hatch, 2012; National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2020). This poses a challenge to teacher-educators offering child-feeding professional learning opportunities in Singapore. After all, when viewed only through a Western lens, the feeding styles of non-white caregivers may be misunderstood as sub-optimal (Rohit et al., 2021). Researchers acknowledge that existing perspectives in child feeding may be culturally biased (Anderson et al., 2017). Therefore, teacher-educators can struggle to help preschool teachers reconcile Western feeding knowledge and local mealtime

traditions.

In this globalized world, preschool teachers need localized child-feeding professional learning opportunities. Thus, I present findings from a two-cycle action research study designed to develop and pilot such opportunities for early childhood educators—working with young children (aged 1 to 6 years)—at a university in Singapore. As a teacher-educator at the research site, I asked the question: How can I leverage preschool teachers' food-related funds of knowledge to provide culturally sustaining child-feeding professional learning opportunities in Singapore? To respond to the research question, I engaged 20 Singapore-based preschool teachers as participants. In Cycle 1, I analysed data from 12 semi-structured interviews, five mealtime observations and five menu documents to understand local educators' child-feeding knowledge and challenges. Together with the extant literature, these Cycle 1 discoveries informed the Cycle 2 action step comprising two localized learning opportunities: a teacher reflection tool and WhatsApp chat group aimed at strengthening participants' culturally embedded knowledge of and confidence in their child-feeding practices. Data from semi-structured interviews conducted at two points in Cycle 2, a review of participant-generated mind maps, personal reflection documents and WhatsApp chat logs, coupled with field notes and analytic memos, enabled evaluation of the project's effectiveness and the generation of four findings. These findings indicate that to localize existing guidance on feeding young children, teacher-educators need to: (a) leverage local preschool teachers' values, attitudes and beliefs; (b) marinate Western literature and Eastern traditions; (c) build safety and trust to make child-feeding learning feel less risky; and (d) combine both introspection and community support to achieve change in mealtime practices. Implications from this study include the need to strengthen relationships between teacher-educators and preschool teachers, and to expand child-feeding learning opportunities both within and beyond local universities.

Student Center-P1-04
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A Study on the Effectiveness of Preschool Principals Participating in the "Adler Parent-Teacher Consultant and Parent-Child Life Coach Program"

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Keywords: Adlerian psychology, preschool leadership, principal professional development, parent-teacher collaboration

Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of preschool principals' participation in the "Adler Parent-Teacher Consultant and Parent-Child Life Coach Program" on their practical management and leadership effectiveness. The course content is grounded in Adlerian psychology, particularly the 4C model, which addresses children's intrinsic psychological needs—connection, competence, significance, and courage. Experiential components of the program include early recollections, sibling constellation analysis, strengths assessment, relationship-building, positive communication, natural and logical consequences, Socratic questioning, and family meetings. The instructional strategies encompass theoretical lectures, group discussions, situational role-playing, and reflective practices.

This qualitative research involved six preschool principals who completed the program. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analysis of learning process documentation. The findings reveal significant self-perceived transformations among the

principals: (1) enhanced self-awareness and emotional regulation; (2) increased inclination to explore the underlying causes of team members' behaviors rather than making hasty judgments; (3) improved capacity to listen empathetically to the concerns of teachers and parents, offering support and encouragement by recognizing their strengths and courage; (4) elevated professional competence in building parent-teacher relationships and guiding parental practices; (5) a shift from prioritizing programmatic efficiency to a more child-centered and need-sensitive approach; (6) hands-on experience in designing and facilitating Adlerian group sessions, which fostered emotional connections with parents and facilitated mutual understanding of educational philosophies; and (7) for novice principals, the program served as a valuable support system to mitigate managerial stress and embrace imperfection while progressing through practice.

Overall, the Adlerian life coaching program contributed to the development of consistent educational values and counseling strategies within preschools, thereby strengthening the professional confidence of teaching teams.

It is recommended that Adler-based workshops be integrated into in-service professional development programs for preschool principals, as they offer practical benefits for educational leadership and school management.

Student Center-P1-05
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Parental Perception and Engagement in Young Children's Play at Home: Interviews on How It Relates to Children's Experiences in Early Childhood Settings

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Keywords: parents, children's play at home, early childhood settings

Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how parents of young children perceive their children's play at home in relation to their experiences in early childhood settings, and how they engage in their children's play.

Background

Interviews with mothers of children aged 2 to 6 years revealed that many view play as meaningful when it brings satisfaction to their children (Tomioka, 2020). Moreover, mothers were found to adjust their involvement in play by taking into account their children's interpersonal relationships and play experiences in early childhood settings.

For instance, when one mother was unsure how to respond to her child's selfish behavior during play, she recalled a comment from a teacher that her child was able to exercise self-control and yield play opportunities to others at kindergarten. Based on this, the mother decided to first meet her child's needs (Tomioka, 2022).

In this way, parents may envision their children's social experiences in early childhood settings and strive to balance those with their own involvement at home. However, the relationship between such parental perceptions and actual play behavior at home has not been thoroughly examined.

Therefore, this study explores how parents understand these experiences and how this understanding is reflected in their approach to play at home. We believe that the findings will deepen our understanding of parent-child play and offer insights that can contribute to promoting cooperation between families and early childhood institutions, as well as to supporting parenting practices.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative, interpretive approach as its analytical framework. Participants currently include four Japanese parents of young children. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit rich, contextualized narratives that illustrate how parents understand their children's experiences in early childhood settings and how they draw on this understanding to engage with their children's play at home.

Findings and Discussion

While data collection and analysis are still ongoing, the emerging narratives shed light on how parents perceive their children's developmental experiences and how they respond to them at home. One notable feature is parents' attempts to complement and reinforce their children's experiences in early childhood settings. For example, when a child showed interest in new equipment or activities at daycare, some parents incorporated similar elements into play at home. One parent described encouraging a child who was frustrated after losing a relay race at kindergarten by saying, "Let's run together," and offering support and advice.

Another emerging feature is parents' efforts to address their children's developmental challenges through play. For instance, when a biting incident occurred during a conflict over toy sharing at daycare, a parent recreated the situation during play at home, taking on the role of a play partner and encouraging the child to express their feelings with words by saying, "It's okay to say, 'I don't like that.'" The study will continue to collect narratives that illustrate such parental practices in order to further explore their nature and significance.

Student Center-P1-06
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Financial Education in Early Childhood Education Settings: A Holistic Approach to Early Development

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Keywords: financial education, holistic approach, experiential learning

Abstract

Early childhood serves as a foundational period for shaping cognitive, social, and emotional competencies that influence lifelong learning and behavioral patterns. Financial education, when introduced during preschool years, extends beyond numerical comprehension-it fosters problem-solving, impulse control, and social responsibility. This research advocates for a holistic developmental model of financial literacy, preparing children for real-world financial interactions and responsible decision-making.

Financial education in preschool settings plays a crucial role in fostering interdisciplinary growth, integrating cognitive development, social-emotional skills, and ethical learning. Basic financial concepts also serve as an extension of early numeracy skills, helping children distinguish quantities, compare values, and recognize currency as a medium of exchange. Understanding financial transactions enhances classification and sequencing skills, supporting cognitive abilities necessary for later mathematical learning.

Beyond cognitive benefits, financial education contributes significantly to social-emotional development. Learning financial concepts fosters self-regulation by teaching children the principles of saving, spending, and delayed gratification. Studies (e.g., Tympa et al., 2024) indicate that financial literacy programs at the preschool level strengthen impulse control and goal-setting abilities, emphasizing the importance in making thoughtful decisions

regarding financial and personal choices. Additionally, financial interactions encourage empathy, as children learn to consider the needs and preferences of others when making economic decisions. Furthermore, early financial education plays significant role ethical learning. Introducing children to financial responsibility at an early age helps them cultivate ethical decision-making skills, allowing them to assess notions of fairness, sharing, and sustainability.

Understanding how financial behaviors impact individual well-being and broader social contexts encourages children to develop responsible habits that align with ethical and societal values. By incorporating experiential learning strategies, such as role-playing, classroom currency exchanges, and problem-solving exercises, educators can ensure that financial lessons promote integrity and accountability.

Experiential learning, technology integration, and family collaboration have revolutionized financial education in preschool settings, ensuring young learners develop essential money management skills in an engaging manner. Parental involvement plays a crucial role, as children absorb financial habits through household experiences. Research (Tympa et al., 2024) highlights that discussing financial concepts at home builds children's confidence in decision-making and fosters responsible spending behaviors. Parents can reinforce financial literacy through daily routines, such as budgeting allowances, saving for goals, and involving children in shopping decisions. Equally important is teacher training, ensuring educators employ age-appropriate teaching methods. Professional development programs (Jambunathan et al., 2024) help teachers integrate play-based financial learning, utilize digital tools, and encourage peer interactions.

This study focuses on the innovation of financial education in preschool settings by incorporating play-based strategies, technology, family engagement and teacher professional training. The new model set as the foundational tool for holistic child development, including cognitive, social-emotional, and ethical learning, early financial literacy. equips young learners with financial competency.

Student Center-P1-07
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Exploring Children's Written Narrative Abilities: A Study of First-Graders in China

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Keywords: narrative ability, school transition, language development

Abstract

This study examines the written narrative competencies of first-grade children by analyzing 99 writing samples from 33 students at a Shanghai primary school. Employing macro- and micro-level analysis frameworks, it investigates language expression characteristics during this critical developmental transition phase. Findings reveal three key dimensions: 1) thematic diversity dominated by leisure/recreational activities, reflecting children's playful and daily-life orientations; 2) narrative organization marked by classic structure and chronological sequencing, indicating emerging logical thinking; and 3) structural competence in event progression versus contextual background development. Linguistic complexity manifests through mixed sentence types (declarative-interrogative-exclamatory-imperative), rhetorical devices (metaphor-personification-parallelism), and connectives (temporal-causal-adversative). Based on these insights, the study proposes evidence-based interventions including outdoor observation tasks, role-playing scenarios, and scaffolded background training to enhance narrative development. This research contributes to understanding early literacy acquisition in Chinese educational contexts.

Student Center-P1-08
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Exploring Interpersonal Emotion Regulation and Its Characteristics among Chinese ECE Teachers: A Multiple Case Study

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Keywords: interpersonal emotion regulation, early childhood education teacher, multiple case study

Abstract

Early childhood education (ECE) teachers frequently confront diverse and challenging interpersonal emotional regulations (IER) that present significant challenges to their own well-being and the children's learning and development. However, existing research has paid less attention to the IER of ECE teachers. To address the research gap, we conducted a qualitative research design to collect the IER strategies of 28 ECE teachers in Guangzhou, China, using interviews and critical incidents forms. This study extended a new IER frameworks to classify the IER strategies of ECE teachers two dimensions: (a) the target (i.e. intrinsic IER, extrinsic IER, and interpersonal emotion co-regulation) and (b) ways of involvement of IER (i.e. emotion-focused regulation, emotioncognition-focused regulation, emotionbehavior-focused regulation and emotioncognitionbehavior-focused regulation). The study also analyzed the characteristics of ECE teachers' IER in the Chinese context. The IER strategies differ based on target individuals, frequently occurs in close "guan xi", and differ with seniority. This study explored how ECE teachers regulate their emotions or others' emotions by harmonizing their interpersonal relationships in the Chinese context and

provides implications for ECE teacher education programs.

Student Center-P1-09
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Learning Approaches to Computational Thinking through Programming Activities in Early Childhood Education: A Scoping Review

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Keywords: computational thinking, programming, learning approach

Abstract

Recently, more and more studies have focused on the cultivation of computational thinking (CT) in early childhood education (Zeng et al., 2023). Programming has become one of the important ways for children to learn CT (Bers et al., 2022). However, little research has summarized what learning methods are applied to promote students' CT learning. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to use the existing framework (see Zeng et al., 2023) to review the relevant literature, and summarize the current characteristics of CT learning methods for young children. The researcher conducted the search on the Web of Science (WOS) database. Finally, there were 24 studies from 2013 to 2023 concluded in this review. The researcher used content analysis with both deductive codes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) to identify the CT components practiced in the selected studies through programming activities, and inductive codes (Forman & Damschroder, 2007) to determine the learning approaches applied in programming activities.

The results show that in the whole frequency of adopting learning approaches, the number of hands-on learning approaches accounts for nearly half (19 studies, accounting for 42% of the total). Studies tend to use physical programming toys (e.g., Bee-bot, Turtle Bot and Robot Tito) to carry out programming activities. The experimental results show that hands-on activity is significantly better than virtual learning for children to learn CT. In the

process of review, it is found that programming activities are no longer limited to coding project or computer science. Instead, it appears in the integration curriculum connecting other subjects and sociocultural perspectives (5 studies, accounting for 11% of the total). The purpose of education ranges from simply learning the knowledge and skills of programming to cultivating students' thinking and ability to solve problems from multiple perspectives. In addition, multimodal learning (4 studies, accounting for 9% of the total) and creative exploration (3 studies, accounting for 7% of the total), are applied in CT learning and are gradually taking shape. There is not enough literature and evidence to prove that they have significant effects, they have formed a benign beginning and provided sufficient direction for future research.

Student Center-P1-10
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Empowering Families: Strategies for Engaging Parents in Early Childhood Education in Deprived Districts

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Keywords: parent engagement, empowerment, deprived families

Abstract

This report examines effective strategies for engaging parents in early childhood education within deprived districts. By identifying barriers and proposing actionable solutions, the aim is to empower families and strengthen the educational outcomes for young children in these communities.

Introduction:

Parent engagement is critical for the success of early childhood education, particularly in deprived districts where children face various socio-economic challenges. Strengthening these connections can significantly impact children's educational and emotional outcomes, necessitating targeted strategies to involve parents more actively. Research indicates that strong parental involvement is associated with improved academic performance, social skills, and emotional well-being in children (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). This report outlines strategies to foster meaningful engagement between parents and Hong Kong Christian Service Early Childhood Education Service.

Current Challenges:

Economic Constraints: Families in deprived areas often struggle with financial instability, impacting their ability to participate in educational activities.

Cultural and Linguistic Barriers: Diverse backgrounds may create misunderstandings

that hinder effective communication between parents and educators.

Limited Knowledge and Skills in STEAM: Many parents may lack familiarity with science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM), which can hinder their ability to support their children's learning in these critical areas.

Time and Energy Constraints: Parents often juggle multiple responsibilities, including work and household duties, leaving them with limited time and energy to engage in educational activities.

Lack of Confidence: Many parents may feel insecure about their ability to contribute to their children's education, particularly if they did not have positive educational experiences themselves.

Limited Resources: Deprived districts often face shortages in educational materials, support services, and community programs, making it difficult for parents to access the tools they need to engage effectively.

Strategies for Engaging Parents:

- Collaborative Workshops and Training: Partner with local educational organizations, such as Yew Chung Early Childhood Education and Pario Education Centre, to offer workshops on parenting skills and child development.

- Take Place in Nature & Community Facilities: Organize activities in local parks and community centers to foster a sense of belonging and provide parents with opportunities to engage in nature-based learning experiences with their children.

- Use of Daily Life Materials to make STEM toys: Encourage parents to utilize everyday materials found at home for educational activities, promoting creativity and resourcefulness in learning and emphasizing play-based learning that supports cognitive and social development.

- Use of Open-ended Questions: Encourage parents to ask open-ended questions, it is a vital strategy for enhancing children's exploration and learning. Open-ended questions stimulate critical thinking, creativity, and meaningful conversations between parents and children.

- Take-Home Activity Packs: Distribute activity packs that include materials and instructions for engaging educational activities that families can do together at home,

reinforcing learning in a fun and accessible way.

- Parent-Child Cooperation: Promote activities that require collaboration between parents and children, fostering teamwork and enhancing the parent-child bond while engaging in educational tasks.

- Flexible Scheduling: Offer events at various times (weekdays and weekends) to accommodate parents' work and personal commitments, ensuring broader participation.

Conclusion:

Empowering families through effective engagement strategies is essential for enhancing early childhood education in deprived districts. By addressing barriers and fostering collaborations with educational providers, we can create a more supportive and equitable environment for families. Implementing these strategies will not only benefit children's educational outcomes but also strengthen community ties and support systems.

Student Center-P1-11
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Participatory Animation Production: The Construction of Cultural Identity and the Cultivation of Creativity in Kindergarten Children

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Keywords: participatory animation production, cultural identity construction, creativity development

Abstract

In the context of globalization and technological innovation, participatory animation production has emerged as a novel educational tool, providing children with a unique platform to explore cultural diversity and stimulate creativity. This study focuses on kindergarten children, investigating the impact of participatory animation production on the construction of their cultural identity and the development of their creativity. Grounded in sociocultural theory and constructivist learning perspectives, the research advocates for children's active participation and collaborative practices in the animation creation process, aiming to enhance their understanding and identification with local culture while fostering creative thinking and artistic expression. The findings reveal that participatory animation

production, as an interdisciplinary educational activity, integrates language expression, artistic creation, technical operation, and social interaction, offering children a diverse cultural practice field.

At the practical level, the study conducted a six-month action research project in a kindergarten, designing and implementing an animation creation curriculum centered on local cultural themes. Through activities such as story creation, character design, scene drawing, and digital animation production, children gradually deepened their perception of cultural elements such as traditional festivals, folk stories, and local symbols, while collaboratively completing animation projects. Using observation, interviews, and artifact analysis, the study identified three key roles of participatory animation production in constructing children's cultural identity: first, the visual expression of cultural symbols enhances children's embodied understanding of local culture; second, intergenerational interactions (e.g., inviting parents to share traditional stories) facilitate the transmission of cultural memory; and third, the innovative transformation of traditional culture through digital media helps children develop an open and inclusive cultural identity in the globalized context.

In terms of creativity cultivation, the study highlights the role of the animation creation process in promoting children's divergent thinking, problem-solving abilities, and media literacy. Through the use of technical tools (e.g., tablet drawing software), narrative logic construction, and teamwork, children demonstrated significant autonomy and innovation.

This paper proposes that participatory animation production can serve as an innovative approach to kindergarten education reform, with its value extending beyond the application of media technology to the redefinition of children as cultural agents. Future research should further explore issues such as cultural resource selection, technological appropriateness, and the transformation of teachers' roles to promote the sustainable development of this model. The findings provide theoretical and practical insights for cultural education and creativity cultivation in the digital age.

Student Center-P1-12
20250415142023337110514

Fostering Diverse Curiosity and Specific Curiosity in Early Childhood Education and Care in Japan: Insights from ECEC Teachers' Views and Practices

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Keywords: curiosity and inquisitiveness, ECEC teachers' views and practices, inquiry-based learning

Abstract

Japan's national curriculum guidelines—the National Curriculum for Kindergarten, the Guidelines for Nursery Care and Education at Day Nurseries, and the Guidelines for Education and Childcare at ECEC Centers—emphasize the importance of comprehensive learning through play and child-centered care.

Referring to some qualitative studies about the process of curiosity and inquisitiveness in Japanese ECEC and the study about two types of curiosity, diverse and specific curiosity (Nishikawa & Amemiya, 2015), this study aims to clarify how curiosity and inquisitiveness are nurtured in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Japan, focusing on ECEC teachers' perspectives and practices.

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In the quantitative survey, a questionnaire was distributed to a large sample of 16,488 ECEC facilities across

Japan. According to responses received from 5,797 ECEC teachers responsible for 4-to-5-year-old children, more than 50% reported that children were developing the ability “to try new things and interesting things” (curiosity). In contrast, fewer than 30% observed that children had developed sustained effort (inquisitiveness), such as the ability to “challenge new or difficult things without giving up,”“persistently pursue and achieve goals,”and “engage in trial and error.”

In the qualitative survey, three semi-structured interviews (in-person and online) for each participant were conducted with the principals of three private daycare centers that actively promote fostering children’s curiosity and inquisitiveness. The results indicated their emphasis on “providing children with a variety of experiences to broaden their interests. ”Furthermore, their common perspective on childcare was observed in which “predictability” and “stable daily routines” were seen as contributors to acquiring security and autonomy in children, serving as a foundation to exhibit curiosity and inquisitiveness.

The novelty of this study lies in its detailed clarification of the contexts in which curiosity and inquisitiveness are nurtured, the underlying ECEC teachers’ practices, and their perspectives on childcare and education. Moreover, examining the impact on children’s inquiry-based learning of“childcare that places high value on social rules and order,”as revealed in the principals’ interviews, may provide valuable insights for educational practices in other countries.

Student Center-P1-13
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Engaging Children through Humour: Reflective Practices in Creative Play

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Keywords: early childhood education, creative play, squiggle

Abstract

Background

Humour plays a crucial role in human life, aiding the establishment of social relationships (Caird & Martin, 2014), promoting emotional and psychological health (Ruch & McGhee, 2014), and enhancing problem-solving abilities (Zhou et al., 2021). These outcomes are vital for overall well-being. Since humour development begins during early play and communication (Hoicka & Akhtar, 2012; Hoicka & Gattis, 2008; Reddy, 2001), we hypothesized that humour-focused play activities would significantly benefit children's development and well-being.

To test this hypothesis, we designed structured humour play activities and initiation programmes for Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers to create humour-infused sessions. Preliminary evidence suggests these programmes motivated ECE teachers to explore humour-infused activities in their classrooms (Tsuji, 2025).

Aims of the Study

Building on these findings, this study conducted a qualitative examination of classroom teachers'evolving attitudes and awareness of children's humour development over one academic year. We aimed to identify shifts in pedagogical approach, changes in teacher-student interactions, and emerging patterns of humour integration.

Method of the Study

Participant teachers attended an induction session, including a lecture on humour in education and brainstorming on incorporating humour using “Squiggle”drawing play. Squiggle involves:

1.An adult drawing a random squiggle.

2.The child transforming it into a meaningful picture.

3.The child telling a story about their creation.

Teachers implemented their plans and documented their first humour-based Squiggle activity. These records were shared during team meetings, facilitated by the researcher. Collaborative teacher teams met at least once per term, resulting in three sessions throughout the year.

Results and Discussion

Data collection included discussion summaries, reflection papers, and analyses of children’s work. Two main findings emerged:

1.Initial Individual Sessions: Children showed variability in their approaches. Teachers reported higher engagement and enjoyment from children who typically struggled in general activities.

2.Developmental Progression: Teachers noted developmental differences:

Three-year-olds initially imitated the teacher but gradually expressed their own ideas.

Five-year-olds were initially eager to play with realistic representations but became more creative with dynamic spaces and diverse materials.

While lacking a comparison group, these observations highlight the importance of reflective practice in early childhood education. Structured reflective sessions and a supportive framework may enhance teachers’ ability to nurture children’s creative and humorous expression through activities like Squiggle drawing.

Student Center-P1-14
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Research on the Development of the National Common Language among Children Aged 6-9 in Ethnic Areas of the Southwest Border Region

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Keywords: national common language, southwestern border ethnic regions, children aged 6-9

Abstract

The national common language is a vital link in maintaining the sense of community among the Chinese nation, and it plays a crucial role in the stability and development of ethnic areas in the southwest border region. This study focuses on children aged 6-9 in these ethnic regions and comprehensively explores the development patterns of their national common language from the perspectives of vocabulary ability and narrative ability. The results show that children's vocabulary and narrative abilities steadily improve with grade progression. After entering primary school, their receptive vocabulary level rapidly surpasses their expressive vocabulary level. In the transition stage from kindergarten to primary school, the grade level plays a mediating role in the influence of receptive vocabulary on narrative ability, and this mediating effect is moderated by urban-rural factors.This study suggests that the national common language proficiency of children in the southwest border region can be improved in the following three ways: 1. Follow the natural laws of language development and focus on the transition from kindergarten to primary school to enhance children's overall quality; 2. Pay attention to the quality of the educational environment in ethnic areas of the

southwest, and optimize the family language environment through children's "feedback"; 3. Emphasize the development of children's receptive vocabulary ability and effectively improve the quality of teacher-child (kindergarten) interactions.

Student Center-P1-15
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Innovative Practices in Preschool Science Education: The 'One-Meter Museum' Initiative as a Paradigm

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Keywords: preschool holistic science education, science education ecosystem, One-Meter Museum

Abstract

Scientific education, as a crucial pillar in accelerating the advancement of education powerhouses, science and technology powerhouses, and talent cultivation powerhouses, has evolved into an international imperative. Against the backdrop of China's national strategy to establish science literacy education spanning all educational stages and strengthen the construction of a comprehensive science education system bridging kindergarten through higher education, we have re-examined current kindergarten science education practices through renewed understandings of scientific literacy's role in holistic child development and future readiness. Our analysis reveals three systemic challenges: the absence of cohesive top-level design for science education, inadequate development and utilization of localized scientific resources, and insufficient attention to cultivating a robust science education ecosystem.

Centered on the "Creating the Future"vision and utilizing the "One-Meter Museum" as an innovative platform, this report proposes to explore three critical dimensions: 1) multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms for preschool science education, 2) sustainable resource development models aligned with regional characteristics, and 3) transformative learning approaches that foster scientific thinking in early childhood. These initiatives aim to

construct an integrated science education framework that nurtures young learners' curiosity, critical thinking, and capacity for lifelong scientific engagement.

Student Center-P1-16
202504141638219684749 12

The Stress-Behavior Connection: How Children's Emotional Regulation Mediates Parental Anxiety and Child Behavioral Outcomes in Hong Kong

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Keywords: emotion regulation, behavioral outcomes, parental distress

Abstract

Grounded in the Tripartite Model of Family Impact (Morris et al., 2007), which posits that family emotional climate shapes children's emotional development through observation, parenting practices, and emotional climate, family dynamics may influence children's developmental outcomes, with emotion regulation (ER) playing a considerable role (Paley & Hajal, 2022). Hong Kong's unique context – a dense urban setting, high-pressure work

environment, distinct cultural values surrounding education, emotional expression and family functioning (e.g., Guo, 2023) – has received limited local attention regarding these parental and household relationships. This local study aims to explore and clarify the mechanisms through which familial emotional processes may potentially influence children's behavioral adaptation by examining the indirect pathways that link parental distress to children's social-emotional outcomes.

This study is sampled from 2,156 families that reported that they were not currently receiving any additional government financial support. Primary caregivers of kindergarten children (aged 4-5) completed a survey consisting of three measures: (1) the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), assessing parental depression, anxiety, and stress; (2) the Emotion Regulation Checklist (Shields & Cicchetti, 1997), a parent-rated scale to reflect children's ER (emotional regulation and emotional liability); and (3) the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997), a parent-rated screening tool measuring children's socioemotional behavior across five domains: conduct problems, emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, peer problems, and prosocial behavior.

The result showed that parental distress directly increased conduct problems ($\beta = 0.252$, $p < 0.001$, emotional symptoms ($\beta = 0.281$, $p < 0.001$), hyperactivity ($\beta = 0.207$, $p < 0.001$), peer problems ($\beta = 0.137$, $p < 0.001$), and reduced prosocial behavior ($\beta = -0.046$, $p < .05$). Children's ER mediated these relationships with significant indirect effects ($p < .001$). Prosocial behavior was the strongest mediator, which explained 58.56% of the total effect. This may be because prosocial behaviors, such as empathy and cooperation, depend highly on caregivers' ability to model and reinforce these skills through effective emotional regulation, which can be compromised when parents experience distress. The results align with models where parental distress diminishes caregivers' capacity to scaffold ER through emotional attunement (Morris et al., 2007). while ER buffers socioemotional risks (Eisenberg et al., 2010).

The direct parental distress–behavior and ER–behavior associations underscore universal risks: parental distress heightens behavioral difficulties. When parents experience heightened distress, their ability to model adaptive regulatory strategies or respond sensitively to children's emotional cues may be compromised. They may also engage in inconsistent

discipline strategies and lack of warmth (Jocson & McLoyd, 2015), exacerbating children's socioemotional difficulties. This study extends the evidence of the critical role of parental mental health and children's ER in shaping behavioral difficulties. Systematic intervention addressing parental stressors and facilitating children's ER is vital to alleviating familial stress and creating a favorable environment conducive to ER development. Through efforts from different parties (e.g., authorities and schools), we may disrupt the intergenerational cycles and mitigate children's behavioral difficulties.

Student Center-P1-17
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Integrating Digital Puzzles in an Active Learning Environment to Enhance Young Children's Interpersonal Skills

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Keywords: active learning, digital puzzles, group work

Abstract

One of early life's most important developmental tasks is learning to communicate. Without it, children will not be able to engage with others or have their needs addressed. The study aims to evaluate the usefulness of digital puzzles as a learning tool in an active learning environment for enhancing young children's interpersonal skills. In this study, we explored an active learning approach that utilizes digital puzzles as a learning medium to improve interpersonal skills in young children. A digital puzzle was developed and validated by several experts. The digital puzzle was then integrated into a classroom in Bandung, Indonesia. One group pre-test and post-test design was conducted to investigate enhancing young children's interpersonal skills. The study sample included 21 students of young children (aged 2-3 years), which were divided into ten groups (consisting of two to three young children). The results indicated that there were enhancements in students' interpersonal skills after learning using the digital puzzle.

Student Center-P1-18
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Cultural Differences in Perspectives on Child's Body: An International Comparison of Japan and Western Countries

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Keywords: body, phenomenological perspective, international comparison

Abstract

In Japan, it has been pointed out since around 1985 that a situation of children that is clearly different from before, although not necessarily expressed in data, is observed (Central Council for Education, 2002). However, there is a wide range of prior research on what and how children's "body disorder" refers to. This is because there are several terms in Japan that indicate different perspectives of "body". In addition, in Japan, where the mind-body monism has long permeated the culture, it is thought that the study of child's body has taken a different direction than in Western countries, where the mind-body dualism has prevailed. It is necessary to examine the cultural background of the child's body, which has been the focus of discussions among child care providers, educators, and researchers. At present, it is hoped that research on early childhood education and care will be promoted across national borders, but without clarification of the above, it may be essentially difficult to consider the crisis of child's body and countermeasures of children internationally. On this basis, this study will organize the various perspectives on children's bodies from previous studies, present the author's theory of this, and then discuss the positioning of the various problems presented as anomalies in child's body, and their solutions. In this presentation, the international comparative part of Perspectives on Children's Bodies, which is a part of this research project, will be presented. The number and content of articles on children's bodies published in the

Japanese academic journal “Research of Early Childhood and Care in Japan “(RECCEJ) and the international journal “International Journal of Early Childhood “(IJEC) are compared to reveal cultural differences in perspectives on child’s body that have been studied so far. Cultural differences in the perspectives on the child’s body that have been studied were identified.

Results (as of April 2025)：

Among the papers published so far, 22 (3.09%) studies in RECCEJ and 11 (1.35%) in IJEC refer to the body, which is more common in Japan. In particular, five studies referring to child's body in a phenomenological context were found in RECCEJ from the late 1990s, whereas none of them dealt with phenomenological bodies in IJEC. In RECCEJ, four of the 22 studies on the body of the caregiver were found, and all of them were based on the phenomenological theoretical premise that the physicality of the caregiver affects the child’s body. In contrast, there were no studies in IJEC that referred to the body of the caregiver. In IJEC, the largest number of studies, four, focused on “physical activity,” two of which showed a relationship to health. It was clear that the perspectives commonly used on child’s body differ between cultures with a mind-body monism background, such as Japan, and those with a dualistic background. In particular, it became clear that in Japan, child’s body is often viewed from a phenomenological perspective, and that there is a comprehensive view of child’s body in conjunction with the bodies of others around them.

Student Center-P1-19
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"I Can Do It!": Using Care as Curriculum as a Focal Approach for Empowering Toddlers in a Playgroup Classroom

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Keywords: toddlers, care as curriculum, respectful care

Abstract

As fields of affective neuroscience increasingly highlight the importance of sensitive and responsive caregiving and recognising infants and toddlers' fundamental right to autonomy and respect, more practitioners in the Singaporean early childhood education landscape shift their attention to strategies that can promote healthier attachments and children's sense of well-being, like implementing primary caregiving systems.

This paper will focus on the care as curriculum approach to provide opportunities for very young children to practice self-help and life skills and exercise their agency. Core to this approach is the principle that instead of passive and compliant routine care tasks, toddlers are engaged in care moments that are respectful, reciprocal and completely unrushed.

In this teacher research, a practitioner reflects on how trust in toddler's abilities and sensitive and responsive interactions during routine care moments eventually encouraged her class on 18-month-olds to become active participants in these tasks and empowered to do things for themselves-how caring for them eventually evolved to become self-care and self-help skills.

Interventions such as adopting respectful caregiving practices, like involving the children in routine care (feeding and diaper changes) in incremental steps and providing encouragement to work on self-help tasks (setting up individual play and meal areas)

independently, took place in a 18-month-old classroom. Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were used, with minimally-interrupted long-form videos being the key observation tool. These videos were analysed by the practitioner to understand how each child was engaged in tasks, with documentation of their development and learning written in second-person perspective.

Our findings provide insight into how very young children could carry out self-help tasks that we once thought were too difficult for them, and even engaged with challenges for a sustained amount of time. The results show that when care and education is sensitive to each child's needs, their independence and autonomy is concurrently enhanced.

This paper advocates for care as curriculum as a pedagogical approach for toddlers in group care: unhurried, intimate and individualised practice with routines that empower children to be actively involved, space to make mistakes and opportunity to enable their autonomy. We conclude that toddlers' learning should unfold through self-rewarding, personal discovery and an adult's basic trust in their capacity to pursue essential life skills.

Student Center-P1-20
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Exploring the Role of Working Memory and Learning-Related Behaviors in Early Mathematics Achievement: Evidence from Chinese Kindergartens

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Keywords: working memory and math, learning-related behaviors, cultural context

Abstract

Working memory (WM), defined by Baddeley and Hitch (1974), supports critical cognitive tasks such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving. While WM training can enhance WM capacity (Scionti et al., 2020; Ramani et al., 2017), its effectiveness in improving broader cognitive outcomes, particularly mathematics performance, remains debated (Sala & Gobet, 2020; Passolughi & Costa, 2016; Melby-Lervåg et al., 2016). This inconsistency emphasizes the necessity of exploring alternative mechanisms, notably learning-related behaviors (LRBs). LRBs, including attentional control, task persistence, and strategic problem-solving, significantly influence academic outcomes by enhancing student engagement and effective cognitive resource utilization (Day et al., 2015; Anthony & Ogg, 2020; Sasser et al., 2015).

This study investigates the relationships among WM capacity, LRBs, and math achievement in the context of Chinese kindergartens, hypothesizing that LRBs mediate the WM-Math relationship. Although previous research conducted in Mainland China has consistently identified strong associations between WM and math among school-aged children (Wang et al., 2018; Liang et al., 2021; Ji & Guo, 2023), kindergarten populations remain understudied. Chinese kindergartens provide a distinct environment emphasizing foundational mathematical skills such as counting accuracy, numerical fluency, and basic

arithmetic concepts, making them ideal for examining these cognitive-behavioral relationships. Differences between public and private kindergartens also allow an exploration of how curriculum affects cognitive and behavioral development (Wang & Dong, 2022). Participants included 163 kindergarteners (aged 4-5 years) from two kindergartens in Shijiazhuang, China. Each child completed assessments consisting of a Corsi block-tapping test to evaluate WM capacity, a number line game to measure numerical magnitude understanding, and symbolic/non-symbolic math tests to assess basic math skills. Teachers completed the Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale (PLBS), evaluating students' attentional control, persistence, and classroom organizational behaviors. Structured researcher observations complemented these ratings to ensure reliability. Mediational structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test whether LRBs, which were proposed as a mediating variable, have a significant role in the relationship between WM and math. Results indicated that WM significantly predicted LRBs and directly influenced math achievement. Furthermore, LRBs were strongly correlated with math performance, partially mediating the relationship between WM and math achievement. These findings highlight the critical role of behavioral engagement in leveraging cognitive capacities for academic success. This research contributes valuable insights into cognitive-behavioral interactions within early educational settings, informing targeted educational interventions to enhance early mathematical development by simultaneously supporting WM and promoting effective learning-related behaviors. Thus, the findings highlight the value of culturally sensitive pedagogical practices and support the development of educational strategies that are both globally informed and locally adapted.

Student Center-P1-21
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Seeing and Nurturing: Promoting Children's Self-Assessment through Child-Initiated Journals in Kindergarten Thematic Activities

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Keywords: child-initiated journal, child assessment, thematic activities

Abstract

Education is fundamentally a dialogic process-one that both "sees" and "nurtures" children's growth. To achieve this dual purpose, two elements are essential. First, we need to integrate professional observations with children's own narratives. Second, we must rely on a robust evaluation system-one that ensures the curriculum is appropriate and that it effectively supports children's development in kindergarten.

This study addresses three key challenges in evaluating thematic activities in Chinese kindergartens: the fragmented assessment dimensions, a lack of child agency in the evaluation process, and teachers' delayed or ineffective feedback. Grounded in the national *Guidelines for the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3-6*, and situated within the development of the kindergarten-localized *Taowan* curriculum, the study introduces a multidimensional dialogic framework centered on the integration of thematic progression and child-initiated learning journals ("Tongxin Journals").

This study developed an integrated design framework that aligns the goals, processes, and assessment criteria of thematic activities-referred to as the "three-in-one" model. At the implementation level, a four-phase implementation strategy was developed to embed formative assessment throughout the entire process of thematic activities. Additionally, a

four-dimensional feedback mechanism enabled data-informed and dynamic adjustments to activity and curriculum design.

The study developed a set of visual assessment tools to capture and support children's learning and development. These include child journals for recording everyday growth moments, developmental timelines to track learning trajectories, progress posters to showcase skill advancement, and a badge system to encourage positive motivation. Together, these tools form a feedback loop of observation, analysis, adjustment, and encouragement.

The findings show that the dialogic assessment approach based on child-initiated journals led to three key shifts: children moved from passive recipients to active narrators of their learning; teachers grew from intuitive practitioners to reflective professionals; and parents became engaged partners through visual growth documentation. Ultimately, the study created a dialogic space where thematic goals and children's lived experiences inform each other, making child assessment a visible process of growth.

Student Center-P1-22
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A Comparison of the Structure of Picture Book Lending Activities and the Behaviors of Five-Year-Old Children in Two ECEC Facilities in Japan

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(Teikyo University)

Keywords: the way young children interact with picture books, mutual influence of young children, different types of ECEC facilities

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to clarify the differences in the structure of the picture book lending activities and the behaviors of 5-year-old children at two different ECEC facilities in Japan. The importance of language activities, such as“becoming familiar with picture books and stories”,is well known. However, according to the results of the National Survey of School Performance and Learning, 12.45% of elementary school students have only 0 to 10 books at home (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2024). Furthermore, the results of the survey on activities and environments related to picture books revealed that 47.4% of the ECEC teachers said they“do not lend picture books to families” (Shoin University, 2018). Therefore, we believe that by clarifying the actual situation of picture book lending activities and analyzing the specific ways in which young children interact with picture books, we can examine the significance of these activities and other issues in ECEC.

The collaborators in this study were Class X of 5-year-old children in the 20xx at a public kindergarten A in Tokyo and Class Z of 5-year-old children in the 20xx+2 at a private nursery school B in K prefecture. The participants were observed once a week and video cameras were used to record the children's behaviors during the picture book lending

activities. Permission for the observation, recording and the use of data was acquired from the ECEC facilities and the parents. The privacy of the children was strictly protected, and the data was allowed to be used in research only. As one child in each class who was familiar with picture books and one child in each class who was not familiar with picture books were selected and their behaviors were examined. The results showed that the two children who were familiar with picture books shared the same behaviors: they exchanged words with their friends when choosing picture books, and they also caught information about picture books from their friends and used it to choose their own picture books. In addition, the books that the two children borrowed were read by the teachers during storytelling or related to the information provided by their friends. On the other hand, the two children who were not familiar with picture books were observed to be unsure of what kind of picture book to borrow throughout the session, and often wandered around, followed behind their friends, or only held the picture book without opening it. In addition, it became clear that the picture books borrowed by the two children were not related to their own movements during the activities, or that the intentionality of the book borrowing was weak. Although the structure of the picture book lending activities at the two ECEC facilities was different, the aims of parental support for childcare support were similar, suggesting ingenuity on the part of the ECEC teachers. However, we believe that further study is needed on how to support children who are not familiar with picture books.

Student Center-P1-23
20250424103624124147494

Sharing of the Educational Practice of the Yew Chung Early Childhood Education Approach in the Parent-Child Class of Yew Wah Infant and Toddler Discovery Centre in Shanghai

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Keywords: primary caregiver, infant and toddler discovery centre, environment as the 3rd teacher

Abstract

Yew Wah Infant and Toddler Discovery Centre is implementing the Yew Chung Early Childhood Education Approach, and it has provided a professional educational environment suitable for the growth of infants and toddlers aged 6 months to 2 years old. It firmly believes that the environment is the third teacher for children. It guides parents and caregivers to trust and respect children, giving children the opportunities for free exploration through play, and supporting children's interests. Educators provide appropriate educational support for children through the cycle of observation-reflection-response. It has also been observed that different parent-child interaction patterns and family education concepts have different impacts on the behaviors and development levels of infants and toddlers. The educators at the center support caregivers' observation and understanding of children through various means, and form an learning community to jointly promote the healthy growth of children.

Student Center-P1-24
202504111519383058492 62

Meta-Analysis of the Effect of Physical Activity on the Cognitive Ability of 3- to 6-Year-Old Children in China

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Keywords: physical activity, cognitive abilities, meta-analysis

Abstract

Objective: To systematically evaluate the effect of physical activity on the cognitive ability of children aged 3-6 years in China, and to provide an empirical basis for the development of physical activity and the improvement of children's cognitive ability in kindergartens in China. Methods: A total of 694 articles were retrieved from the establishment of the database to March 31, 2025, and 8 articles with a total of 15 studies were included in the PICOST model. The Cochrane system was used to assess the quality of the literature, and the Review Manager 5.3 software was used for statistical analysis and publication bias detection. Discussion and results: A total of 829 subjects were included in the literature, divided into the experimental group (430 participants) and the control group (399 participants). The results of meta-analysis showed that the effect of physical activity on enhancing children's cognitive ability was statistically significant (SMD=1.16, 95%CI=0.85~1.47, Z=7.31, P<0.00001). The subgroup analysis showed that the intervention frequency of 2 times a week and 3 times a week had no significant effect on children's cognitive ability (I2=80%, P>0.05), and there was no statistical significance. Conclusion: Physical activity has a high impact on children's cognitive ability, and regular and effective physical activity can significantly enhance children's cognitive ability.

Student Center-P1-25
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A Systematic Review of the Characteristics and Effectiveness of Home-Based Math Apps for Young Children

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Keywords: math app, young children, systematic review

Abstract

Educational math apps are effective in raising children's mathematical achievement, while existing studies tend to focus on using educational apps in the classroom settings, while little is known on the characteristics of home-based educational math apps and their effectiveness in supporting children's mathematical learning. this study synthesized the characteristics and effectiveness of home-based educational math apps for young children. A total of 25 home-based educational math apps (13 from the Popular Educational Apps List and 12 from academic intervention studies) were included in analyses. All apps were evaluated with the adapted Rubric for the Evaluation of Educational Apps for Preschool Children (REVEAC, Papadakis et al., 2017). The intervention studies were coded with a self-developed coding framework to understand the apps characteristics, apps use features and intervention effectiveness. The results showed that the apps scored high in technology adaption but low in educational content or users' active engagement. The majority of the apps only included numbers and/or shapes concepts. Only nine apps supported parent-child interactions in learning and two supported children's mathematical learning through everyday problem-solving. The interventions using apps that i) supported parents' active engagement

in children's use of apps; ii) contained learning content catering for children's individual differences; and iii) included functions supporting children's learning processes were more likely to attain a positive effect on children's mathematical learning. Implications for designing quality educational math apps and supporting children's mathematical learning with apps at home were discussed.

Student Center-P1-26
20250415100431592616681

Social Work Functions Found in Training Programs for Early Childhood Teachers and Public Health Nurses in Japan

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Keywords: early childhood teachers, social work functions, training programs

Abstract

In Japan, the needs of children and their families have become increasingly diverse and complex in recent years. Against this backdrop, there have been major developments such as the creation of the Children and Families Agency and the enactment of the Basic Act for Children, which aims to provide support through cooperation and collaboration among professionals and specialized agencies involved with children. This study focuses on early childhood teachers and public health nurses as familiar professionals for preschool children. These professionals have in common that they are responsible not only for providing direct support to the child, but also for identifying needs and linking them to services available in the community. Connecting professionals and specialized agencies that provide support for children in the community is considered to be a social work function. In order to promote collaboration between child care providers and health professionals, this study aims to identify similarities and differences in the social work functions of the two.

The method is a literature study. Firstly, we extracted descriptions of social work from the curricula of training programs for early childhood teachers and public health nurses. Then, those descriptions are discussed by classifying them into 15 functions of childcare

social work.

The results showed that the functions shared by early childhood teachers and public health nurses were Collaboration, Consultation, Protection, Case managers, and Management functions. When the descriptions that were not classified into the 15 functions were summarized by similarity, “Prevention” and “Needs-finding” function were found. “Needs-finding function” was also identified in the both curricula.

There were some functions that the contents differed between early childhood teachers and public health nurses. For Collaboration function, descriptions in the curriculum of early childhood teachers were about working interactively with child guidance centers and health centers is written, whereas those in the curriculum of public health nurses were clarifying the roles of relevant professionals and organizations, and coordinating them. For Consultation function, the curriculum of early childhood teachers focused on basic attitudes toward individual counseling, but in the curriculum of public health nurses, the description about home visitation support was found.

It was also clear that the unique function of early childhood teachers is the treatment function, while the unique functions of public health nurses are Research and Planning, Social change, and Prevention function. This result suggests that collaboration can be promoted through recognition of these similarities and differences by both professions.

Student Center-P1-27
202504101455500691210 53

Meta-Analysis of Variables Related to Pre-service Early Childhood Teachers' Major Satisfaction

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Keywords: meta-analysis, pre-service early childhood teachers, major satisfaction

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect sizes of variables related to pre-service early childhood teachers' major satisfaction and to suggest directions for enhancing their satisfaction. For this purpose, 42 variables extracted from 19 studies on preservice early childhood teachers' major satisfaction were selected and categorized into career and occupational characteristics, psychological, emotional, and intrapersonal characteristics, and social relationships and teacher characteristics. A meta-analysis was conducted using Comprehensive Meta-Analysis (CMA) Version 4.0. The results showed that, first, the overall effect size of the variables related to major satisfaction was found to be medium. Second, the effect sizes by category indicated that career and occupational characteristics (ESr = .52) had the highest effect size, followed by social relationships and teacher characteristics (ESr = .46), and psychological, emotional, and intrapersonal characteristics (ESr = .42). These findings suggest the importance of providing educational support to help pre-service early childhood teachers develop a clearer understanding of and preparedness for their future careers. Furthermore, the development and implementation of programs that enhance social relationships and emotional support are necessary. This study is

meaningful in that it offers a foundation for the development of early childhood education curricula and counseling and guidance strategies. Future research should explore causal relationships among variables and consider longitudinal studies.

Student Center-P1-28
20250423225457988846117

Characteristics of Young Children within the Montessori Environment in Thai Context

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Keywords: characteristics, young children, Montessori

Abstract

Through personal interview and documentation studied, 31 characteristics of Young Children in the context of Montessori environment were identified. The researchers were interested to find out of whether young children within the Montessori environment in Thai Context would have the same characteristics as their counterparts and in what degree.

The participants were 45 school administrators and homeroom teachers using Montessori method from 10 schools and childcare centers that were members of Thailand Association of Montessori Schools (TAMS) network. The research instrument was a questionnaire, quality checked for content validity and construction. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, level evaluation, ranking and content analysis.

The findings of the study indicated that the Characteristics of Young Children within the Montessori environment in Thai Context were at the most level for 11 characteristics and were at the frequent level for 20 characteristics. The first 3 aspects at the most level, with the

descending order were as followed: (1) Happy/Full of Joy/Joy of Learning, children are happy and joyful in daily life as well as when doing activities and learning new things (M = 4.84, S.D. = 0.37) (2) Curiosity, children are curious and eager to learn (M = 4.76, S.D. = 0.48). (3) Frank, children are honest and direct in their action and communication. (M = 4.62, S.D. = 0.58). On the other hand, the last 3 characteristics being rated, with the descending order as followed: (29) Organize, children are able to manage and organize their work. (M = 4.11, S.D. = 0.65). (30) Global Thinkers, children are able to think broadly, aware of the occurrence and changes. (M = 4.09, S.D. = 0.63). (31) Problem-solving, children are able to solve problems themselves (M = 4.00, S.D. = 0.74).

The results were discussed within the Montessori and Thai culture frameworks as well as the demands of the current world. The key principle in teaching is the teacher's ability to observe and lead the young children to acquire the characteristics according to Montessori Method.

Student Center-P1-29
202504101946268583623 95

Enhancing English Language and Literacy through Integrated Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness, and Phonics Instruction: A Pilot Study in Hong Kong Kindergartens

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Keywords: early childhood education, english language and literacy development, phonological awareness

Abstract

This pilot study investigates the effectiveness of an integrated English vocabulary instruction program enriched with phonological awareness (PA) and phonics for Hong Kong Chinese kindergarten children learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Grounded in sociocultural theory and early literacy development frameworks, the study examines how the combined instruction of vocabulary, PA, and phonics supports oral language and foundational reading skills in bilingual learners.

A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design was implemented in a local kindergarten, involving three K3 classes (ages 5–6) randomly assigned to one of three instructional conditions: (1) PA + Phonics (n = 28), (2) Phonics only (n = 27), and (3) comparison (n = 17). Across eight weeks, all groups received equivalent instructional time, using the same storybooks with the same target vocabulary, and the vocabulary instruction all emphasized

word meaning. The key differences across the three groups are in the availability of training on phonological sensitivity (PA + Phonics group) and letter-sound correspondences (PA + Phonics and Phonics only groups), compared to the comparison group (delivering writing activities instead of PA or Phonics).

Children completed pretests and will complete posttests (by May 2025) on English expressive and receptive vocabulary, PA skills, and spelling. Cantonese assessments—including expressive vocabulary, narrative skills, PA, and phonotactic proficiency—were also administered to explore potential cross-linguistic transfer effects. Additionally, Raven's Colored Progressive Matrices and a Digit Span task were used to control for non-verbal intelligence and verbal short-term memory, respectively.

Findings will provide timely insights into developmentally appropriate EFL pedagogies in early childhood, with implications for curriculum planning, teacher training, and the creation of research-informed English language resource packages for Hong Kong kindergartens.

Student Center-P1-30
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Keyword Network Analysis of Constructivism Research in Early Childhood Education: Trends and Shifts from 1987 to 2025

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Keywords: keyword network analysis, constructivism research, early childhood education

Abstract

Early childhood education serves as a foundational stage that supports the holistic development of young children, and thus requires continuous reexamination of its theoretical underpinnings and pedagogical practices. Among various perspectives, constructivism has emerged as a central paradigm that emphasizes children's active participation and meaning-making processes. However, there remains a lack of comprehensive analysis on how constructivism has been interpreted and applied in early childhood education research, and how related discourses have evolved over time.

This study aims to explore research trends related to constructivism in early childhood education through keyword network analysis. A total of 138 peer-reviewed Korean journal articles were selected for analysis. To identify diachronic shifts in research focus, the data were divided into two timeframes: the early period (1987-2010) and the recent period (2011-2025). The analysis examined keyword frequency, co-occurrence, network connectivity, and subgroup structures.

The findings reveal three key patterns. First, the keywords "teacher," "child," and "early" consistently appeared with high frequency across both periods, underscoring the sustained centrality of child-centered education within the constructivist framework. Notably, the term "teacher" showed a marked upward trend, indicating a deepening academic interest

in the educator's role.

Second, the keywords "belief" and "efficacy" experienced significant increases in the recent period, signaling a discursive shift toward the internal and psychological dimensions of teachers. Contemporary research has increasingly focused on who is teaching, what beliefs and perceptions educators hold, and how these factors influence teaching efficacy. This trend reflects a broader academic effort to enhance professionalism and reflective practice in early childhood education.

Third, a noticeable decline in the keywords "science," "social," "based," and "activity" suggests a transition in research emphasis—from questions of what and how to teach, toward more nuanced inquiries into why and for whom teaching is meaningful. This represents a paradigmatic shift from activity-centered approaches to meaning-oriented educational practices.

These results indicate that research on constructivism in early childhood education is moving beyond instructional content and methods, toward a deeper exploration of teacher cognition, beliefs, and the interpretive processes underlying educational practice. The findings provide valuable insights for guiding future research agendas in the field.

Student Center-P1-31
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Reflective Action: The Design of Performance Evaluation for Practical Knowledge of Preschool Education Normal Students

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Keywords: practical knowledge, reflective practice, teacher education

Abstract

Teachers' practical knowledge encompasses the implicit, experiential insights that shape pedagogical decisions. It is rooted in contextualized practice, emerging through iterative reflection on classroom interactions, curriculum design, and child development. This knowledge is paramount for preschool educators, whose work demands adaptability to dynamic early childhood environments. However, its intangible nature complicates traditional assessment methods, which often prioritize standardized metrics over situational competence. Current evaluation systems, focused on theoretical exams and superficial lesson plans, fail to capture the nuanced application of skills in authentic settings. Furthermore, assessing practical knowledge—the tacit, context-driven theories that guide educators' daily actions—remains a critical yet underexplored frontier.

Research Objectives

This study addresses the gap in evaluating practical knowledge among preschool education students, proposing a performance evaluation framework anchored in reflective action during internship experiences. By bridging theory and practice, the research seeks to

redefine teacher education evaluation in the new era, emphasizing competency development and real-world applicability.

Methodology

This study systematically constructs a performance-based assessment system (what to assess, how to evaluate, and who should determine) for practical knowledge for preschool education teacher candidates, following the logical assessment design and implementation framework. Taking the context of child behavior observation and support as an example, the assessment system was developed through the following rigorous process:

(1) The initial core abilities of child behavior observation and support were synthesized from authoritative domestic and international literature.

(2) Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 outstanding preschool education interns and 10 kindergarten teachers. After coding and analyzing using NVivo 14 software, specific behavioral indicators of practical knowledge components were identified, which were formulated in explicit performance objectives, assessment tasks, and evaluation rubrics.

(3) Two rounds of Delphi expert consultation (involving 15 experts, including university faculty and kindergarten specialists in this field) were conducted until data saturation was achieved to evaluate the initial frameworks.

Findings and Implications

The resultant framework comprises three interconnected pillars:

(1) Practical Thinking in Evaluation: Moving beyond checklist-based assessments, the framework emphasizes situational judgment and ethical responsiveness. For example, create kindergarten scenarios that require students to apply theoretical knowledge, analyze situations, and simulate practical responses, emphasizing the integration of theory and practice.

(2) Evidence-Based Standards: The development of performance-based assessment indicators provides actionable, evidence-based materials to support robust assessment practices, addressing the limitations of traditional evaluation approaches. Specifically, this framework overcomes the vagueness and generality prevalent in conventional teacher candidate assessments—which rely heavily on simplistic tools such as “Internship Evaluation

Forms" and "Survey Report Appraisal Forms" with limited narrative feedback—by establishing clear, observable criteria aligned with professional competencies.

(3) Evaluation Community Building: The framework advocates for a participatory model where interns, mentors, peers, and parents contribute feedback. This framework offers a blueprint for evaluating the often-invisible competencies underpinning effective teaching. For preschool education—a field where empathy and adaptability are paramount—it underscores the necessity of praxis-driven assessment. The theoretical model is further revised through pilot testing. Future research could explore technological integration, such as AI-assisted analysis of reflective journals, to scale personalized feedback.

Student Center-P1-32
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The Effects of Family Socioeconomic Status on Children's Social Communication Ability: Based on the Analysis of Chain Mediation Model

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Keywords: social communication, family socioeconomic status, speech

Abstract

Background

Good social communication abilities in preschool children can lead to smooth interactions with others. Children with communication difficulties not only affect their social interactions, but also have adverse behavioral consequences and emotional problems. As the earliest place where children are exposed to language, families need to provide children with a good language environment, however, based on the family investment theory, the socioeconomic status of the family constrains parents from creating a language environment at home. Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis 1: SES will significantly and positively predict children's social communication abilities. Hypothesis 2: The home language environment mediates the relationship between SES and children's social communication abilities.

Accuracy and intelligibility of children's speech is the foundation of children's social communication. For children with special needs, training such as picture exchange communication system can help them transition from simple speech sounds to picture communication and then to verbal communication. Some researchers have proved the high correlation between SES and phonological ability in early childhood by reviewing a large number of studies, and they have shown that SES needs to be mediated through the home language environment to have an impact on children's language development. Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis 3: Children's speech abilities have a mediating role between SES and social communication abilities. Hypothesis 4: There is a chain mediating role of home language environment and children's speech abilities between SES and children's social communication abilities. In addition, compared with the research on general children's language development which focuses on environmental factors, the research on children with special needs focuses more on the innate factors and less on the acquired environmental influences, and the group of children with special needs tends to be found in families with disadvantaged SES. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is proposed: there is a moderating role of whether a child has special needs in the chain mediation model of SES to children's social communication competence.

Methods

Based on the sequences of children's phonological development, a total of 300 ordinary and special children aged 2-3, 3-4, 4-6 were recruited in Shanghai. Information about the children's home language environment and demographics was collected from parents. Children's phonological abilities were assessed using the Family Questionnaire on Speech Abilities of 2-6 Year Old Children. The Chinese version of the AEPS-3 Social Communication Area was used to assess the children's social communication abilities. Data were processed using SPSS 27.0 and PROCESS 3.3 plug-in.

Results

Preliminary results indicate significant differences in the phonological and social communication abilities of children with special needs and ordinary children. Regardless of whether a child has special needs or not, family socio-economic status needs to influence the child's social communication ability through the home language environment and the child's

phonological ability; it is the child's special educational needs that moderates the relationship between family socio-economic status and the home language environment, which reflects the negative impact of intergenerational transfer of resources on children's early language communication development, especially for disadvantaged children.

Student Center-P1-33
20250414231345774973376

Nurturing Infants' Joyful Growth with Love and Expertise

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Keywords: happy curriculum, infant development, holistic care

Abstract

Since the 1980s, Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS) has championed professional early childhood education, promoting parent education and offering developmental programs for infants aged 0 to 3. Rooted in developmental psychology, these initiatives provide tailored training to foster meaningful parent-child interactions and high-quality home learning experiences, laying a robust foundation for infants' holistic development (Berk, 2017).

In 2017, HKCS collaborated with the Hong Kong Airport Authority to establish the Airport Preschool, embedding a holistic care philosophy. An on-site registered nurse oversees children's health, nutrition, and daily care, while offering parents expert advice. The preschool pioneered a breastfeeding room to encourage breastfeeding and supported family-friendly employee policies. With a 1:6 teacher-to-child ratio, it ensures individualized attention, setting a quality standard recognized by the Social Welfare Department and the early education sector (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

In 2023, HKCS launched its first government-subsidized Solis Playland (Tai Po), creating a safe, nurturing environment for infants aged 0 to 3. Approved by the Social Welfare Department, it introduced Hong Kong's first two infant hydrotherapy rooms, where professionally designed sessions evoke maternal comfort, enhancing sensory and emotional growth (Berk, 2017). Teachers, certified in international infant massage, deliver specialized services to boost coordination and bonding. Solis Playland (Tai Po) hosts diverse parenting

workshops on caregiving techniques, developmental milestones, and emotional support, complemented by a digital platform providing real-time updates on children's activities, health, and progress, fostering strong home-school collaboration. The facility's design aligns with the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), using natural light and soft wooden tones to create a warm, stimulating space (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2017).

HKCS developed the "Happy Curriculum" a pioneering program fostering a homely atmosphere to nurture infants through five principles: Homely, Affinity, Positive, Play and Yield Fruit. Tailored to developmental stages, it promotes cognitive, motor, and socio-emotional growth via play-based, character-focused activities (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). HKCS self-funds on-site nurses for comprehensive health oversight and equips teachers with over 100 hours of training in infant development and caregiving, ensuring a skilled team. This commitment offers a replicable model for the industry.

In 2025, HKCS will open Solis Playland (Sham Shui Po), Hong Kong's first two-story child care centre. With glass walls maximizing natural light, it encourages exploration and peer connections in an open, collaborative environment (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2017). Like Solis Playland (Tai Po), it features hydrotherapy rooms and a nurse. Through innovative curricula, HKCS shapes joyful early education in Hong Kong.

Student Center-P1-34
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Characteristics of First Finger Movements During Musical Expression in Early Childhood

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Keywords: musical expression in early childhood, quantitative analysis of hand-finger movement, meta gloves

Abstract

This study aims to quantitatively analyze of finger movements during musical expression in early childhood. In related fields, movement analysis focusing on hand movements has tended to capture a relationship between expert hand movements for a particular technique and eye movements accompanying hand movements. Research reports on music and movement show a reaction to sound and music, applications to piano teaching materials, video analysis of the relationship between a performer's movement and expression, and a suggestion for methods to evaluate the synchronization of hand movements and music (Burger, 2013; Rahman et al., 2015; Thompson & Luck, 2012; Kawai, 2020; Miura, 2022; Bayed, H.et al., 2023). In those previous researches on movement analysis, little attention has been paid to musical expression in early childhood, and existing method still encounters challenge of improvement of classification accuracy for developmental degree forecasted by machine learning.

The author has quantitatively analyzed the elements of body movement during musical expression in early childhood and explored feature quantities that contribute to the developmental process of musical expression by applying 3D motion capture on body movements or data glasses on eye movements and processing such data with machine

learning. Specifically, a result of hand movement was remarkable, and it showed that an analysis focusing on finger movements is necessary to more specifically analyze hand movements during musical expression in early childhood.

In this study, the author conducted the movement analysis focusing the hand-finger movement during musical expression in early childhood utilizing the Meta gloves system, which captures detailed hand and finger movements, was connected to the MVN system as 3D motion capture used for movement analysis, 3-year-old, 4-year-old and 5-year-old children in T facility (n=29), W facility (n=28), and Y facility (n=29) participated in this survey in 2024. Based on the acquired data by meta gloves, a three-way analysis of variance on the calculated data for 19 types of finger movements revealed several characteristics of the metacarpal bone of the first finger. As a result, the moving distance was significantly larger for the bright tune than for the dark tune, and 5-year-old tended to show a larger distance than 3-year-old.

This study verified that the characteristics of the first metacarpal movement were that the pretend movement by imagination became more active in response to a bright tune, and that the pretend movement by imagination slowed down in response to a dark tune, while a steady beat of movement became more apparent.

Student Center-P1-35
202504151654189381647 82

Promoting and Impeding Factors of Effective Transition from Early Childhood Education to Compulsory School Education

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Keywords: early childhood education, compulsory school education, transition from ECE to CSE

Abstract

An appropriate political question was discussed on the relationship between two parts of the education system, namely, one that provides education for children up to compulsory school age, early childhood education (ECE) and another that offers compulsory schooling, compulsory school education (CSE) (Moss, P. 2012).

The first report of a major cross-national thematic review on ECE and care (Starting Strong I), which was conducted by the OECD, notes a “welcome trend toward increased cooperation between ECEC and the school system in terms of both policy and practice” (Moss, P. 2012).

This study aims to investigate cases of connections among ECE, nursery schools, and elementary schools in local governments and to determine effective strategies for establishing such connections. We focused on two local governments from the perspective of the transition from ECE to CSE. Yaese is a small town in Japan that features four elementary

schools and has fewer kindergartens compared with those in urban areas. Meanwhile, Odate City is one of the model municipalities of the said transition promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan.

The study focuses on Yaese town (Okinawa Prefecture) and Odate City (Akita Prefecture) in Japan and conducts group interviews with staffs of the Board of Education and educators in each local government who are involved in the transition for the year 2024-2025. It intends to identify the promoting and impeding factors of the transition process. The participants were informed of the objective of the study and provided consent to participate.

We identified nine promoting factors as follows:

1) Effective support from administrative bodies based on trust relationships, 2) Interpersonal relationships: emphasizing the importance of mutual understanding among responsible personnel, 3) Organizational formation: establishing effective organizations to facilitate connections, 4) Educational understanding: deepening mutual understanding of ECE and CSE, 5) Child understanding methods: developing effective methods for understanding children, 6) Support for children with special needs: addressing the needs of children that require special attention, 7) Parental understanding: enhancing parental understanding of the connection process, 8) Successful examples: observing good practices in connecting ECE and CSE, 9) Sustainable efforts: exerting continuous and developmental efforts for connection.

We also note five impeding factors:

1) Inadequate understanding of ECE, 2) Lessons constrained by textbooks, 3) Narrow understanding of the transition from ECE to CSE, 4) Internal challenges within elementary schools or ECE centers, 5) Barriers to cooperation between government departments.

Analyses of efforts exerted by each local government will be reported on the day of the conference.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our special thanks to the government personnel in Yaese town and Odate City, and Dr. Chiaki Shimauchi for their participation in the interviews and helpful discussions.

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Student Center-P1-36
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Public Awareness Survey of Spinal Misalignment in Children and Adolescents

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Keywords: health education, spinal misalignment, spinal disorders

Abstract

This study aims to examine adults' knowledge and awareness regarding spinal misalignment in children and adolescents as well as to contribute to developing more effective and practical health education programs.

Spinal health plays a critical role in maintaining overall well-being; however, yet public awareness of the relationship between spinal misalignment and neurological functions remains insufficient. This study aimed to investigate the level of public knowledge regarding spinal alignment and its related health implications, and attitudes toward incorporating spinal health education in school curricula.

Structured questionnaires were administered to 400 adults. The survey focused on the following five key areas: (1) the relationship between the spine and the nervous system, (2) symptoms and disorders caused by spinal misalignment, (3) the causes of spinal misalignment, (4) the treatment of spinal misalignment, and (5) the need to include spinal health education in curricula for children and adolescents.

The respondents demonstrated a moderate level of knowledge regarding the relationship between the spine and nervous system and the treatment of spinal misalignment. High percent of the respondents selected "somewhat aware." However, the awareness of

symptoms, disorders, and causes related to spinal misalignment were notably low, as a majority of the participants indicated they were “not aware.” Female participants showed significantly higher level of knowledge than males ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, 30.1% of the respondents reported having a family member with a spinal disorder, and 99.5% agreed that the spinal health education should be included in school health curricula.

This study highlights the public’s limited understanding of specific aspects of spinal health, even though the participants recognize its overall importance. These findings provide essential baseline data for developing educational programs in order to raise awareness and preventing the spinal-related diseases.

Student Center-P1-37
20250423223058868084135

Instilling Honesty in Children Through the Semai Game at the Taman Baca Inklusi Sentra Terpadu Pangudi Luhur Bekasi, Indonesia

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Keywords: honesty, game, SEMAI

Abstract

Honesty is one of the essential moral values that must be instilled from an early age. One effective approach to teaching the value or character of honesty is through educational games. This study presents the results of a community service activity themed “Being Honest is Fun, Being Honest is Cool,” conducted at the Pangudi Luhur Integrated Inclusive Reading Garden located in Bekasi, Indonesia. The activity utilized the “SEMAI” (Nine Values) game as a tool to instill honesty in children. This game was designed to educate players about honesty in social interactions. The study employed a qualitative approach using participatory methods involving 20 children aged 4-6 years, two Reading Garden companions, and two facilitators who observed and documented the game process. The session concluded with a reflection activity to reinforce the value of honesty.

The results showed that children developed a better understanding of the importance of honesty after participating in the SEMAI game. They were able to identify situations where honesty was needed and recognize how honesty influenced their social relationships.

Discussions and reflections after the game also revealed that children were more open to talking about honesty, both in the context of the game and in their everyday lives. Based on interviews with Reading Garden companions, it was noted that “the children who come here are generally enthusiastic learners with a strong sense of curiosity. They get even more excited when engaged through such fun games.” This study successfully instilled the value of honesty in children through an interactive and enjoyable approach.

Student Center-P1-38
202504142308346663986 47

The Principles and Practice of Community Hubs in KeySteps@JC2.0 Project

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Keywords:child development, child participation, community collaboration

Abstract

The success of the parent-child interactive program of KeySteps@JC 1.0 implemented from 2017 to 2022 in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) (Leung et al., 2022) has offered a strong foundation for expanding community-based parent education and family support initiatives. Such a program aims to build parents and caregivers'competence in optimizing child development while fostering collaboration among professionals through interconnected ecological systems, including family, school, and community hub. In the KeySteps@JC 2.0 from 2022 to 2027, five hubs were designed and built to create synergy among the medical, educational, psychological and social work sectors, enabling dynamic interactions across various systems that support children and their families both within and beyond the hub.

The uniqueness and innovation of the hubs lie in its interdisciplinary collaboration model, which integrates healthcare, education, and social welfare to provide a holistic support system for children and families. Unlike traditional sector-based approaches, which often operate in isolation, this model fosters seamless cooperation among medical professionals, educators, and social workers. This approach ensures that children's developmental, emotional, and health needs are addressed comprehensively. By combining evidence-based healthcare insights, child-centred pedagogical strategies, and community-driven social services, the hubs create a responsive and dynamic ecosystem where early intervention, prevention, and empowerment work together.

This cross-disciplinary synergy not only enhances service efficiency but also drives innovative practices, such as integrated health screenings in early childhood settings, trauma-informed teaching strategies, and data-driven family support programs. The ultimate goal is to prioritize the best interests of the child, ensuring that every child, regardless of background, receives timely, coordinated, and personalized support to thrive in a rapidly changing society.

The hub prototype exemplifies a design thinking approach, ensuring that every initiative is responsive, user-centered, and adaptable to the evolving needs of children and families in HKSAR. Rooted in collaboration and continuous refinement, the hub model integrates high-quality play experiences, parent-child relationship building, co-creation of early childhood education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and strengthening community connections. By applying design thinking principles-empathizing with stakeholders, defining challenges, ideating solutions, prototyping interventions, and testing for impact-the hubs create dynamic, adaptable spaces that prioritize the best interests of children. This approach fosters community-driven innovation in early childhood education and care. This presentation will showcase exemplars supported by data-driven evidence, highlighting the innovative development of the hubs and their significant impacts on children, families and communities, while also sharing the unique socio-cultural contexts that have shaped their evolution and success. Initial successful outcomes have served as a reference for the establishment of four community parent-child centres for child protection and positive development by the government of HKSAR.

Student Center-P1-39
20250415222745251359626

Artful Learning : Enhancing Early Childhood Aesthetic Education in Hong Kong through Collaboration with Atelierista

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Keywords: the Reggio Emilia approach, aesthetic education, artful learning

Abstract

Introduction:

The Reggio Emilia Approach, renowned for its innovative practices in early childhood education, emphasizes creative environments and collaborative learning. Central to this approach are the atelier and the atelierista. This presentation aims to share insights gained from the adaptation and impact of these concepts within Hong Kong's early childhood education landscape, particularly through a Project on the theme of Light and Shadow.

Challenges in the Hong Kong Context:

Hong Kong kindergartens often face significant spatial constraints, making it challenging to establish dedicated atelier spaces. Additionally, government-funded teacher-child ratios result in limited financial resources, hindering the employment of atelieristas in every kindergarten. Nonetheless, a Hong Kong school sponsoring charitable organization operating 16 long full day kindergartens cum child care centres (KG cum CCC) have appointed an atelierista among the staffing establishment to collaborate with and support

teachers in designing and delivering enriching art experiences to young children in all the 16 KG cum CCCs.

Objectives:

1. To share experiences and outcomes of practice in professional development workshops aimed at equipping teachers with skills to integrate art into their curricula and pedagogy.

2. To present case studies highlighting the implementation of atelier-based practices in classrooms, showing children's engagement with the theme of Light and Shadow.

3. To reflect on the possibilities and challenges of establishing ateliers and atelieristas in Hong Kong kindergartens, considering cultural and contextual factors.

Process:

Our presentation begins with an overview of the Reggio Emilia Approach and the role of the atelier and atelierista within that framework. The atelierista helps prepare the materials related to the Light and Shadow Project offsite in the Head Office, which is essential given the space limitations in individual KG cum CCC.

During professional development workshops, teachers explore and experiment with these prepared materials and activities. Before the thematic unit on Light and Shadow begins, the atelierista visits the KG cum CCCs to review lesson plans formulated by teachers and environmental set up in each classroom. Instead of functioning as a traditional atelier, the KG cum CCCs set up various learning corners, time table, division of roles among staff based on the theme, to facilitate children's hands-on exploration, their initiative to discover, observe, manipulate and develop skills to use various tools and materials to imagine, express and create their representation both individually and with peers.

The atelierista also are engaged in classroom observations, experimenting with different ideas with the children and providing real-time feedback to teachers. This collaborative approach fosters a dynamic learning environment where art becomes integral to children's holistic development, especially in understanding themselves, their relationships with others and the world around them, as well as to accommodate diversities among children.

Discussion:

The discussion focuses on the transformative potential of ateliers and atelieristas in enhancing the educational experience for young children in Hong Kong, even within the constraints of limited space and resources. We will reflect on accomplishment and challenges faced during implementation, including teachers' acceptance, resource allocation, and cultural perception of art in education. Engaging participants in dialogue will help explore collaborative strategies for overcoming obstacles and fostering a community that values authenticity, creativity and resilience-building.

Conclusion:

The inclusion of ateliers and atelieristas have presented a promising avenue has appeared to for enriching teaching and learning experiences. By sharing our insights and experiences, we aim to inspire educators, administrators, and policymakers to embrace this innovative approach, ultimately fostering a vibrant and holistic educational environment for young learners.

Student Center-P1-40
20250414224133852409023

Effect of Parental Emotion Coaching on Problem Behaviors in Preschool Children: A Moderated Mediating Model

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Keywords: parental emotion coaching, children's problem behaviors, children's social-emotional competency

Abstract

In the digital age, the technological erosion of parent-child interaction spaces has significantly elevated the risk of children's problem behaviors. Exploring the mechanism of children's problem behaviors can contribute to risk prevention. Based on Gottman et al.'s "Parental Meta-Emotional Structure-Child Outcomes" model and a stratified sample of 4869 families with young children, this study analyzed the mechanism through which parental emotion coaching influences children's problem behaviors. Research findings: Significant urban-rural disparities were found in both parental emotion coaching and embodied cultural capital of family, with the former demonstrating a distinct regional gradient, while children's social-emotional competency and problem behaviors showed significant differences across urban-rural, regional, and gender dimensions; parental emotion coaching negatively predicts children's problem behaviors, and the four dimensions of children's social-emotional competency partially mediate the effects between them; embodied cultural capital of family positively moderates the effect of parental emotion coaching on children's social-emotional competency, and the enhancing effect is more pronounced in families with high embodied

cultural capital. Conclusions: The hypothesis that parental emotion coaching reduces children's problem behaviors by enhancing their social-emotional competency and that family embodied cultural capital positively moderates the path of parental emotion coaching on children's social-emotional competency is valid. Suggestions: To effectively prevent children's problem behaviors, parents should adopt a more proactive emotion coaching and create a supportive emotional atmosphere and educational environment; to ensure that all young children receive equitable and quality pre-school education, governments should establish resource compensation mechanisms that address urban-rural and regional resource disparities, while families, preschools, and communities should collaborate to build a comprehensive resource support system that fosters the development of children's social-emotional competency.

Student Center-P1-42
20250424102932904752970

One Hour of HUI Gaming: Bring on the Energy Challenge!

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Keywords: kindergarten, energetic sports, one hour

Abstract

Since its establishment in 1999, Yiqiao Central Kindergarten in Xiaoshan District has centered its philosophy on “health-first education,”evolving over two decades to create the distinctive “Perseverance and Agility Sports Program.” The program aims to cultivate children who are “physically strong, agile in movement, and resilient in character,” integrating three key components: foundational sports (enhancing motor skills through dynamic morning exercises and structured physical education), immersive sports (activating potential via adventurous “Jungle Adventure,” collaborative “CS Field Combat,” and other wild-themed camps), and expansive sports (building perseverance through outdoor challenges like endurance hikes and mountain climbing). Grounded in John Locke’s “a sound mind in a sound body,” motor sequence theory, and Rousseau’s naturalism, the curriculum emphasizes “following developmental laws, prioritizing interactive engagement, and intelligently integrating values.” Its evolution spans four phases: laying groundwork with morning physical training (2006), earning provincial-level awards for innovative equipment-based routines (2011), pioneering “Outdoor Joyful Fitness Camps” (2014), and refining the program into the acclaimed “Perseverance and Agility Sports Program” (2017), recognized as a Zhejiang Provincial Exemplary Course in 2022.

Third-party evaluations indicate that children's physical fitness ranks first in the district, while pedagogical innovations like the "Three-Three Teaching Model" and "Four-Four Sports Framework" have garnered academic accolades. The program has hosted over 1,000 visitors and earned widespread acclaim from parents and experts. By fostering holistic child development and embedding a "Sunshine & Growth" culture, the kindergarten has solidified its reputation as a community-centered institution with a unique "Wild, Fun, Wise, Collaborative" sports brand.

Student Center-P1-43
20250606230416127478824

Glocalizing the Cambridge Early Years Curriculum: Integrating Pancasila and Islamic Values in Indonesian Early Childhood Education

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Keywords: early childhood, cambridge curriculum, Indonesian Islamic values

Abstract

The globalization of education has led many countries, including Indonesia, to adopt international curricula to improve quality and global competitiveness. One such curriculum is the Cambridge Early Years Curriculum, increasingly implemented in early childhood education institutions across Indonesia. This curriculum emphasizes inquiry-based learning, communication skills, and global citizenship—key competencies in the 21st century. However, its adoption presents challenges when applied in local contexts with deeply rooted cultural and ideological values, such as Indonesia's national philosophy of Pancasila, which upholds beliefs in God, humanitarianism, unity, democracy, and social justice.

In the Indonesian context, where Islam is the majority religion, educational values are also shaped by Islamic principles such as honesty, discipline, trustworthiness, justice, gratitude, humility and compassion. These values are important in the moral development of children and are very much in line with Pancasila and the broader goals of character education.

The purpose of this study is to explore how schools that adapt the Cambridge curriculum in collaboration with local values (Pancasila) and Islamic concepts in the implementation of their learning can help new students in grade 1 to adapt well in the early days of school. Using a qualitative case study methodology, data were collected through interviews with educators, classroom observations, and curriculum document analysis at an Islamic School in Bekasi, Indonesia. The findings show a variety of localization strategies, including the incorporation of Bahasa Indonesia, regional folktales, and national holidays to promote cultural identity. Educators also integrate Islamic values by including daily prayers, Qur'anic verses, and stories of the Prophets to teach moral lessons aligned with both Pancasila and global citizenship.

Despite these efforts, educators report several challenges, including difficulties in aligning Cambridge learning outcomes with national standards, limited access to culturally and religiously relevant materials, and insufficient institutional support for curriculum integration. The research underscores the importance of teacher training, local curriculum co-design, and policy backing to effectively bridge global frameworks with national ideologies and religious values.

The study argues that glocalizing the Cambridge curriculum is not merely an instructional adaptation but a holistic educational approach that fosters globally aware, culturally grounded, and morally upright learners. Successful implementation requires collaboration among teachers, curriculum developers, policymakers, and communities to ensure that education supports international standards while honoring both national identity and religious values.

Student Center-P1-44
20250414203723626971908

Analysis of Research Trends in Early Childhood Literacy and Language Education: Focusing on Keyword Network Analysis

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Keywords: early childhood literacy, early childhood and language education, keyword network analysis

Abstract

This study analyzed the research trends on early childhood literacy and language education in Korea through keyword network analysis.

Childhood is a very important period for language development, and how a child spends this period sets the foundation for developing language potential and becoming a better language user (McGee & Richgels, 2000; Morrow, 2012). As a result, the importance of early childhood language education is being emphasized, and research on early childhood language education is being actively conducted (Lee, Lee & Lee, 2006).

In previous studies that analyzed the trends in early childhood language education in Korea, the trends in research on early childhood language education (Kim, 2009; Park, 2005; Lee & Bae, 2015) and literacy education (Choi & Lee, 2009) were conducted. In addition, research on early childhood language education in Korea has increased rapidly since 2000 (Kim & Kim, 2014; Ma, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to select research on early childhood language education since 2000 as the research subject and analyze the research trends.

The research data was collected by searching for papers published from 2000 to 2024 using the keywords“early childhood + language”and“early childhood + literacy”in the Research Information Service System (RISS) of the Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS). As a result, a total of 463 studies were found, and after reviewing the suitability for analysis, a total of 163 papers were selected for analysis. Data analysis was performed using TEXTOM, Excel 16, and UNICET6 to investigate the current state of key terms in research related to early childhood literacy and language education and was analyzed using network centrality and structural equivalence (CONCOR) techniques. In addition, Gephi 0.10.1 was used to visualize the entire network and perform community analysis.

According to the research results, firstly, the number of research papers related to early childhood literacy and language education increased after the implementation of the Nuri curriculum in 2012, increasing by more than 2.5 times in the second period (2012-2024) compared to the first period (2000-2011). Second, the keyword frequency and centrality analysis showed that“development,”“play,”“English,”and“reading and writing at home”were the prominent keywords with high values. Third, the community analysis identified five sub-structures: ‘Language Development,’ ‘Language Teaching and Learning,’ ‘Language and Literacy Environment,’ ‘Picture Book Reading and Interaction,’ and ‘Reading and Writing Interaction at Home.’

This study is significant in that it can provide insight into the research trends in early childhood literacy and language education, and it also provides basic data for establishing research strategies to support early childhood literacy and language education.

Student Center-P1-45
20250415160950276751986

The Influence of Parents' Child-Based Worth on Children's Problematic Media Use: A Moderated Parallel Mediation Model

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Keywords: child-based worth, problematic media use, parenting behaviors

Abstract

Problematic media use among children in the digital age is becoming increasingly serious, with parents' media-related parenting practices emerging as a pivotal determinant of young children's media engagement. The Process of Parenting Model in Early Childhood indicates that parents' child-based worth are the basis of parenting behavior, but the specific impact of parents' child-based worth on children's problematic media use remains unclear. Based on Family Ecological Systems Theory, Parenting Style as Context Model and The Process of Parenting Model, examines the influence mechanism of parents'child-based value beliefs, media-related parenting behaviors, and growth mindset on children's problematic media use. A stratified sampling and questionnaire surveys of 2,000 parents of 3-6-year-old children in Guangdong Province. Findings reveal that parents' child-based worth exerts a negative direct effect on problematic media use, with controlling and instrumental parenting behaviors operating as parallel mediators. Notably, parents' growth mindset moderated the relationship between controlling parenting and problematic media use, attenuating its adverse impact. Also find fathers have higher child-based value beliefs than mothers, and mothers are more likely to adopt controlling parenting behaviors than fathers. This study reveals parents

based their own value on children's achievements can inhibit children's problematic media use, and indirectly affect children's problematic media use by strengthening controlling parenting behaviors and inhibiting instrumental parenting behaviors. In this mechanism, parental growth mindset can play a moderating role. Suggestions: Parents are advised to prioritize reflexivity in their value-belief systems, cultivate affective bonding with children, and foster growth-oriented mindsets. Moreover, pay attention to the differences between parents in concepts and parenting behaviors, regulate bad parenting behaviors, harmonize compensatory mechanisms within family systems, and reduce the occurrence of "monitoring-resistance" interaction, then realize the growth-oriented role of family functions.

Student Center-P1-46
20250423231015835226758

Coaching Early Childhood Leaders in Singapore: Contextualizing the Needs, Skills and Support for Leadership Learning

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Keywords: early childhood leaders, Singapore, coaching

Abstract

The development of early childhood leaders in Singapore has been significantly supported through targeted professional development programmes designed to meet the diverse needs of leaders at various stages in their leadership journeys. These structured learning opportunities are aligned with the Early Childhood Leadership Development Framework developed by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA). This framework delineates key areas of leadership competencies which includes core leadership skills, curricular and pedagogical leadership as well as strategic and administrative leadership skills. This framework serves as a guide for leadership progression and supports the professionalisation of the early childhood sector. However, given the evolving nature of the preschool landscape in Singapore-marked by policy shifts, increasing parental expectations, and heightened accountability-early childhood leaders are expected to demonstrate a high level of adaptability, relational acumen, and contextual responsiveness.

Leadership in this sector is often shaped by experience and the ability to navigate complex, on-the-ground realities. Much of what constitutes effective leadership involves experiential learning and reflexive practice, where leaders learn to manage challenges unique

to their institutional contexts. In response to these complexities, coaching has gained traction as a powerful professional learning approach in education. Coaching, long used in corporate leadership, has increasingly been embraced in educational settings as a means of enhancing leadership capacity through reflection, dialogue, and goal setting (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012; Robertson, 2008). Research shows that leadership coaching can promote deeper self-awareness, build relational trust, and support leaders in achieving sustainable change in their practices (Wise & Jacobo, 2010; Aguilar, 2013).

In Singapore, the use of coaching in early childhood leadership training marks a significant shift toward personalised, strengths-based leadership development. Coaching offers a confidential, inquiry-driven space for leaders to explore the nuances of their roles, surface challenges, and co-construct solutions with a trained coach. This process helps leaders clarify their thinking, strengthen decision-making, and cultivate a reflective leadership stance. Drawing on both global research and regional best practices, a customised early childhood leadership coaching programme has been developed to address the unique cultural and systemic factors influencing leadership in Singaporean preschools.

This presentation will explore the evolving role of coaching in supporting early childhood leaders, offering insights into the perspectives of programme participants and the rationale behind the coaching model's design. Participants will gain an understanding of the foundational mechanisms required to implement an effective coaching initiative and explore its intended outcomes for individual leaders and the broader leadership ecosystem. The session will also underscore the importance of cross-sector learning, illustrating how leadership insights from business, adult education, and community development can be adapted to enhance early childhood leadership development in meaningful and contextually relevant ways.

Student Center-P1-47
20250318161919163939345

From Shyness to Engagement: Strategies for Enhancing Group Participation in Preschoolers through Longitudinal Observation

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Keywords: shyness, group participation, strategies

Abstract

In this study, a 5-and-a-half-year-old boy, fendi, was used to explore strategies for enhancing collective expression in kindergarten contexts using a case-tracking approach. Fendi was quiet, did not talk much, preferred to play alone, and seldom participated in various group activities on his own initiative. Prior to the intervention, fendi came to kindergarten in a depressed mood, and after coming to kindergarten, fendi tended to choose his favorite Lego blocks to build and individualized materials, with persistent social avoidance behaviors, low participation in group activities, and accompanying physiological nervous reactions (e.g. biting her fingers).

Based on the ecosystem theory, this study adopts a 4-month participatory observation as the main line of the classroom activity “I am a little anchor” and focuses on constructing an intervention framework of “step-by-step guidance-peer connection-extension outside the garden”. “In the behavioral dimension, the guidance strategy of ‘small steps forward-scaffolding-continuous reinforcement’ was adopted; in the peer dimension, from point to point, the scope of expression was gradually expanded through sharing with friends, group sharing and collective sharing; in the spatial dimension, cooperation with home and abroad was used to migrate experiences and create opportunities for multi-frequency communication and expression. At the end of the semester, fendi was not only able to tell a

complete story, but also to have a question and answer session with her peers around the story she had told, and the frequency of interactions had increased significantly (from 0 to 5 times).

This study verified the effect of individualized support strategies on shy children's collective expressiveness in a natural kindergarten context (I'm a Little Anchor Activity), and emphasized the need for educators to grasp the intervention rhythm of "creating moderate challenges-personalized scaffolding support-social feedback and reinforcement" to provi

Student Center-P1-49
20250403163210406335848

Innovative Construction and Practical Exploration of Science Curriculum in Kindergartens in the New Era: A Case Study of the "Exploration & Creation" Curriculum

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Keywords: kindergarten science curriculum, innovative construction, practical exploration

Abstract

Under the global context of technological competition and innovation-driven development, early science education has become a strategic cornerstone for building national innovation capabilities. Aligned with China's innovation-driven development strategy and policies such as the Deepening Reform Action Plan for Basic Education Curriculum and Teaching ("Science Literacy Enhancement Initiative"), the Guidelines for Science Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (Document No. 1 [2025] from the

Office of Education Supervision), and the Opinions on Strengthening Science Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the New Era (Document No. 2 [2023]), this study constructs and implements the science-oriented "Exploration & Creation" curriculum system for kindergartens.

Rooted in Tao Xingzhi's educational philosophy "Life as Education" and integrating Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory with constructivist learning perspectives, the "Exploration & Creation" curriculum transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. It holistically integrates the five developmental domains outlined in the Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3-6, aiming to cultivate "inquisitive, socially adept, expressive, and creative" holistic children. The curriculum features three innovative modules: Nature Exploration, Life Inquiry, and Technological Innovation, comprising 12 thematic units and over 60 inquiry-based projects, such as "Seed Detective Club" and "Light and Shadow Magic Room."

Implementation adopts a Five-Step Inquiry Paradigm (Problem Triggering–Experiential Engagement–In-Depth Exploration–Multimodal Expression–Reflective Application), supported by multimodal learning scenarios including planting/breeding practices, science games, parent-child experiments, and festival activities. These approaches encourage children to "think like scientists and create like engineers." Course evaluation employs the CIPP model (Context, Input, Process, Product) to ensure curriculum relevance and effectiveness, utilizing diverse assessment tools such as teacher observation records, children's growth portfolios, and artifact analysis packages.

Empirical data show improvements of 42%-65% in key indicators such as "umber of problems identified" "duration of inquiry engagement" and "rate of innovative solutions proposed". Teachers also demonstrated enhanced capabilities in designing scientific inquiry activities and developing educational materials. This research not only provides a practical model for preschool curriculum reform but also highlights the unique value of early science education in fostering critical thinking and innovative personalities. It confirms that life-based inquiry contexts, experiential learning, and project-based strategies can effectively ignite children's intrinsic motivation for scientific exploration, achieving deep integration of knowledge construction and skill development. This study offers innovative pathways to

counteract the “over-academicization” trend in kindergartens and to build developmentally appropriate school-based curricula, contributing theoretical and practical insights to advancing high-quality preschool education and supporting national strategies for education, technology, and talent development.

Student Center-P1-50
20250415091402054655954

Enhancing Early Childhood Mathematical Learning Through a High-Quality Educational Environment and Everyday Math Experiences

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Keywords: ECERS, high-quality educational environment, mathematical learning

Abstract

Our Kindergarten has always prioritized the establishment of a high-quality learning environment to support the holistic development of young children. This year, we have been dedicated to improving the mathematical learning environment and instructional activities for early childhood education.

According to Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory (1952), a child's mathematical learning is closely linked to their cognitive developmental stages. Piaget suggests that children begin developing fundamental mathematical concepts, such as counting and classification, during the preoperational stage, and later advance to understanding numerical relationships and logical reasoning during the concrete operational stage. Similarly, Bruner's Discovery Learning Theory (1960) emphasizes that children construct mathematical concepts through exploration and manipulation. He introduced the Spiral Curriculum, which advocates for repeated exposure to mathematical concepts across different stages to deepen understanding progressively.

We strongly acknowledge the crucial role of mathematical exploration in early childhood, as it fosters logical reasoning, problem-solving abilities, and spatial

awareness-key competencies essential for daily life. Children naturally employ mathematical concepts through interactions and play, engaging in activities such as counting, classification, and spatial reasoning. Apart from environmental settings, the effective application of mathematical strategies by teachers in daily instructional activities is also a critical factor influencing children's mathematical learning. Teachers must provide appropriate guidance to enable children to utilize mathematics in natural contexts, promoting cognitive growth and flexible thinking.

To enhance the quality of mathematical learning in early childhood education, our principal has led teachers in utilizing the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) as a framework to assess the diversity, interactivity, and richness of materials within the existing mathematical learning environment. This ensures that children receive the best possible learning support. A well-structured environment should incorporate essential mathematical materials, including numbers, counting tools, shape puzzles, and measurement instruments, allowing children to build mathematical concepts through hands-on activities and exploration, thereby fostering mathematical thinking.

Additionally, the ECERS assessment tool helps teachers reflect on the importance of integrating mathematical strategies into daily interactions, ensuring that children naturally engage with mathematical concepts in authentic situations. For instance, teachers can encourage children to categorize and count items during meal preparation, explore sequencing and spatial relationships through play, or reinforce quantity perception and estimation skills in everyday conversations. Moreover, teachers can facilitate mathematical reasoning by posing questions and guiding children to apply mathematical concepts in problem-solving scenarios.

In conclusion, our kindergarten has established a high-quality mathematical learning environment through the ECERS framework, assessing both the learning space and instructional strategies employed by teachers. By engaging in real-life mathematical experiences, children not only enrich their mathematical knowledge but also enhance their problem-solving abilities and confidence. This poster presentation aims to serve as a practical reference for early childhood mathematics education, encouraging educators to integrate environmental design and instructional strategies to create effective mathematical learning

opportunities.

Student Center-P1-51
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Meta-Analysis of Factors Influencing the Play Support Competency of Early Childhood Teachers in South Korea

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Keywords: play-support competence, early childhood teacher, meta-analysis

Abstract

This study aims to explore research trends associated with early childhood teachers' play support competency in South Korea and, accordingly, recommend directions for articulating future programs that refine their play guidance skills. Lately, the significance of play support competency has been widely recognized by researchers, with several studies identifying multiple influencing factors. Nevertheless, research that systematically synthesizes the factors influencing early childhood teachers' play support competency is minimal, thereby necessitating pertinent research to explore directions for future research.

Accordingly, this meta-analysis examines the general attributes and effect sizes of variables influencing early childhood teachers' play support competency. Meta-analysis allows the integration of findings from numerous independent studies, thereby augmenting statistical power and the generalizability of results. Besides, it enables heterogeneity testing that helps in identifying differences across studies. Compared with conventional content analysis, meta-analysis provides more precise quantitative estimations of effect sizes, rendering it suitable for identifying key factors related to play support competency.

Data collection was done from Korean academic theses and journal articles without limiting the year of publication. Keywords like “early childhood teachers’ play support competency,” “infant and toddler teachers,” “childcare teachers,” and “kindergarten teachers” were used to search major databases [e.g., Research Information Sharing Service (RISS), Korean Studies Information Service System (KISS), DBpia, and the National Assembly Library]. We excluded studies that were irrelevant, duplicated, lacked correlation analysis, or failed to fulfill the inclusion criteria. Finally, 76 studies were selected. Using the Jamovi program, we analyzed the overall effect size and effect sizes by variable groups: individual, organizational, job-related, and play-related.

The meta-analysis revealed an overall effect size of Zr = 0.84. By variable group, the effect sizes were: job-related (Zr = 0.91), organizational (Zr = 0.83), individual (Zr = 0.82), and play-related (Zr = 0.78), suggesting typically large effects. Furthermore, high heterogeneity was observed across all groups, signifying substantial variation in effect sizes among studies.

Discussion of the results yields the following insights. First, despite collecting data without the publication year restricting, all selected studies were published after 2022, even though the concept of play support competency emerged in 2020. Perhaps, the development of such competency among early childhood teachers could have been markedly constrained by the extensive adoption of remote learning during the COVID-19. As face-to-face instruction resumed in 2023–2024, a notable increase occurred in research related to play support competency. Second, environmental variables (job-related and organizational) exerted a bigger impact on play support competency than individual factors. Although teachers’ personal skills have often been highlighted, this study indicates that job and organizational contexts exert a more substantial impact. As overemphasis on individual competence could elevate teacher stress, apt external support systems should be considered to enable teachers to efficiently implement their play support skills. Finally, high heterogeneity among studies reflects varying effects of variables, signifying the intricacy and diversity of early childhood education settings. Hence, future research should integrate moderation analysis to explicate the sources of heterogeneity.

Student Center-P1-52
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Comparison of Early Childhood Education Curricula for Indigenous Peoples' Identity in Japan and Hawaii

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Keywords: identity, indigeous, Hawaii

Abstract

The Ryukyu people, the indigenous people of Japan, were ruled by the Yamato people from the 17th century, and were incorporated as part of Japan in the 19th century. They were originally a kingdom with strong ties to China and South Asia, but were forced to conform to the Yamato people under Japanese rule. We explore the direction of what kind of childcare is best for ensuring the identity of the Ryukyu people, who had their own unique culture, by comparing it with the education of the Polynesian people of Hawaii, who were also ruled by the United States.

Student Center-P1-53
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Cultivating Moral Awareness in Rural Preschoolers through Play-Based Learning

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Keywords: moral enlightenment in preschool education, rural kindergarten curriculum development, play-based moral education

Abstract

The Ministry of Education in China emphasizes the importance of developing high-quality preschool education as a fundamental component of a robust educational system. This initiative calls for in-depth reforms and practical implementations aimed at elevating the standards of kindergarten operations and the quality of care and education provided. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, there has been a strong emphasis on “fostering virtue” as the cornerstone of the nation’s educational endeavors, highlighting the need for moral education and a people-centered approach.

The Guide for the Evaluation of Kindergarten Education and Care Quality further integrates the concept of “fostering virtue” into early childhood moral enlightenment, prompting educators to consider the dual objectives of enhancing educational quality and fulfilling their moral educational mission. In this policy context, the focus of this study is on moral enlightenment for young children, particularly within rural settings.

This research endeavors to develop a unique moral education curriculum tailored to the specific characteristics of rural kindergartens. By adopting a child-centered perspective, the curriculum aims to harness local resources to inspire moral awareness and foster positive moral behaviors among children. Central to this approach is the use of play as a primary medium for engaging children in various experiential activities that emphasize cultural,

resource-based, and characteristic play elements.

The curriculum is designed with the core principles of “behavioral experience and perception of moral beauty” in mind, encouraging children to internalize moral values through active participation and reflection. A collaborative effort between kindergartens and families is essential to reinforce the learning outcomes, ensuring that children not only understand moral concepts but also experience and embody them in their daily lives.

The ultimate goal is to enhance children’s moral perception, experience, and character, nurturing them into individuals who embody both inner beauty and outward action. By focusing on these aspects, the curriculum seeks to contribute to the development of well-rounded, morally conscious individuals who are equipped to navigate the complexities of modern life with integrity and compassion.

In summary, this study aligns with national educational policies by promoting high-quality preschool education that integrates moral enlightenment into early childhood development. Through innovative and context-specific approaches, it aims to cultivate a generation of children who are not only academically proficient but also morally upright, thereby contributing to the overall well-being and harmony of society.

Student Center-P1-54
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A Systematic Review of the Characteristics and Effectiveness of Home-Based Math Apps for Young Children

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Keywords: math app, young children, systematic review

Abstract

Educational math apps are effective in raising children's mathematical achievement, while existing studies tend to focus on using educational apps in the classroom settings, while little is known on the characteristics of home-based educational math apps and their effectiveness in supporting children's mathematical learning. this study synthesized the characteristics and effectiveness of home-based educational math apps for young children. A total of 25 home-based educational math apps (13 from the Popular Educational Apps List and 12 from academic intervention studies) were included in analyses. All apps were evaluated with the adapted Rubric for the Evaluation of Educational Apps for Preschool Children (REVEAC, Papadakis et al., 2017). The intervention studies were coded with a self-developed coding framework to understand the apps characteristics, apps use features and intervention effectiveness. The results showed that the apps scored high in technology adaption but low in educational content or users' active engagement. The majority of the apps only included numbers and/or shapes concepts. Only nine apps supported parent-child interactions in learning and two supported children's mathematical learning through everyday problem-solving. The interventions using apps that i) supported parents' active engagement

in children's use of apps; ii) contained learning content catering for children's individual differences; and iii) included functions supporting children's learning processes were more likely to attain a positive effect on children's mathematical learning. Implications for designing quality educational math apps and supporting children's mathematical learning with apps at home were discussed.

Student Center-P2-01

20250414131313351986130

Inclusive and Collaborative Vision: A digital-intelligent Strategy for Evaluating Early Childhood Teachers' Professional Reading Engagement in County Regions

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Keywords: inclusive teacher evaluation, professional reading engagement, digital intellectualization

Abstract

Long-term challenges in early childhood teacher evaluation within county-level regions of China include excessive focus on selection, rigid criteria, monopolized evaluation processes, and insufficient feedback, all of which impede teacher growth and educational equity. This study tackles these issues through digital-intelligent innovation, anchored in Sheyang County's "Professional Reading Initiative," to design a universal and inclusive evaluation scheme encompassing all teachers. By deploying online platforms and AI-driven tools, the proposed solution introduces four key innovations:

1.Shifting Evaluation Paradigms: Transitioning from "elite screening" to universal participation, eliminating competitive barriers to ensure equitable access.

2.Integrating Multidimensional Criteria: Balancing qualitative insights (e.g., educational practices) with quantitative data (e.g., reading metrics) for comprehensive assessment.

3.Establishing Collaborative Transparency: Implementing a tripartite mechanism integrating teacher self-assessment, peer review, and AI-assisted analysis to enhance accountability and shared understanding.

4.Delivering Dynamic Feedback: Generating personalized, data-informed feedback coupled with pedagogical support to drive continuous improvement.

Empirical findings highlight the scheme's low entry barriers, high engagement, and actionable feedback, which significantly enhance teachers' professional reading capabilities and promote regional educational equity. This research offers a replicable, localized evaluation solution that demonstrates how technology can transform educational assessment systems, providing critical insights for policymakers and educators in similar contexts.

Student Center-P2-02
202504152345294425692 91

Guidelines for Developing Economic Literacy for Third-Year Early Childhood Education Major Students at Kalasin University in Thailand

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Keywords: development guidelines, economic literacy, early childhood education major student teachers

Abstract

The objectives of this research were 1) to study the status, the desired status, and the economic literacy needs of early childhood education major student teachers at Kalasin University, and 2) to create guidelines for economic literacy for third-year early childhood education major student teachers. The research methodology employed descriptive statistics. The sample consisted of 50 third-year early childhood education major student teachers at Kalasin University. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula with a margin of error of .05. Stratified random sampling was used. The instruments were a 5-level rating scale questionnaire with an IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruence) of 0.60-1.00, a reliability coefficient of 0.97 for the complete questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. The statistics used in the research were frequency, percentage, mean, and needs assessment index. The research results found that: 1) The current situation, the desired situation, and the need for economic literacy among third-year early childhood education major student

teachers at Kalasin University were overall at a high level. 2) The guidelines for developing economic literacy for third-year early childhood education major student teachers at Kalasin University consisted of 2 main approaches, 5 sub-components, and 15 activities.

Student Center-P2-03
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Practical Research on the Development and Implementation of Life Experience Curriculum in Kindergartens

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Keywords: life experience curriculum, life-practice educational theory, child-centered approach

Abstract

With the increasing national emphasis on preschool education, child-centered educational philosophies and the healthy physical and mental development of children have become a growing societal focus. However, in kindergarten curriculum practices, phenomena such as "obedient-child orientation" and "knowledge-centered approaches" still persist, deviating from a genuine child-life perspective and creating a significant gap between national policy directives and educational practices. Addressing this issue, this study

conducts practical research on the development and implementation of a life experience curriculum in kindergartens, grounded in Professor Ye Lan’s "Life-Practice" educational theory. The aim is to promote a return to child-centered educational values in early childhood education through innovative kindergarten-based curricula, shifting educational objectives from external demands to the activation of children’s intrinsic life potential.

Guided by the "Life-Practice" theory, this research constructs a life experience curriculum system for kindergartens. The system targets "cultivating vibrant, life-empowered children of the new era," structured around four dimensions: "self, nature, society, and culture," and implemented through a "dual-subject activity approach involving teachers and children" and a "collaborative education mechanism integrating kindergartens, families, and communities." Curriculum development follows a four-phase model: "problem identification, theoretical construction, practical implementation, and reflective evaluation." First, literature analysis and field surveys reveal the superficial implementation of child-centered slogans in current curricula. Next, the "Life-Practice" theory is employed to articulate core principles of respecting children’s life characteristics and prioritizing firsthand experiences. Practical implementation is then carried out across small, medium, and large classes to explore concrete pathways for curriculum execution. Finally, a dynamic "implementation-evaluation-optimization" mechanism, combined with the CIPP evaluation model (encompassing context, input, process, and product), is used to scientifically assess curriculum efficacy and iteratively refine the system based on feedback.

The study proposes a cyclical "theory-practice-theory" development mechanism, enhancing curriculum adaptability through flexible strategies that integrate pre-designed and emergent content. A dedicated life experience curriculum evaluation system is established, supported by expert guidance and pedagogical research, ensuring evaluations serve children’s holistic development. Empirical results demonstrate that the curriculum effectively promotes children’s physical and mental health, social adaptability, and cultural identity, offering evidence-based support for shifting kindergarten curricula from a "knowledge-centered" to a "life-centered" paradigm.

This research emphasizes the mutual generation of educational theory and practice, providing not only an actionable framework for life education in kindergartens but also

institutional safeguards for the scientific rigor and vitality of curriculum implementation. Through dynamic evaluation and optimization, the curriculum continuously aligns with children’s authentic needs, offering innovative pathways to realize the "child-centered" educational philosophy. Future studies will further explore mechanisms for long-term curriculum implementation, deepen home-kindergarten-community collaboration models, and contribute systematic practical references for preschool education reform.

Student Center-P2-04
202504152230055439789 58

The Relationship between Parental Early Educational Involvement and Their Children's Academic Achievements: The Serial Mediating Roles of School Belongingness and Academic Self-Efficacy

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Keywords: parental involvement, academic achievement, chain mediator effect

Abstract

Parental involvement plays a significant role in the development of children's cognitive abilities, particularly during early childhood. This study, utilizing data from the 2023 TIMSS survey in Hong Kong, explored the impact of parental educational involvement in early childhood on children's academic achievements in the fourth grade. The findings revealed that parental engagement in early educational activities varies significantly according to socioeconomic status (SES); however, no significant differences were observed based on children's gender. Pearson correlation analysis further revealed significant pairwise correlations among parental early educational involvement, school belongingness, academic self-efficacy, and academic achievement. Bootstrap analysis identified a significant serial mediating effect, in which school belongingness and academic self-efficacy acted as sequential mediators in the relationship between parental early educational involvement and children's academic achievements. These results suggest that higher levels of parental involvement during the preprimary years are associated with an increased sense of school belonging in children, which, in turn, fosters greater academic self-efficacy and leads to enhanced academic achievements. Although parents exhibit a strong awareness of gender equality in their children's mathematics and science learning, parental involvement remains

relatively underdeveloped among those with lower SES. It is crucial for parents to provide diverse and stimulating mathematical and scientific learning experiences for their preprimary-aged children, facilitating a smooth transition from early childhood education to primary school and establishing a solid foundation for children's development of both cognitive and non-cognitive abilities.

Student Center-P2-05
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The Trend in Domestic Research Regarding Artificial Intelligence in Early Childhood Education Field

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Keywords: artificial intelligence, early childhood education, a scoping review

Abstract

The combination of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital tools with Early Childhood Education (ECE) brings powerful chances to improve the thinking, emotional, and social growth of young children. In 2024, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council released the Outline of the Plan for Building a Stronger Education Nation (2024–2035), naming the use of digital tools in education as a top goal. The policy points to AI as a driving force for new teaching methods that support tailored learning and fair access to good education.

This study looks at how research on AI in early childhood education has changed over the past twenty years in China. Using the keywords “artificial intelligence,” “early childhood education,” and “use of information technology,” we searched for peer-reviewed articles published after 2003 in AMI journals found in the CNKI, Wanfang, and VIP databases. After removing studies from unrelated areas like medicine or design, 33 articles were chosen and grouped by year, topic, research method, and main focus. The results show that research on AI in early childhood education has grown a lot since 2020, with an expected high point in 2024(9 articles) and 2025(10 articles). Main reasons include fast progress in AI, a move

toward student-centered learning, and more teamwork between different fields. These changes have widened how AI is used and led to new teaching tools and ways of thinking.

This study also highlights the importance of early childhood teachers' digital skills, since raising teacher quality is key to improving preschool education. Major research areas include how AI helps teacher training, how it can be used in play-based learning, digital management in kindergartens, ethical issues, and how AI fits with teaching. Current studies also explore tools like ChatGPT, metaverse, and human-like robots, in line with national education and AI plans. However, many of these studies are still based on theory or reviews of other papers and don't have enough real-world data. Most research focuses on teachers, leaving out children's views, and there isn't much attention on parents. Also, clear ethical rules and guidance for using AI in this area are still missing. To improve this, future research should focus on four areas:

1.Inclusive perspectives: Include children, teachers, and parents to better assess how AI supports holistic development. Studies should examine children's play, learning, and peer interaction across different AI tools.

2.Teacher collaboration: Use digital platforms to support regional collaboration, integration of technology into teaching, and ongoing professional development.

3.Parental involvement: Promote awareness of digital safety and provide guidance and resources to support effective home-school cooperation.

4.Ethics and training: Offer teachers high-quality digital training and develop national ethical standards to regulate AI use in kindergartens.

A future model of education should blend new technology with strong teaching and caring human interaction. This study looks back at past AI use in Chinese preschool education to help guide future studies.

Student Center-P2-06
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Based on the Yew Chung Approach to ECE to Support Chinese Learning and Development for Children Aged 0-8

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Keywords: emergent literacy, Chinese character, Yew Chung approach to ECE

Abstract

Traditional views believe children cannot learn and develop literacy skills before formal instruction. However, children begin to continuously perceive, test, and validate literacy related to images and text in their daily living environments from an early age (Huang, 2018). Young children's reading and writing behaviors occur anytime and anywhere in children's daily lives. Emergent literacy is a critical way for young children to communicate with others using symbols, such as graphics and text, before learning literacy formally. This process includes a range of emotions, attitudes, cognitive skills, and literacy-related abilities, and its development significantly impacts children's future academic performance (Teale, 1986).

Chinese character has its uniqueness. So, children's Chinese character recognition consists of three stages: pictogram recognition, radical awareness, and orthographic awareness (Liu, 2012). Meanwhile, the writing of Chinese characters goes through four stages. Random lines and meaningless scribbles characterize the first stage; children do not respond to or cannot answer questions about what they have written. In the second stage, children present structured lines with unclear meanings, but they can explain the content of their scribbles. In the third stage, children can write simple numbers, letters, and single characters and draw shapes based on the meanings of the characters. Sometimes, they imitate

writing, but it does not look accurate, making it difficult to recognize what has been written. In the fourth stage, what children write is very close to being correct, with minor errors such as redundancy, missing strokes, and mirror writing (Chen,2010).

Yew Chung Approach to ECE emphasizes respect, emergent curriculum, inquiry-based learning, and multilingual support, providing a robust framework for children's learning and development. Some strategies are explored to develop children's physical literacy using the YC Approach to ECE. The first point is to respect and accept the unique ways children read and write and encourage them to explore writing more actively. The second point is that teachers intentionally use appropriate materials and effective interactions to stimulate children's emergent literacy in their play. The third point is to use some strategies for reading picture books, such as reading aloud and finger tracking, shared reading, interactive reading, shared writing, and interactive writing.

Student Center-P2-07
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Emotional-Behavioral Problems and Prosocial Behavior in Early Childhood: Roles of Gender and Parental Education

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Keywords: internalizing problems, externalizing problems, prosocial behavior

Abstract

Prior research on gender differences in children's emotional-behavioral difficulties has yielded mixed findings, and most studies discussed the roles of risk factors (e.g., parental stress, anxiety) rather than the protective factors (e.g., parental education). Moreover, considering the influence of socio-cultural factors, we hypothesized that the specific Myanmar context (COVID-19, political crises, and under-researched ECE) might reduce typical parental education benefits, highlighting the need for localized studies. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of gender and parental education on emotional-behavioral difficulties (internalizing and externalizing problems) and prosocial behavior in young children in Myanmar. Data were collected online in November 2024 from 125 parents of children aged 4 to 8 (M = 5.9 years; 73 boys, 52 girls) using the parent-reported Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). While initial group comparisons suggested no significant gender differences in internalizing or externalizing problems, further correlational analysis revealed that girls tend to have significantly lower levels of externalizing problems than boys. Maternal education, but not paternal education, was negatively associated with both internalizing and externalizing problems. Prosocial behavior was negatively correlated

with both internalizing and externalizing problems. Mediation analysis indicated a significant indirect effect of maternal education on internalizing problems through externalizing problems. Specifically, higher maternal education predicted lower externalizing problems, which, in turn, was associated with lower internalizing problems. This indirect effect remained significant when the roles of internalizing and externalizing problems were reversed in the mediation model. These findings highlight the importance of addressing externalizing problems and the crucial role of maternal education in promoting positive emotional-behavioral development in the specific sociocultural context of Myanmar, where maternal influence may be particularly salient. Future research should explore the mechanisms underlying these relationships, including the role of paternal education, cultural parenting practices, access to resources, and longitudinal studies to disentangle the causal effects. In conclusion, maternal education must be considered in planning effective interventions as well as in making policy frameworks for fostering children's socio-emotional development.

Student Center-P2-08
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Advancing Environmental Education in Early Childhood: A Case Study of United Christian Medical Service Nursery School

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Keywords: experiential learning, ecological literacy, sustainability education

Abstract

Environmental education plays a vital role in shaping young children's attitudes toward sustainability and conservation. Early childhood education is a crucial period for cognitive and behavioral development, offering an opportunity to instill foundational ecological awareness. With increasing global concerns about environmental degradation, kindergartens are well-positioned to nurture responsible consumption habits and environmental stewardship.

Hong Kong faces sustainability challenges, including excessive food waste and limited green spaces. United Christian Medical Service Nursery School, founded in 1993 under the Hong Kong Christian Service, integrates experiential learning methods to enhance environmental education. Through initiatives such as "Food for GOOD Week" and “Love Food More Fun Reward Scheme”, the school fosters sustainability awareness, ensuring that children engage with environmental principles in meaningful ways.

This study examines the effectiveness of the school’s environmental education programs, assessing the impacts on young learners’ ecological literacy, responsible behaviors, and long-term sustainability knowledge.

Background: Research suggests which early exposure to environmental concepts significantly influences children's ecological awareness and attitudes toward conservation

(Tilbury, 2019). Despite growing awareness of sustainability challenges, Hong Kong continues to struggle with food waste and resource inefficiencies (Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department, 2023). Many kindergartens lack structured sustainability programs, limiting children's practical engagement with environmental issues.

This study focuses on the following objectives:

Assessing the impact of food conservation programs on children's awareness of sustainability.

Evaluating the effectiveness of gardening activities in fostering ecological literacy.

Analyzing the role of family collaboration in reinforcing sustainability learning beyond the classroom.

By exploring these areas, the research aims to provide insights into better practices for integrating environmental education into preschool curricula.

Food Conservation Initiatives: "Food for GOOD week" and "Love Food More Fun Reward Scheme" promote responsible consumption and waste reduction. Children can reduce food waste, while some of the children can even transfer these habits to home settings, advocating for sustainability practices within their families.

Gardening Activities: Hands-on gardening workshops enhance ecological literacy, fostering an appreciation for nature and sustainable practices. Children demonstrate increased understanding of plant growth cycles and organic farming principles, strengthening their environmental engagement (Chawla, 2020).

Family Engagement in Sustainability Learning: Collaborative sustainability initiatives extend ecological learning beyond school settings. Parent involvement highlight the effectiveness of family involvement in reinforcing environmental principles, ensuring long-term adoption of sustainable behaviors.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Early childhood environmental education enhances sustainability awareness and fosters responsible ecological behaviors. United Christian Medical Service Nursery School exemplifies successful integration of environmental themes into preschool curricula, effectively cultivating ecological literacy through interactive learning experiences.

Future research should explore long-term impacts of early sustainability education on

children's environmental attitudes and behaviors, while comparative studies can broaden the perspectives on optimizing pedagogical approaches.

Student Center-P2-09
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The Internal Logic and Basic Strategies of Game Sharing Activities in Supporting Children's Deep Learning

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Keywords: game sharing activities, experience internalization, dialogue

Abstract

Deep learning serves as a pivotal pathway for young children to autonomously construct cognitive schemas and comprehend the essence and developmental patterns of things. Current kindergarten game-sharing activities generally face practical dilemmas such as dialogic imbalance, topic derailment, and fragmented experience transfer, which severely constrain the effectiveness of children's deep learning. Although game-sharing activities are regarded as a critical bridge connecting teaching and play, the dynamic coupling mechanism and optimization pathways between such activities and deep learning remain underexplored.

The purpose of this study was to reveal the intrinsic logical connections between game-sharing activities and early childhood deep learning. Grounded in cognitive development theory, sociocultural theory, and motivation theory, it investigated three core questions: how game-sharing activities supported deep learning through cognitive, motivational, and sociocultural mechanisms; how structural barriers in practice hindered this process; and how strategic optimizations could transform game-sharing into an effective scaffold for deep learning.

Adopting a multidimensional theoretical framework and analyzing practical kindergarten cases, the research deconstructed their dynamic relationships through cognitive integration, emotional engagement, and cultural interaction. Qualitative analysis of

observational records from game-sharing activities identified high-frequency obstructive factors and proposed a three-dimensional optimization model focusing on “dialogue-topic-experience transfer”.

The results showed the inherent connections between game-sharing activities and deep learning across cognitive, motivational, and sociocultural dimensions. To address the issues of imbalanced dialogue relationships, unfocused topic selection, and fractured experience transfer during these activities, teachers should cultivate egalitarian dialogic relationships, prioritize core questions, and construct experience-transfer scaffolds. This necessitated shifting from a “knowledge transmitter” role to a “dialogic collaborator”, supported by systematic strategies such as dynamic observation-feedback mechanisms and multimodal reflection tools. Ultimately, such optimized game-sharing activities could be upgraded into deep learning scaffolds, fostering children's critical thinking and creative problem-solving abilities in authentic contexts.

Student Center-P2-10
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Breaking the Cocoon and Constructing Children's Philosophy Education in the Era of AI: Exploring new paths of localized practice

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Keywords: AI era, children's philosophy, localization practice

Abstract

In the AI era, children's education faces three major challenges: cognitive homogenization, creative inertia, and value hollowing out. Children's philosophy takes on the mission of "breaking the cocoon of thought." Through systematic dialogue and value reflection, it encourages children to question and challenge, fostering empathy and innovation. It breaks through educational dilemmas, shifts the focus of education, and ensures that children maintain their "subjectivity of thinking" in the wave of technology. This approach aims to cultivate critical, innovative, collaborative, and caring minds, turning them into "philosophical little citizens" who embrace tools rather than being alienated by them.

This study takes 32 kindergartens in the region as a pilot, constructs the "cocoon-breaking and construction" double helix model, and explores four practical paths that are in line with China's national conditions:

Philosophical Circle Talks: Dedicated to fostering knowledge exchange and sharing among young children through well-designed processes and a positive atmosphere, these talks aim to cultivate critical thinking in an equal dialogue setting. Drawing on the international "P4C" philosophy and integrating the traditional Confucian approach of heuristic questioning, they employ a three-step dialogue method that anchors questions, sparks perspectives, and elevates meanings. Teachers act as "dialogue catalysts,"supporting

the development of young children.

Children's Parliament: Activities to involve young children in decision-making processes around the concept of children's right to participation, encouraging young children to participate in decisions related to their lives with their own opinions and ideas, practicing "listening, consultation and decision-making", and laying a moral foundation in democratic practice.

Thematic insertion: Use the "philosophy +" strategy by selecting appropriate themes, designing philosophical questions and creating environment to embed philosophical questions into daily activities, enhance the philosophical depth of thematic activities, let children develop the cognitive thinking habit that "questions are more important than answers" in a stress-free situation, and activate creative imagination.

Curriculum integration: break the boundaries of traditional curriculum, diffuse philosophical elements into five fields, from concept to method, realize the simultaneous promotion of knowledge learning and value construction, and promote the cultivation of children as a whole.

After two years of practice, the children in the project's experimental garden have become more active in their thinking, with significant improvements in problem-solving and emotional expression; teachers have transformed into "thinkers," greatly deepening classroom dialogue. This empowers each child with the courage to think, the "power of questioning," and the "warmth of connection." It also transforms every teacher's mindset, marking both an awakening from the cocoon of technology and a profound construction for nurturing new generations.

Student Center-P2-11
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Practical Research on Project-Based Learning for THE Development of Children's Critical Thinking

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Keywords: children's critical thinking, project-based learning, performance evidence

Abstract

Advancing the critical thinking capabilities of children is increasingly recognized as a crucial element in China's educational reforms. With China's shift from an industrial to a creative economy, the exploration of effective strategies to cultivate critical thinking in the early years is of paramount importance.

This study employed an integrated Project-Based Learning (PBL) design methodology, dynamically integrating teaching, learning, and assessment into a cohesive framework as the primary intervention mechanism. By embedding performance-based assessments within teaching tasks, the study provides evidence-based evaluations of children's critical thinking development. Utilizing a randomized controlled trial design, the study assesses the impact of PBL on the critical thinking abilities of 80 children aged 5-6 years, revealing a significant positive effect of PBL interventions on enhancing these skills.

The aim of this research is to uncover effective curricular strategies for bolstering children's critical thinking abilities. Through the provision of empirical evidence and targeted educational tactics, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights and practical guidelines for the promotion of critical thinking skills in children.

Student Center-P2-12
202504141543031537983 25

Coordinate the Curriculum to Meet the Needs of Children's Development-A Practical Study on the Construction of 23-Year-Old Kindergarten Curriculum in Xincun Kindergarten

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Keywords: kindergarten-based curriculum, coordinate construction, children's development needs

Abstract

Kindergarten curriculum is the main way for kindergarten to achieve its educational goals, the core of kindergarten education quality improvement, and the key to the implementation of kindergarten educational ideas. Therefore, kindergarten curriculum must meet the development needs of children.

Xincun Kindergarten has been dedicated to the construction of its “Joy Valley Curriculum” for twenty-three years. Through theoretical learning guiding practice and practical attempts enriching theory, the kindergarten continuously conducts educational research, focusing on solving current core issues at different stages. It innovatively constructs a “dual-axis three-dimensional” curriculum system, achieving three major breakthroughs: adopting a coordinate model to establish a three-dimensional curriculum, with the vertical axis setting the core educational goal and curriculum objective of “Happy and Confident Little Masters”, and the horizontal axis developing a teacher-student interactive teaching model, forming a dynamic educational content coordinate system.

The “Joy Valley Curriculum” system innovatively implements a three-tier progressive framework of “basic domain courses + three small garden-based courses + personalized

class-based courses", catering to the common needs, special needs, and individual needs of children's development. It establishes a "Six Pleasures" literacy observation system (six dimensions with 105 observation points, including sunshine sports, joyful reading, and enjoyable performances) to achieve precise alignment between general development and individual growth. In practice, it pioneers the "Six-Step Experience Method" (multi-sensory participation-perception-operation-expression-summary-transfer) and the Slock Group teaching research model (four-level lesson preparation + tiered teaching research). During the construction and implementation of this curriculum, teachers' course-building abilities and activity organization skills have significantly improved, leading to the comprehensive development of children and driving the rapid improvement of the overall quality of the kindergarten curriculum.

The curriculum system organically integrates the national education policy, regional cultural characteristics and child-centered concept, responds to the three attributes of education, namely, the state, society and individual, in dynamic adjustment, and provides a systematic practice sample for the innovation of preschool education curriculum.

Student Center-P2-13
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Toddlers' Responses to Educators' Commanding Language in Free Play

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Keywords: toddlers' responses, commanding language, educator-toddler interaction

Abstract

Commanding language is a common type of instructional language employed by educators, which is used to guide and regulate the behaviour of toddlers or to organize activities. In early childhood education, educators' commanding language is an important carrier of educator-child interaction. The way and results of toddlers' responses are the core indicators to evaluate the quality of interaction. Different types of commanding language directly influence toddlers' comprehension and acceptance, consequently eliciting toddlers' different responses. Notably, toddlers aged 24-36 months exhibit age-specific response characteristics, often conveying needs and feelings through body movements, facial expressions, voice intones or simple vocabulary.

Toddlers' responses to commands are not only the result of command execution but also manifest representations of their self-awareness, social cognition, and language development. Previous studies predominantly concentrated on the unidirectional output of educators' commands such as types or frequency of commanding language, while neglecting toddlers' responses. This has struggled to reveal the bidirectional dynamic process of educator-child interaction and to truly understand the subject status of toddlers in the interaction.

This study investigated 30 toddlers from 8 early childhood education and care institutions in Hangzhou. It focused on toddlers' responses to educators' commands in educator-toddler free play interactions, systematically coding and analyzing the types of educators' commanding language and toddlers' multimodal responses. Adopting the semantic framework of Hasan (2009), commands are categorized into direct & non-suggestive, direct & suggestive, indirect & non-suggestive, and indirect & suggestive. According to White (2015) codes of educators' and infants' initiation and response language forms, toddlers' responses to commands are divided into three dimensions: (1) mode (e.g., verbal , non-verbal, verbal and non-verbal combined), (2) time (e.g., immediate and delay), and (3) result (e.g., positive, negative and non-response). Through research findings, this study thoroughly explored the factors influencing toddlers' response to commands, including types of commanding language, toddlers' development levels, and play contexts. And provide targeted suggestions for educators to use commanding language in free play to improve the effectiveness of commands.

The results indicate that toddlers' responses to educators' commands exhibit multimodal characteristics, dominated by non-verbal responses (e.g., gestures, body movements and expressions). The proportion of combined verbal and non-verbal responses shows a significant increase with advancing age. In terms of response time, the proportion of toddlers responding immediately to direct & non-suggestive commands is significantly higher than that of indirect & non-suggestive commands, and delayed responses are often accompanied by repeated requests. This suggests that the type of commands uttered by educators is the factor that affects the timeliness of toddlers' responses. The results of toddlers' response are mainly positive, with less occurrence of negative responses. Specifically, toddlers have a higher frequency of positive responses to direct & non-suggestive commands, while negative responses are more common in suggestive commands.

This study transcends traditional educator-centered paradigms in educator-toddler interaction studies and applies Bakhtin's (1986) dialogic methodology to early childhood education. It highlights toddlers' multimodal responses and reveals the subjective expression and development value of toddlers in the interaction, which has significant practical value in

improving the quality of educator-toddler interaction.

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Sharing on Optimizing Early Childhood Science Education Activities

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Keywords: STEAM, early childhood education, science education

Abstract

Hong Kong Christian Service Kwun Tong Nursery School has consistently focused on the evolving trends in early childhood education. In recent years, the global emphasis on STEAM education has led to increased attention towards the effectiveness of early childhood science education. Our institution has long provided scientific exploration activities for children, aiming to enhance their problem-solving skills and cultivate independent values. To achieve this, we actively engage in teacher training to improve professional competencies, encourage continuous learning, and broaden teaching perspectives.

We have integrated STEAM elements into our school-based curriculum, encompassing various domains such as nature and daily life, early childhood mathematics, arts and creativity, and Montessori education. A notable example is our design of a "flower arrangement" activity, where children are given the opportunity to select their preferred vase and flowers. They carefully measure and compare the heights of the flower stems and the vase, using scissors to trim the stems to fit the vase. Ultimately, they engage in artistic and creative thinking to design and create their floral arrangements. Throughout this process, children are required to measure and compare, while paying careful attention to the relationship between the height of the stems and the vase to maintain balance. This activity, which may appear simple, reflects the teachers' profound understanding and flexible application of curriculum design, enabling children to learn in a holistic manner within a

natural environment rather than through fragmented categories.

In addition, to provide children with diverse scientific experiences, our school is dedicated to exploring and arranging various outdoor learning opportunities that broaden their understanding of nature. Activities include visits to farms, where children can engage in outdoor farming, cooking over a fire, creating toys and instruments from bamboo, and painting with coal. These activities utilize natural materials for multifaceted learning. We also lead children in exploration activities at the beach, using light-sensitive paper and other materials to investigate the properties of sunlight and understand the concepts of light and shadow.

Such experiences allow children to step outside the confines of the classroom, enriching their learning in different natural environments. We aim to instill the habit of "learning from life and applying knowledge in life," thereby enhancing their practical wisdom. This approach not only fosters a deeper connection to the natural world but also promotes critical thinking and creativity, essential skills for their overall development.

By emphasizing the integration of STEAM education and providing hands-on experiences in various environments, we hope to create a rich and balanced learning experience for our children. As we continue to adapt our teaching strategies and curriculum to meet the needs of young learners, we remain committed to fostering a love of science and exploration, empowering children to become curious, independent thinkers.

In summary, the efforts of our school reflect a dedication to optimizing early childhood science education through innovative curriculum design and diverse learning experiences, preparing our children for a future where they can confidently explore and engage with the world around them.

Student Center-P2-15
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Enhancing Curriculum Development through ECERS to Promote the Effectiveness of Free Play

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Keywords: free play, ECERS, professional development

Abstract

In early childhood, play is not only central to children's lives but also their main way of exploring and understanding the world. Its importance is well-supported by international research. In 2023, the school was introduced to ECERS through a professional development program and began using it to assess and enhance the school environment. For the 2024-2025 school year, the school's focus is to further strengthen children's free exploration through the promotion of free play, aiming to create an open, inspiring environment that fosters creativity, problem-solving, and social skills.

All teachers receive training on free play to enhance their ability to design, guide, and provide feedback on play-based activities. This supports greater independence and exploration in learning. The school also encourages the integration of theory and practice through regular joint lesson planning, observations, and evaluations. These practices boost teachers' confidence and help them reflect on and adjust the school-based curriculum based on children's play behaviors.

To promote professional growth, each semester includes three peer observation sessions that assess environmental layout, material use, children's game engagement, and teacher interaction skills. A particular focus is placed on whether children can organize and

consolidate their learning experiences through play. Core team members also host monthly curriculum-sharing sessions to exchange resources and teaching experiences, encouraging team collaboration and development.

The school continuously improves its environment by designing diverse free-play areas and providing rich, stimulating materials. These encourage peer interaction, creativity, and collaboration. Reading activities are also used to extend play contexts, enhancing imagination and motivation and helping children integrate knowledge through play.

The school organizes a monthly "Happy Friday" event to further enrich exploration. This event allows mixed-age groups to engage in free play and sensory exploration. Themed exploration days are also held to promote active participation and independent learning.

Throughout the year, the school conducted three assessments using ECERS-R and ECERS-E, which showed consistent improvement in free play-related items. Observations and teacher feedback confirmed that children were actively engaged, and teachers found ECERS to be a positive and practical tool. They recognized that (1) the environment influences play quality, (2) ECERS supports play-based learning, (3) a high-quality environment enhances free play goals, and (4) teacher roles are crucial in supporting play. ECERS thus serves as an assessment tool and a valuable guide for creating rich, safe, and stimulating learning environments that support high-quality free play.

Student Center-P2-16
202504141758064728086 59

Chinese Parents' Implicit Theories of Intelligence and Parenting Styles: The Moderator of Marital Quality

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Keywords: implicit theories of intelligence, marital quality, parenting styles

Abstract

This study examined the moderating effects of marital quality (MQ) in the relationship between parental implicit theories of intelligence (ITI) and parenting styles (PS). Participants were 249 parents in Macau who had at least one child attending K1 to K3 classes at a private kindergarten. The results indicated that: (a) parental incremental theory was positively related to authoritative parenting and showed a nonsignificant correlation with authoritarian parenting; (b) parental entity theory was positively associated with authoritarian parenting and was negatively related to authoritative parenting; and (c) MQ moderated the relation between parental entity theory and authoritative parenting. Specifically, parental entity theory was negatively related to authoritative parenting in higher MQ conditions, but such moderation effects disappeared in lower MQ conditions. Furthermore, a high level of marital quality buffered against the detrimental effects of parental entity beliefs on authoritative parenting. Theoretical implications are discussed for research on ITI, MQ, and PS, along with practical implications for increasing beneficial parenting practices.

Student Center-P2-17
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Localizing Montessori Education through Life Experiences to Enhance Early Childhood Learning Motivation

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Keywords: montessori, follow the child, localizing

Abstract

Every child is unique and has an innate love for exploration, making them active learners. The environment in everyday life serves as an excellent learning context. Our school has always emphasized "Following the child," respecting each child's abilities and interests. We place a strong focus on integrating the spirit of independent exploration and learning from the Montessori philosophy into daily life, allowing students to experience Montessori education through their everyday experiences. As Tim Seldin, the president of the American Montessori Foundation, once said, "For me, Montessori education is life."

During 2018, our school began to deepen its Montessori teaching strategy, integrating nature and daily life with Montessori education, applying Montessori attitudes and skills from daily experience to improve children's ability to explore independently, self-solving and active learning.

Our school has set up Montessori classrooms that include five major areas, allowing young children to engage in self-exploration through sensory experiences and hands-on activities. Children can pursue independent learning and problem-solving based on their personal interests, goals, and needs, thereby fostering respect for themselves, others, and their environment. A free learning environment can enhance children's learning motivation, and the cultural area allows children to understand the world and the unique customs of various

countries.

In addition to traditional Montessori learning materials, we also integrate into local culture by adding Chinese language materials, elements of traditional Chinese culture, festive customs, and local sentiments from Hong Kong. For examples, there are teaching materials on the Mid-Autumn Festival fire dragon dance tradition in Tai Hang, research on giant panda cubs in Ocean Park, Chinese weaving, Hong Kong transportation and local snacks..

With the outdoor garden available at the school, we have redesigned and developed a natural exploration area, establishing an outdoor Montessori classroom. This space includes creative woodworking, nature exploration, laundry and drying activities, and planting. Children can engage in tasks according to their individual interests, such as caring for tortoises, feeding goldfish, gardening, woodworking, washing and drying clothes, cleaning tables, crushing eggshells, fertilizing plants, watering, arranging flowers, observing specimens, and exploring nature. This setup ensures that the quiet atmosphere of the indoor classrooms is not disturbed while providing opportunities for children to explore the natural world. In the spirit of Montessori exploration, we foster an objective and open-minded attitude towards learning. Through questioning, hypothesis prediction, observation, and comparison, we aim to enhance children’s curiosity about nature and life, allowing plants and animals to thrive under their care.

In conclusion, our school provides high-quality indoor and outdoor learning environments for young children, allowing them to learn about local culture and global knowledge through everyday experiences. This connection to the world helps them understand the environment they live in and fosters a global perspective from a young age.

Student Center-P2-18
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Research on the Identification of Key Elements of Kindergarten Structural Quality from a Parental Perspective

Yuhan Zhang
(Yunan Normal University)

Keywords: parental perspective, kindergarten structural quality, kano model

Abstract

This study is parent - oriented and uses the Kano model to explore the key elements of kindergarten structural quality, aiming to reveal the priority of kindergarten structural quality from parents'perspective.By integrating structural quality indicators from literature reviews, 25 core elements were identified through the Delphi method, covering five dimensions: material environment, class structure, teacher allocation, management standards, and resource investment. A bidirectional questionnaire designed using the Kano model was administered to 500 parents (both public and private kindergartens) in urban and rural areas of Kunming. Key findings include: (1) Parents'demands for structural quality show significant stratification, with material environment identified as a basic attribute, whose absence causes strong dissatisfaction; (2) Teacher-child ratio and sufficiency of educational resources are one-dimensional attributes, with a linear relationship to satisfaction; (3) Personal activity space is an exciting attribute, significantly enhancing satisfaction when present; (4) Urban and rural parents exhibit distinct demands: rural parents prioritize infrastructure compliance, while urban parents emphasize teacher-child ratio and teacher professionalism; (5) Through quadrant matrix positioning, adjustments to teacher-child ratio and improvements to safety emergency plans were prioritized for enhancement. Focus group interviews further revealed

that parental demands are influenced by regional resource supply and information transparency, such as rural areas emphasizing foundational guarantees due to weak hardware, and urban parents pursuing quality improvement due to educational anxiety. This study provides empirical support for optimizing kindergarten resource allocation and enhancing parental educational satisfaction.

Student Center-P2-19
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Exploring Early Education Practices for 0-3 Year Olds Under the EYFS Framework: Observation-Assessment-Planning(O-A-P)

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Yiwen Liu
(Lucton Nursery School)

Keywords: diverse needs, observation and assessment, personalized support strategies

Abstract

The period from 0 to 3 years old is the most rapid and transformative stage of growth and development in a lifetime. By leveraging the EYFS framework, through observation, assessment, and the development of personalized development plans and support strategies, we can organize targeted individual and group activities, as well as provide parental guidance, to make early education more precise and effective.

Taking 24-month-old Timothy as an example, observations revealed that Timothy's language comprehension and ability to follow instructions are well-developed (he often responds with single words like "mama" or "bubble," or with gestures and actions, after carefully listening to others). The next step is to guide Timothy to use two-word phrases more frequently to express his thoughts and needs, such as saying "want more water" when thirsty. Referring to the EYFS developmental assessments, a personalized development plan and support strategies were designed for the upcoming stage of language and communication development: animal cards and real object toys from picture books were added to the reading area; after reading the books, open-ended questions that required Timothy to think and express himself were asked, such as "Which animal do you like to play with? The rabbit or

the bear?" The teacher first demonstrated simple sentences and encouraged Timothy to imitate them. When Timothy attempted to use two-word expressions, positive feedback was given, and the corresponding animal was handed to him. In individual activities, a "flip-board picture conversation" activity was designed to encourage Timothy to flip the boards, describe the picture content with simple words, and engage in interactive communication. In group activities, role-playing scenarios like "playing house" and "doctor and patient" were created to guide Timothy to interact and communicate with other children. Regarding communication with parents, inquiries were made about Timothy's language use at home, including commonly used words, sentences, and interactions with parents. Parents were encouraged to share specific examples of Timothy's language development at home. Parents were advised to use simple sentences or phrases that Timothy could easily imitate in daily life. For instance, when Timothy expressed a need, the corresponding words and sentences were clearly repeated. Parents were encouraged to ask Timothy open-ended questions to guide him to express his thoughts with simple words or sentences, such as "What did you play today?" or "Which toy do you like?"

After a month, Timothy's language and communication skills showed significant improvement. In terms of independent expression, Timothy could use phrases or sentences of more than two words. For example, when Timothy picked up a toy fish, he said, "Red fish come out!" In terms of communication and conversation skills, he could engage in conversations about a common focus and clearly express his thoughts by following others' topics. For instance, when seeing a picture of a bird in a picture book, the teacher said, "This is a bird." Timothy added, "Chirp chirp."

Every child is unique. The continuous pursuit of high-quality early education lies in deeply studying the EYFS educational philosophy and framework, mastering how to find the starting point for the next plan through observation, recording, and evaluation, and providing personalized and targeted development support strategies and guidance for infants and toddlers aged 0-3 and their parents.

Student Center-P2-20
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Exploring Learning Corners and Free-Choice Activities: An Action Research Study in a Hong Kong Kindergarten

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(The Education University of Hong Kong)

Keywords: learning corners, learning through play, Hong Kong kindergarten

Abstract

The learning environment is considered the "third teacher" (Gandini, 1998). It encompasses not only the physical aspect, but also the classroom rules and atmosphere, such as flexibility, openness, and collaboration that support learning (Nevanen, Juvonen & Ruismaki, 2014). A well-designed learning environment facilitates children's exploration, practice, and learning, while catering to their individual needs and different learning situations. Learning corners, created by early childhood teachers, play a crucial role in promoting active learning among children, both individually or in small groups.

Action research serves as a valuable approach for professional development and enhancing children's learning. It involves teachers systematically reflecting on their work and implementing changes in their practice. In this presentation, we will share our ongoing school-wide action research project that has been focused on children's learning in learning centers and during free choice time since the 2015/16 school year. Our kindergarten, a typical Hong Kong kindergarten that offers a full-day programme for children aged 2-6, 5 days a week.

The action research project consists of four cycles, each encompassing four key stages:

reflection, planning, implementation and observation. Throughout each cycle, we have collected and analyzed fieldnotes, photos, videos, observations and reflections.

Cycle 1 (2015-17): Under the guidance of a new principal, the kindergarten initiated the action research project by reviewing videos of all age groups. During free choice activities, it became apparent that some children were struggling to engage with the learning corners. This led us to focus on improving the learning corners and enhancing free-choice activities. We gradually implemented change to guide children in making choices, keeping records, and improving the quality and variety of the learning corners.

Cycle 2 (2017-18): In response to the concept of free play introduced by the Education Bureau [EDB] (Curriculum Development Council, 2017), a specific space and time were allocated for free play as part of the learning corners and free-choice activities. They sought on-site professional support service provided by EDB while reorganizing the physical environment and timetable. Additionally, the principal also addressed teachers' conceptions of play and learning.

Cycle 3 (2018-19): To foster meaningful learning experiences in learning corners and free-choice activities, the principal introduced the 4F active reviewing model. This model refers to facts, feelings, findings and future, and teachers were encouraged to use this model to facilitate children's reflection on their learning experiences.

Cycle 4 (Post-pandemic): Following the pandemic, there were limitations on learning corners and free-choice activities when children return to kindergarten. Moreover, there was a 40% turnover in teachers. We are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the learning corners, free-choice activities and the implementation of the 4F model.

Through sharing our experiences and insights gained from implementing the action research project and setting up learning corners, we hope to benefit early childhood educators worldwide and contribute to their professional development in this field.

Student Center-P2-21
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Meta-analysis of the Effects of Exercise Interventions on the Continuous Coordinated Jumping Ability of 5-6-Year-Old Preschool Children

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Keywords: exercise intervention, preschool children, continuous coordinated jumping ability

Abstract

Objective: To systematically evaluate the impact of exercise interventions on the continuous coordinated jumping ability of 5-6-year-old preschool children and provide evidence-based support for optimizing physical activity designs in kindergartens. Methods: Relevant literature was retrieved from databases such as PubMed, CNKI, Wanfang, and VIP from the establishment of the databases to March 9, 2025. The PCOST model was used for literature screening, and 14 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) were ultimately included. The quality of the literature was evaluated using the Cochrane system, and a meta-analysis was conducted using Review Manager 5.3. The standardized mean difference (SMD) and 95% confidence interval (CI) were calculated. Heterogeneity was tested using the I^2 test, and subgroup analyses were conducted to explore the effects of factors such as gender and exercise frequency. Results: A total of 722 children were included in the studies, with 397 in the experimental group and 325 in the control group. The meta-analysis results showed that exercise interventions had a statistically significant effect on the continuous coordinated jumping ability of 5-6-year-old preschool children (SMD = -0.55, 95% CI: -0.84 to -0.27, P = 0.0002), but there was high heterogeneity (I^2 = 77%). Subgroup analysis indicated that high-frequency exercise (3 times/week, SMD = -1.18) and long-term intervention (> 12 weeks, SMD = -0.63) were more effective. There was no statistically significant gender

difference (P = 0.90), and sensitivity analysis suggested that the results were stable (SMD = -0.73). Conclusion: Exercise interventions can effectively improve the continuous coordinated jumping ability of 5-6-year-old children. It is recommended to adopt high-frequency and long-term intervention plans and design personalized activities considering individual differences.

Student Center-P2-22
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Practical Research on a Kindergarten Inquiry-Based Curriculum Oriented Toward the Enlightenment of Scientific Ethos

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Keywords: inquiry-based curriculum, curriculum system, enlightenment of scientist spirit

Abstract

Against the backdrop of intensifying global competition in scientific and technological innovation, the cultivation of the scientific spirit has emerged as a pivotal issue in foundational education. As the foundational stage for the formation of individual cognition and values, preschool education's goal of nurturing "holistic children" is highly congruent with the humanistic qualities inherent in the scientific spirit. This study aims to explore how inquiry-based curricula in kindergartens can effectively inspire the scientific spirit, thereby addressing the demand for high-quality educational development and laying a foundation for the sustainable growth of children.

Employing an integrated methodology that combines theory and practice, this study investigates the intrinsic connection between kindergarten inquiry-based curricula and the cultivation of the scientific spirit through literature analysis, field research, and case studies. A tri-dimensional implementation pathway—"environmental immersion, internalization through practice, and spiritual enlightenment"—is constructed, and a "three forces-driven"

collaborative educational model is proposed, wherein teachers, scientists, and parents collectively advance the inquiry-based curriculum. Concurrently, a “five steps, five movements” inquiry cycle is designed to support children in experiencing a comprehensive inquiry process, while environmental linkages create a multidimensional inquiry field that provides rich learning experiences.

The findings indicate that the inquiry-based curricula in kindergartens can effectively inspire the scientific spirit through the collaborative “three forces-driven” educational model and the “four steps, four movements” inquiry cycle. In interdisciplinary thematic inquiries and real-life practice settings, children exhibit enhanced inquiry abilities, a cooperative spirit, and a pragmatic attitude. Moreover, the multidimensional inquiry field established via environmental linkages offers abundant learning resources, thereby promoting the concurrent development of children’s cognition and personality. This study provides a practical paradigm for the cultivation of the scientific spirit in preschool education, opens a new pathway for nurturing scientific literacy during early education, and offers valuable insights for international exchanges in preschool education across the Pacific Rim region.

Student Center-P2-23
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Creating a Professional Learning Community in a Hong Kong Child Care Center: A FOCUS Approach

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Keywords: child care center, infants and toddlers, professional learning community

Abstract

Background

In recent years, childcare services have gained increasing recognition and are in demand within Hong Kong (HK) society. This growing awareness of the vital importance of infant and toddler care and education has led to opportunities to enhance resources and professional training for educators, supported by government initiatives as well as charitable organizations.

As the first aided childcare centre (CCC) opened in HK after a two-decade hiatus, it not only signifies a key milestone of childcare services in HK but also determined to breakthrough the previously established service model of CCCs to create a more progressive and supportive high-quality child care service.

Centre

Committed to holistic development, CCC introduces an innovative model for nurturing infants and toddlers. In collaboration with the Jockey Club Bright Start Project, which aims at providing support to CCCs to develop high-quality ECEC services, CCC commits to fostering professional development for teachers while improving the standards of their service and education for children.

New pioneer unit for innovative

CCC introduces a fresh approach to delivering childcare services. Its design resolves spatial limitations with an open-plan layout, promoting independent exploration and learning for infants and toddlers. The center offers a variety of materials and teaching tools designed to provide a stimulating yet secure and stable environment. Although we have updated the hardware of the center, we also recognize the importance of enhancing the "software" – our teachers – through ongoing training and development. Teachers are encouraged to respond and engage sensitively with children through daily interactions, enhancing communication and connection to strengthen mutual attunement.

Teacher development taskforce

As professional development, JP spearheaded to launch a teacher development taskforce, which supports and empowers teachers working with infants up to 2 years old. This initiative highlighted our profound commitment to innovation in ECEC, and integrated values of quality ECEC to refine teaching practices. In particular, it focused on enhancing awareness in enriching the learning environment, and the delivery of nurturing care, which are essential for every infant's well-being. The initiative's outcome is guided by the FORCE framework, highlighting the following five key elements:

• Fulfilling: Providing training and professional development opportunities.

• Openness: Encouraging teachers to share ideas and challenges, fostering open communication.

• Reflective: Encouraging teachers to regularly assess their teaching practices and children outcomes through reflective journaling and peer observations.

• Collaboration: Organizing group discussions and establishing mentorship programs between experienced and newer teachers.

• Empowerment: Enhancing professional skills to improve teaching quality and methodologies, leading to job satisfaction.

Teachers received target training on understanding and implementing the principles of quality ECEC in their practices. They engage in a systematic evaluation process, beginning with self-assessments and advancing to peer evaluations. These reflective evaluations enabled teachers in the Teacher development taskforce to constantly reflect on their practice, ensuring that their practices are evidence-driven and align with the aspired standards.

We will discuss the details of our FORCE framework, and how professional learning community is incorporated to enhance teachers' values and practices. Discussion will highlight the practicality and success of such initiative, and how it leads to a change throughout the whole centre and benefits all stakeholders in the centre.

Student Center-P2-24
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Make Every Child A Protagonist: A Case Study of AI Used in Pedagogical Practices

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(Soong Ching Ling Kindergarten)

Keywords: AI, childhood, pedagogical practices

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) literacy is a crucial part of digital literacy that all individuals should possess in today's technologically advanced world. Despite the potential benefits that AI education offers, little research has been done on how to teach AI literacy to children.

This case study focusing on the AI technology used in 3 to 4-year-old children's classroom to realize their dream of creating picture books. As a result, we found that from the children's rich imagination and language expression of food in the theme activities, parents also can use AI technology to turn the young children's imagination into reality, generating an original AI picture book called "Leek and Egg", so that children experience the magic of technology and feel the pride of being a young author. We also witnessed the process of children actively exploring and solving problems under the driving force of the problem, becoming active learners, and deeply felt the growth that the children gained in the curriculum.

This study aims to fill that gap by investigating how children are engaged in AI pedagogical practices that are supported by parental resources whilst parents are supporters of the class curriculum. We find that children have the capability to understand the basic

functions of AI, especially when they are provided with the learning opportunities that are age-appropriate and relevant to their prior experience.

Student Center-P2-25
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Transdisciplinary Collaboration: Development of Professional Educare Practice in a Child Care Center in Hong Kong

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Keywords: transdisciplinary collaboration, integration, educare practice

Abstract

The growth and development of children aged 0 to 3 years during their sensitive period are critically important. There has been increasing attention among scholars, educators, parents, and the public in this area. To facilitate optimal development of infants and toddlers, the integration of various professions is essential in creating developmentally appropriate routines, activities, curriculum and environmental design. Therefore, the role of educare practice in nurturing and enriching environments in supporting young children in child care centers becomes a significant and urgent issue that the field needs to address.

A child care center in Hong Kong has been developing and advancing their professional educare practice through transdisciplinary collaboration. This approach involves different professionals sharing their disciplinary expertise and working together to plan and implement comprehensive support for children. This collaborative effort includes not only the primary caregivers—frontline child care practitioners— but also center supervisors, senior

management teams, health-related professionals, and teacher educators, both directly and indirectly engaged in educare practice for children aged 0 to 3 years.

This poster aims to illustrate the development of professional educare practice through transdisciplinary collaboration in this child care center. Supported by a structure of organizational policy, leadership, and resources from the management team of the center, it enables the frontline child care practitioners to have opportunities to interact with various professionals in the center, including nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, and professional coaches in early childhood education. Such interactions provided a platform for professional exchange, enabling the team to enhance their understanding of the developmental needs of young children through the perspectives of different disciplines.

Through ongoing professional dialogues, the team transitioned from apprehension about implementing changes to existing educare practice to the state of willingness and openness to engage in discussions with their teammates, ultimately leading to a consensus on quality educare practice for promoting the growth and development of young children by incorporating insights from different professional expertise. With individual and collective knowledge and experience, the center developed their own professional educare practice. These practices include (1) implementing developmentally appropriate activities with the ideas of discovery learning, (2) providing stimulating multisensory learning experience for children, and (3) catering children's health needs in accordance with health care operating procedures, and (4) evaluating program quality using Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS).

Through transdisciplinary collaboration, the center established a learning circle within their team. The team moved beyond individual professional distinctions, working collaboratively in a shared and collective manner despite their diverse professional backgrounds. They continually supported and learned from one another, broadening their awareness and understanding of other disciplines as well as expanding their skills and knowledge across disciplines. This collaborative experience fostered mutual trust and respect, further enhancing their courage and confidence to address numerous changes and challenges in providing high-quality child care services for the children.

Student Center-P2-26
20250414143506844038578

Empowering Young Minds: Sustained Shared Thinking and Its Influence on Young Children's Development

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Keywords: SST, cognitive development, social interaction

Abstract

Children learn through social interaction, while engaging with others allows children to co-construct knowledge and internalize concepts (Vygotsky, 1978). Recent research highlights the strong connection between interaction and learning effectiveness, showing that responsive teaching significantly enhances teacher-child and peer engagement (Michelle, 2023). To enhance the effectiveness of interaction, it is essential to adopt Sustained Shared Thinking (SST) in order to enhance children's cognitive and social skills (Siraj et al., 2015). It is a collaborative process where two or more individuals engage intellectually to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, or expand a narrative, with each party contributing to deepen their understanding (Siraj et al., 2002) This approach allows children to freely express their thoughts and ideas, empowering them and enhancing their learning experiences.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, a nursery school in Hong Kong, which serves children aged 2 to 6, engaged in free play every week and shares thoughts by shared thinking sessions after the activities. Through a year of free play and sustained shared thinking, teachers have observed significant improvements in children's language expression and problem-solving abilities. During this period, children were continuously encouraged to use language to communicate and collaborate during interactions to plan their free play or solve problems, enhancing their expressive skills. Additionally, when faced with various challenges, they learned how to analyze problems, propose solutions, and find the best approaches through collaboration with peers.

Recognizing the importance of interaction, we incorporate SST into our school's daily routines to facilitate more effective interactions between teachers and children. A comprehensive program was implemented to improve teachers' skills in SST, facilitating them to apply SST strategies effectively in the classrooms. An in-depth study was conducted in the school. To assess children's performance in cognitive and social skills, teachers recorded dialogues of interactions at both the beginning and end of the school year. Additionally, interviews were conducted with eight practitioners, who were invited to reflect on their experiences.

Guided by the The Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing (SSTEW)standards, teachers equipped skills in modelling thinking, encouraging children to elaborate on their ideas, and respecting their decisions and choices. Data collected from children's dialogues and teachers’ interviews indicated significant improvements in children's cognitive and social skills. The improvements include: (1) enhanced problem-solving skills, (2) increased positive peer engagement, and (3) higher confidence in expressing their opinions. Additionally, the school has published a book of children's dialogues, capturing meaningful conversations between peers and between children and teachers. This resource serves as a valuable reference for early childhood educators on how to effectively guide children in expressing their thoughts and ideas.

In conclusion, this study underscores the nursery school's commitment to fostering children's cognitive and social development through SST. The implementation of SST has

significantly enhanced teachers' skills and improved children's language expression, problem-solving abilities, and peer interactions. These findings highlight the importance of quality interactions. Continued exploration of SST practices will further support the growth of both teachers and children, promoting a collaborative and effective educational experience.

Student Center-P2-27
202504151537553973650 49

Lucton Kindergarten School-Based Research Project
-House & PBL: A Fresh Integration, A Unique Experience

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Keywords: PBL, house, integration

Abstract

· Origins:

Under the backdrop of globalized education, the Chinese and foreign teaching team at Lucton Kindergarten innovatively combined the essence of the "Hogwarts" house system with the Reggio Emilia project approach, exploring and practicing a brand-new HousePBL curriculum model.

· House Establishment: A Mixed-Age Mini-Society, A Learning Community

Four Houses: Lion House, Fox House, Star House, and Knight House, each symbolizing different character traits.

Dual mentorship by Chinese and foreign teachers, accompanied by unique logos, slogans, and a point system.

Mixed-age grouping: Children from small, middle, and large classes are evenly distributed through a fun lottery, forming new mixed-age social groups. This allows children of varying developmental levels to find their own growth rhythm through cross-age interactions.

· House Activities: PBL-Practicing, Exploring, and Understanding the World in

Real-Life Contexts

Taking last semester’s "Silk Road: From East to West" as an example:

Super China Theme: Activities included field trips to the World Skills Museum, ancient paper-making workshops, movable-type printing experience zones, and compass-oriented orienteering, breaking physical space limitations and allowing children to explore and gain hands-on experience in real-world contexts.

From East to West Theme: Chinese and foreign teachers jointly performed Adventures on the Silk Road, showcasing the clashes and exchanges between Eastern and Western cultures. Each house collaborated across ages to build miniature Silk Road landscapes, featuring models of Xi’an’s Terracotta Warriors, Dunhuang murals, Rome’s Pantheon, and Egypt’s pyramids. The project concluded with a challenge-based game, reinforcing children’s understanding and experiences of China and the Silk Road through various interactive tasks.

· Empowerment:

House-PBL breaks the constraints of traditional education:

From "classroom"

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202504241025446159564 96

Integration and Creation in Boundless Outdoor Activities ——Research on the Practice of Outdoor 2-Hour Activities Based on the Priority Concept of Early Childhood Development

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Keywords:boundless outdoor activities, early childhood development priority, multidimensional integration

Abstract

This study centers on “boundless outdoor activities” and emphasizes young children’s development. By integrating space, time, and relationships multidimensionally, and with innovative teaching-research mechanisms, it reconstructs kindergarten outdoor activity ecosystems. From rainy-day conservation practice, it suggests strategies like “dynamic resource integration” and “teaching-research-driven iteration”, forming a new outdoor multi-scene integration activity model. Research shows long-term outdoor activities boost children’s physical fitness and health management, enhancing teachers’ teaching and research abilities too. The article fully explains the “space-time-relationship-teaching research” four-dimensional collaboration practice path, offering theoretical and practical references for kindergarten outdoor curriculum reform.

Student Center-P2-29
20250407220342949044065

Localized Curriculum in Rural Kindergartens: Connotation Characteristics, Value and Practice Path

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Keywords: local education, rural kindergarten, local curriculum

Abstract

Under the background of rural revitalization and high-quality development of education in the new era, how to realize the connotative development of rural preschool education has become the pursuit of education. As an important entry point for the high-quality development of rural preschool education, the localization education theory opens up a practical path for the curriculum construction of rural kindergarten. With the purpose of cultivating rural children with sound personality and cultural belonging, rural kindergartens have the characteristics of context, integrity and dynamic, and show important value in helping the healthy growth of rural children, promoting the sustainable development of rural education and condensing the endogenous power of rural revitalization. In the construction of local curriculum, rural kindergartens should return to the local nature and reconstruct the curriculum vision; Children and rural culture as the source, design the curriculum content; Strengthen the professional empowerment and improve teachers' quality; Focus on local resources and expand the practical experience; Form the main body resultant force, and enhance the evaluation effectiveness.

Student Center-P2-30
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Applying a Localised Quality Assessment Tool in Improving Children's Learning Environment

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Keywords:localised quality assessment tool, early childhood education, learning environment

Abstract

Inspired by international quality assessment indicators, national early childhood education policies, and local early childhood education practices, the Shenzhen Education Bureau continuously develops and revises an assessment tool aimed at improving the quality of kindergarten operations and education. This tool has been adopted by many local kindergartens to assess and reflect on the quality.

This study applied this locally developed quality scale as a tool for reflection and focused on addressing challenges teachers faced in developing the learning environment in a kindergarten with 270 children in Shenzhen. With the goal of improving the learning environment to better support children's learning, the kindergarten principal and an early childhood education researcher adopted an action research approach, involving 20 teachers in the study. The research team formulated an action plan, using the localised tool as a reference and centring on challenges the principal and teachers encountered. The plan includes reorganising indoor and outdoor play spaces, optimising the provision of indoor and outdoor play materials, and adjusting the daily schedule for learning activities.

Through implementation and eight professional in-depth discussions at different stages during the implementation, the research team observed and documented three key changes related to the learning environment. First, the original independent learning spaces were connected. Second, children's play became more diverse. Last, collaboration in teaching among teachers was enhanced.

Additionally, the study found that establishing coherence based on teachers' practical experiences, leaders' support, scholarly reflection, and the contextualised professional tool can sustain quality improvement in kindergarten. The study also demonstrates a practical approach to teachers' professional development, which effectively supports children's learning and development.

Student Center-P2-31
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Using Experiential Learning to Foster Positive Emotional Development in Young Children

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Keywords: experiential learning, positive emotional development, chlid education

Abstract

Experiential Learning is an educational approach that emphasizes learning through direct experience andreflection. Experiential learning focuses on utilizing diverse environments and community resources,combined with various aspects of time, place, and people to create learning situations that achieve an"experiential learning cycle."Positive emotions are a very important value in life and also an indicator of mental health. American psychologist Barbara Fredrickson (2009) point out that positive emotions can cultivate children's ability to think from multiple perspectives, establish positive thoughts about learning and social life, turn stress into motivation, and learn gratitude.

The Education Policy Research Center of the Hong Kong Policy Research Institute conducted a study on the effectiveness of "experiential learning" activities in 2019 and found that these activities can influence the establishment and transformation of students' various values, such as perseverance, commitment and peace, effectively leading to positive emotional development. Hong Kong Christian Service Li Cheng Uk Nursery School uses experiential learning activities to allow children to learn through doing, learn through play, and learn from life. It aims to cultivate positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, tranquility, awe, hope, pride, interest, and love. Through learning activities, science experiments, snack tasting, and group corner activities, a safe, comfortable, fun, and challenging environment is

provided, enabling children to learn through direct life experiences, sensory interactions, and engaging activities. Our school will also design a variety of games in line with the curriculum goals and content, responding to the interests and abilities of young children, to provide a relaxed and effective learning experience. This includes activities in music, physical education, art, drama, and even foreign languages. Our school also values free exploration to maintain and enhance children's focus and interest in learning, allowing them to express joy and pride during activities. We will also appropriately introduce information technology resources to assist children's learning, providing interactive and engaging game experiences. Additionally, Our school will lead the children out of the classroom to visit the Positive Character Museums, experiences of intangible cultural heritage and food conservation culture, visits to giant pandas and elderly centers, trips to country parks, and tours of art galleries, allowing children to understand society through various learning and teaching resources as well as community resources to cultivate positive values. Our school has also established the "Positive Picture Book Library" this year, allowing parents and young children to extend positive emotions to their homes through borrowing positive picture books. Additionally, our school has organized the "Food Conservation Guided Tour" activity, teaching young children to learn gratitude and cherish, and bringing love and hope to the community. In summary, through experiential learning, young children achieve diverse potential development, foster the establishment of positive emotions, and cultivate positive traits.

Student Center-P2-33
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Investigating Learning Outcomes and Developmental Benefits in Half-Day and Full-Day Early Childhood Programmes for Three-year-olds

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Keywords: Early childhood education, School program, Holistic development

Abstract

Early childhood education (ECE) is a critical period for children's holistic development, including cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004). Research highlights the importance of programme structure and duration in shaping young learners' outcomes, with evidence suggesting that extended learning hours can enhance language acquisition, social-emotional skills, and school readiness (OECD, 2020). At HK YCIS, the increasing interest in half-day programmes—alongside practical considerations such as classroom space constraints—has raised important questions about how programme length influences the developmental trajectories of three-year-old children.

This study explores the comparative developmental outcomes of three-year-old children enrolled in half-day and full-day early childhood education (ECE) programmes at HK YCIS. The research is driven by a growing interest in half-day options, alongside practical considerations of classroom space and resource allocation. The study examines how programme length influences children's language acquisition in English and Chinese, social-emotional development, physical milestones, and readiness for the four-year-old full-day curriculum.

A mixed-methods approach was employed at two three-year-old classrooms at a kindergarten in Hong Kong under the Yew Chung Education Foundation (Yew Chung

International School of Hong Kong), including observational data, developmental assessments, and feedback from teachers and parents across both half-day and full-day programme groups. Comparative analysis was conducted to identify variations in learning outcomes, focusing on how extended programme hours support in-depth learning, sustained engagement, and holistic development.

Findings from this study provided evidence to support HK YCIS ECE in evaluating the long-term viability and benefits of full-day programmes for three-year-old children. By identifying the developmental gains associated with extended learning hours, particularly language acquisition, social-emotional development, and school readiness. This study offered a foundation for informed decision-making and future programme planning. The results aim to guide curriculum design, resource allocation, and the expansion of early years education, ensuring that young learners receive the highest quality of care and education to support their ongoing development.

Student Center-P2-34
20250414021312870629430

Maternal Parenting Styles and Preschool Children's Problem Behaviors and Prosocial Behaviors in China

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(Hiroshima University)

Keywords: parenting styles, problem behaviors, prosocial behaviors

Abstract

The family plays an irreplaceable role in children's behavioral development, as many of the activities of preschool children take place with their parents, especially mothers. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of maternal parenting styles on preschool children's problem behaviors and prosocial behaviors in China. In this study, an online questionnaire survey was given to 165 mothers (mean age: 32.33 years, SD = 4.02) with children aged 3-6 years (mean age: 4.56 years, SD = 0.93). The parenting styles and dimensions questionnaire (PSDQ) and Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) were used to measure maternal parenting styles, children's problem behaviors and prosocial behaviors according to their responses. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation to measure the relationship between maternal parenting styles and children's problem behaviors and prosocial behaviors. The Pearson correlation results showed that authoritative parenting styles were negatively correlated with children's problem behaviors and positively correlated with children's prosocial behaviors. Authoritarian parenting styles and permissive parenting styles were positively correlated with children's problem behaviors and negatively correlated with children's prosocial behaviors. This study shows that maternal parenting styles have a

significant impact on children's problem behaviors and prosocial behaviors. In the future research, it is necessary to focus on paternal parenting styles since fathers also participate in child parenting nowadays.

Student Center-P2-35
202503271730358154433349

Encouraging Global Citizenship: The Benefits and Impact of Sustainability Curriculum for Preschoolers

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(NTUC First Campus)
Lai Yeng Lee
(NTUC First Campus)
Wei Qin Sng
(NTUC First Campus)

Keywords: global citizenship, sustainability and environmental awareness, curriculum and pedagogy

Abstract

Globally, there is increasing emphasis on protecting the Earth and addressing urgent issues such as climate change, resource scarcity, rapid urbanization, and the rise of digital technology (Wong, Hassell, and Yeo, 2016). Environmental awareness and sustainability are becoming crucial topics of discussion; and it is essential to nurture this understanding from an early age. Preschools, in particular, play a pivotal role in fostering such awareness.

In Singapore, the government introduced the Singapore Green Plan 2030, described as ‘a whole-of-nation movement to advance Singapore’s national agenda on sustainable development’(Singapore Green Plan 2030). This initiative spans various industries and aims to systematize efforts toward a more sustainable future, including early childhood education.

NTUC First Campus (NFC), Singapore, aims to be a leading example of a Sustainable

Early Childhood organisation by 2025, encouraging staff, children, and their families to champion sustainability. Since 2022, Little Skool-House (LSH), as part of NTUC First Campus, has enhanced the curriculum and pedagogical practices with sustainability elements and outcomes in children's learning through intentional practices on empowering children and educators to adopt sustainable practices.

At LSH @ Republic Polytechnic, sustainability initiatives have been underway since 2022, starting with the use of recycled coffee grounds. The Centre repurposed café waste for sensory play, recognizing this as an opportunity to incorporate discarded grounds into educational activities. This initiative also promoted environmental responsibility through hands-on learning experiences.

In addition, other sustainability initiatives were launched, such as recycling food waste to create compost, as well as projects focused on water conservation and waste reduction. Children's curiosity about sustainability was further nurtured through the BUILDERS project on food composting. Children took the initiative to reduce waste, recycle materials and promote eco-friendly practices to their peers, parents and the community. From April to December 2022, a food wastage initiative resulted in a 13.5% repurposing of food waste into plant compost. This initiative significantly altered children's attitudes towards food appreciation and waste reduction, as reflected in their actions and learning.

In 2024, The Centre for EC Transformative Practices (NFC) studied the effectiveness of the sustainability curriculum in LSH using the Children's Environmental Sustainability Scale (CESS). This scale is designed to measure sustainability awareness in 5-and 6-year-olds. The study revealed that children exhibited a higher awareness of environmental issues than ecological topics, with energy reduction being the most prominent concept. Notably, K2 children (6-year-olds) scored higher than K1 children (6-year-olds), likely due to their increased exposure to sustainability-focused content in the curriculum from 2022.

LSH @ Republic Polytechnic's consistent efforts to integrate sustainability practices have gained recognition locally. The centre was honoured with the "Recycle in School with UOB" award, organised by Sembcorp Industries Ltd and United Overseas Bank, Singapore, for our commitment to sustainability and environmental education through a recycling project and instilling recycling habits both at home and in school.

Moving forward, Little Skool-House (LSH) will raise awareness and refine sustainability practices through strengthened collaboration with parents, teachers, and the community. By fostering global citizenship and creating opportunities for active participation, we aim to enhance our collective efforts in sustainability.

Student Center-P2-36
20250314234730831632658

Family Socioeconomic Status and Chinese Parental Provisions in Early English Language Learning: Parental Beliefs as a Predictor

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(Universiti Sains Malaysia)

Keywords: socioeconomic status, parental beliefs, parental provisions

Abstract

The research investigated the interplay relationship between family socioeconomic backgrounds (SES) and parental beliefs as well as their provisions towards Early English language learning (EELE). The impact of parents' beliefs towards the benefits of EELE on their provisions of EELE was examined. 160 Chinese parents of the 3- to 6-year-olds who have ever provided their children with English learning experience, completed a questionnaire about family demographics, parental beliefs on the value of EELE, and parental provisions towards EELE, whether formal or informal. Results show that family SES was not related to Chinese parents' beliefs, and family SES was not associated with their EELE provisions in the context of China, whereas parental belief was an important predictor of their EELE provisions.ulum reform actions, and promoted the high-quality development of regional education.

Student Center-P2-37
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Practical Exploration of the "Empowerment Evaluation" Model in Kindergartens

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Keywords: early childhood education, empowerment, child development evaluation

Abstract

"Preschool Child Development Evaluation" is a key topic in China's current kindergarten curriculum reform. The challenge lies in focusing on children's effective development through suitable methods and strategies. Current evaluations face issues like unclear content, lack of tools, and an overemphasis on diagnosis rather than considering children's feelings, leading to negative impacts on their happiness and intrinsic motivation. This approach also risks reverting education to rote learning methods.

To address these challenges, this study proposes an evaluation model tailored to early childhood education that empowers children's development and is user-friendly for teachers.

The model tackles these issues from several angles:

New Evaluation Concepts: Drawing from positive psychology, it emphasizes seeing children's inner strengths, self-directed growth, and promoting positive feedback. This shifts teachers' focus from finding faults to recognizing potential.

Culturally Rich Assessment Tool: The "Visual Compass,"inspired by Chinese culture, uses concentric circles to represent key developmental indicators, helping teachers identify core traits in complex educational settings. This aligns with Zhuangzi's philosophy of adapting to infinite changes.

Evidence-Based Methods: Techniques like "Discovery Scanning" and"Targeted Scanning" guide teachers in observing and evaluating children's behaviors during daily

activities, play, and learning.

Encouraging Feedback: Utilizing evaluation results to foster positive emotions, enhance social skills, stimulate deep thinking, and boost confidence. Teachers are encouraged to use photos and drawings to showcase children's development.

This research was conducted across 20 kindergartens in Gongshu District, Hangzhou, supported by partner kindergartens from Zhejiang Province's Master Teacher Studios. Over 100 practical case studies were collected. Six sub-projects received awards at provincial and municipal levels, and four related papers were published in journals such as China Education News and Early Childhood Education.

By providing new theoretical perspectives and practical paradigms, this study offers a Chinese model for realizing the nurturing function of evaluations in early childhood education. It aims to transform how we assess and support young children's development, ensuring they grow up feeling valued and capable.

This streamlined approach not only addresses the immediate needs of educators but also sets a foundation for future innovations in early childhood education assessment. Through thoughtful implementation, this model can significantly enhance the quality of preschool education, making it more responsive to children's holistic development needs.

Student Center-P2-38
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The Home Environment and Bilingual Development of Korean Young Children from Multicultural Families: A Scoping Review

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Keywords: the home environment, bilingual development, young children from multicultural families

Abstract

With the deepening globalization and multicultural trends in Korean society, the number of multicultural families has been steadily increasing (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2016b). As a result, the Korean government has placed growing emphasis on supporting the development of children from multicultural families, particularly considering that young children growing up in such families face more complex challenges in terms of language, cognition, and social adaptation. The family is the primary environment for a child's development, and factors such as language usage habits, the overall cultural atmosphere, and the level of language exposure within the home have a decisive impact on the formation of young children's language abilities (Sung et al., 2010). Bilingual language use not only influences language development but also has a significant effect on children's cognitive abilities and social adaptability. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of bilingual

usage and related family factors is crucial for supporting early language education in multicultural settings.

This study aims to systematically review and analyze research conducted in South Korea between 2010 and 2025 that focuses on the home language environment and bilingual language development use among young children from multicultural families. By exploring the core themes, research methodologies, and key findings of existing studies, this research seeks to provide a theoretical foundation and practical direction for future studies on language development and family support for children from multicultural backgrounds.
The findings of this study highlight several key aspects. First, regarding the emotional environment within the family, a stable and supportive atmosphere enhances young children's language development. A mother's attitudes toward language and her expectations for her child have been shown to influence the child's bilingual development. Second, in terms of the physical environment, the availability of diverse language-related resources such as books and toys can effectively promote young children's bilingual expression. Lastly, with respect to the language environment, communication enriched with meaningful language content, the mother's language proficiency, the dominant language used at home, and the frequency of its use are all critical factors that affect children's bilingual language use.

This study systematically analyzed the impact of various household factors—namely, the physical environment, emotional atmosphere, and language environment—on bilingual language use among young children in multicultural families. The results indicate that these factors play a significant role in the development of young children's language abilities. Based on these findings, the study hopes to provide reference material to support the creation of a home language environment that fosters bilingual development for young children in multicultural families.

Student Center-P2-39
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Construction and Practice of Rural Children's Aesthetic Education Support System From the Perspective of Cultural Inheritance

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Keywords: rural kindergarten, aesthetic education of children, support system

Abstract

Based on the perspective of cultural inheritance, this study builds a "SECP" support system model for rural children's aesthetic education in view of the current difficulties in the development of aesthetic education resources for rural children, such as the difficulty of converting a large number of local cultures into appropriate educational content, the simple transplantation of cultural elements into decorative curriculum materials, and the failure to form deep cognitive connection. In order to solve the practical problems of fragmentation of rural aesthetic education resources and insufficient educational effectiveness. Based on the theory of cultural psychology and ecology of education, combined with the basic situation of field investigation, this research constructs the theoretical analysis framework of"embodied cognition, cultural identity and value reconstruction". And on the basis of action research refined "Sensory Awakening-Emotional Resonance-Cultural Decoding-practice internalization"The four elements of "Internalization" are mutually dependent on each other to spiral up the practice path of aesthetic education, which is embodied as follows:first, activate children's body perception, establish the physiological basis of aesthetic experience, carry out aesthetic education activities through multi-channel perception, and awaken children's aesthetic consciousness; Secondly, the psychological schema of cultural identity is constructed by means of folk art archetypes and festival ceremonies, so as to strengthen

children's understanding of cultural subjects and block the fault risk of rural cultural inheritance. Thirdly, to carry out aesthetic education activities through games, to promote children to construct cultural symbols in activities, to recognize and understand their meanings in direct perception and personal experience, and to realize cultural decoding; Fourth, promote the transfer of children's experience and cognitive internalization in various educational activities to form a dynamic cycle mechanism of"experience-cognition-practice". This study holds that in the practice of rural children's aesthetic education, it is necessary to construct a three-dimensional resource co-construction map of "natural ecology-cultural environment-life scene" and establish a resource transformation mechanism of rural aesthetic education. Second, we should develop an immersive curriculum system of"situation-project-type inquiry-community co-creation"to realize the ecological integration of aesthetic education activities and children's daily life. The third is to create a multi-subject collaborative model of"government coordination (G)-school leadership (S)-university think tank (U)-non-genetic inheritor (H)-community support (C)" to build an educational ecosystem and provide an aesthetic environment for children; The fourth is to construct a three-in-one aesthetic education activity support system of "digital empowerment-space-time reconstruction-creative workshop"to provide an exploration platform for the practice of rural children's aesthetic education. This study puts forward the theoretical framework and practical path of the rural children's aesthetic education support system, and provides a theoretical and practical reference with cultural relevance and practical explanatory power.

Student Center-P2-41
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The Mediating Role of Executive Function in the Relationship Between Parental Motor Support and Procrastination Behavior in Chinese Young Children

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Keywords: procrastination, executive function, parental motor support

Abstract

Procrastination, the irrational delay of tasks, is a significant self-regulation challenge in young children (3-6 years old), potentially hindering later adjustment. It's linked to internal factors like executive function (EF) and external ones like parental motor support. Understanding these links is crucial for developmental science. This study aimed to examine the impact of parental motor support on procrastination behaviors in preschoolers (3-6 years old), specifically exploring the mediating role of children's EF and comparing differences across grade levels. A cross-sectional study involved 259 preschoolers in Shanghai. Parents completed questionnaires assessing parental motor support (including dimensions like support actions and parental exercise), child EF (using the Early Childhood Executive Function Scale), and procrastination (Preschool Procrastination Scale). Mediation analysis tested the proposed relationships. Key findings revealed that parental motor support significantly predicted lower procrastination and higher EF. Parental support also decreased in higher grades. While EF differed by gender and sibling status, procrastination did not show

significant demographic differences. Crucially, mediation analysis confirmed that EF mediated the pathway: parental motor support fostered better EF, which subsequently reduced procrastination behaviors.These results underscore the vital role of parental motor support in early childhood, demonstrating its influence on procrastination operates significantly through the enhancement of executive function.

Student Center-P2-42
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Psychological Resilience and Emotional-Behavioral Problems in Rural Left-Behind Children: Parental Education Level as a Moderating Social Resource

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Keywords: Psychological resilience, Emotional and behavioral problems, Rural left-behind children

Abstract

In rural areas of China, over 70% of left-behind children face a crisis of surging emotional and behavioral problems due to their parents' long-term absence for work, which has become a significant challenge to educational equity and child development. This study breaks through the traditional individual perspective and, for the first time, reveals how parents' educational levels dynamically regulate the protective effect of psychological resilience on the mental health of left-behind children. Based on empirical data from 692 left-behind children in western China, combined with the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), the study found that high psychological resilience significantly reduces emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and peer conflicts. However, this protective effect diminishes by 42% in families with low

parental education levels-when parents have less than a junior high school education, the intervention effect of psychological resilience sharply decreases, highlighting the deep constraints of structural resource inequality on child development. The study further revealed that 73% of left-behind children' s parents have only a junior high school education or lower, and their families generally lack a scientific parenting support system. This result overturns the notion of"individual resilience omnipotence," confirming that family cultural capital amplifies or weakens children' s internal protective factors through inter-generational transmission, providing an innovative approach for solving the left-behind children problem in developing countries worldwide: there is an urgent need to build a dual-intervention model of"resilience cultivation + parent empowerment,"conducting parent-child co-training programs through community early childhood education centers to implant parenting skills into low-education families, while designing contextualized games to enhance children' s ability to cope with adversity.

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School Readiness Priorities and School Transition Practices: Kindergarten Teachers' and Primary School Teachers' Perceptions

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Keywords: transition to school, microsystem, priority alignment

Abstract

The transition from kindergarten to primary school has been considered important due to its crucial role in shaping children's early life experiences and development. In Mainland China, tens of millions of children started school each year, highlighting the importance of supporting this process. In this study, 843 kindergarten teachers and 258 primary school teachers in Mainland China were surveyed to investigate their views on school readiness priorities and school transition practices. With few exceptions, both teacher groups rated the examined school readiness priorities and school transition practices as ranging from Very important but not essential to Absolutely essential. Kindergarten teachers attached greater importance to each dimension of school readiness and category of transition practices than primary school teachers. Teachers'educational qualifications played a significant role in explaining differing perceptions of the importance of Motor skills, Interest and engagement, Executive function and self-regulation, and Kindergarten-or school-based events. Teachers'professional rank and monthly income were significantly linked to their

prioritisation of Health. Teachers'age was significantly associated with differences in Practical efforts, while monthly income had significant associations with the differentiations in perceiving Classroom practices. The research findings provide evidence to strengthen ongoing dialogue and collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing the alignment of transition priorities and practices for both early childhood and primary school educators. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform practices that create more cohesive educational experiences for children as they move from kindergarten to formal schooling, ultimately supporting their well-being and success during this life event.

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Predicting Preschooler Physical Activity: A Closer Look at Mother and Father Support Roles

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Keywords: physical activity, preschoolers, parental suppor

Abstract

Physical activity (PA) is vital for child development, with family factors, especially parental support, playing a key role. However, distinct maternal and paternal support roles are often overlooked. This study explored multiple dimensions of mother- and father-specific PA support and their impact on preschool children's (3-6 years) daily PA time. A cross-sectional study involved 293 preschoolers and their parents in Shanghai. Questionnaires assessed parent-specific self-efficacy for joint PA, support actions for child's PA level, parental leisure-time exercise, and child's PA time. Correlation and regression analyses were performed. While various parental support dimensions correlated with child PA time (mothers' efficacy, support actions, own exercise; fathers' efficacy, support actions), regression analysis revealed a key predictor. Only maternal support actions (support of children's physical activity level) significantly predicted preschoolers' PA time. Some parental support dimensions varied by child grade (e.g., mothers' support higher for younger children) and father's education, but child PA time itself did not differ significantly by

demographics. Fathers' own leisure exercise did not correlate significantly with child PA time. The findings highlight the unique importance of mothers' direct support actions in promoting physical activity participation among preschoolers.

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Imagination · Creation · Confidence—Drama Education Inspires Hundreds of Forms of Expression in Children

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Keywords: situational experience, social-emotional, creative expression

Abstract

Drama education, distinct from stage performance, does not pursue elaborate props, costumes, or theatrical effects but instead focuses on autonomous and creative expression closely tied to young children's daily life experiences. By integrating situational experiences, role-playing, and interactive games, it encourages children to think independently and express themselves freely within the context of classic picture book stories. This approach fosters comprehensive skills such as verbal communication, social-emotional development, peer collaboration, and multiple perspectives, making it an important curriculum practice in kindergartens that aligns with the"whole-person education""philosophy and lays the foundation for lifelong learning.

The simple plot and vivid characters of the picture book Hello, Little One spark endless imagination in 3-4 year old children. By experiencing "Little One" greeting others in different scenarios, they are inspired to express themselves through imitation and peer interaction, naturally integrating into social situations.

4-5 year old children draw on the interactions—such as actions and dialogues—between characters in the picture book "Guess How Much I Love You" to

express rich emotions. By playing the roles of little bunny and big mother bunny, they use exaggerated gestures (e.g., spreading their arms, jumping high) and phrases like “I love you to the moon and back!”Guided by open-ended questions, they are encouraged to expand dialogues and use their imagination to create new content, fostering empathy and the expression of love.

Ten Minutes Till Bedtime reflects common parent-child or teacher-student conflicts in the lives of older children. By role-playing scenarios like “ten minutes before bedtime”or “ten minutes before leaving the house,” they apply life experiences to enhance problem-solving skills and develop self-management abilities.

Imagination, creativity, and expression inject unique value into children’s growth. Immersed in specific story lines, they engage in impromptu thinking and performance. With teachers’ open-ended questions as inspiration and positive feedback as affirmation, every whimsical idea is taken seriously, and every role-playing experience is filled with joy.

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Understanding Work Placement Dynamics: A Systems Perspective Case Study of Australian CALD Vocational Education Students in Early Childhood Education Settings

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Keywords: work placement experience, CALD vocational education students (VESs), bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

Abstract

Work placement experience is pivotal in shaping vocational education students'(VESs) professional identity and development as it bridges the gap between theoretical coursework and practical application in real educational contexts. However, few studies have explored the work placement experiences of Australian early childhood VESs. Furthermore, given that Australia is a multicultural country, few studies have focused on early childhood VESs who come from a cultural and linguistically diverse background (CALD). This study investigates the lived experiences of CALD VESs during their work placement in Australian ECEC services.

Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this study highlights the role of environmental/systems' factors on VESs' work placement experiences to illuminate their impacts on VESs' professional identity and future development. Using a multiple case

study design, this study conducts a semi-structured interviews with five CALD VESs. Through thematic analysis, data were analyzed with a hybrid codebook developed through deductive and inductive approaches to capture emerging themes. Seven themes emerged (1), Teacher Belief; (2), Public Belief; (3), Relationship with Supervisor in Service; (4), Relationship with Teacher in Private College; (5), Relationship with Peers; (6), Policy and Culture in service; (7), Educational Policy

Findings suggest that CALD VESs' work placement experience is a dynamic process, which calls for enhancing institutional support for CALD educators in ECEC. Moreover, this study not only contributes to the retention of ECEC workforce but also improves the teacher quality in ECEC. This study extends Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to provide new insights into the experience of CALD VESs in ECEC settings.

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Implementing Drama-Based Picture Book Curriculum through DMP Model: A Three-Phase (Design-Make-Play) Five-Step Instructional Framework in Early Childhood Education

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Keywords: Design-Make-Play (DMP) model, picture book dramatization, process-oriented learning

Abstract

As an innovative practice of drama education in early childhood education, picture book drama curriculum integrates the literary narrative of picture book reading with the multimodal expressiveness of theatrical arts, achieving cross-modal artistic transformation from two-dimensional texts to three-dimensional performances. The growing prevalence of this curricular paradigm in preschool institutions highlights its educational potential in synthesizing literary aesthetics, bodily expression, and collaborative creation. However, existing practices commonly face structural contradictions including diminished child agency, insufficient creative engagement, and linearized teaching processes, resulting in implementation challenges such as excessive adult dominance and hindered deep learning experiences.

To address these issues, this study adopts Margaret Honey and David E. Kanter's "Design-Make-Play"(DMP) theoretical framework to develop a three-phase five-step instructional model for picture book drama curriculum. Breaking through the limitations of

unidirectional knowledge transmission in traditional drama pedagogy, this model establishes a dynamic cyclical architecture of “Design-Make-Perform”phases, structured through a five-step implementation process: Text deconstruction and meaning reconstruction, Creative planning and systemic modeling, Collaborative production with iterative refinement, Contextual verification and dynamic adaptation, Theatrical performance and meaning generation. The model embeds STEM thinking tools throughout children’s drama creation cycles, constructing a scaffolded support system that facilitates spiral development through process-oriented evaluation guiding “conceptualization-practice-reflection”cycles.

Validated through action research in a senior class of Kindergarten J, this instructional model has demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing children’s autonomous decision-making capabilities, interdisciplinary thinking competencies, and depth of artistic expression during picture book drama creation. The study provides a theoretically grounded and practically operational framework for drama curriculum implementation in early childhood education, offering methodological insights for advancing play-based learning innovation and fostering children’s deep learning development.

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Chinese Heart, Global Vision: Shanghai Xiwai Kindergarten

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Keywords: multicultural education, project-based learning, innovative pedagogy

Abstract

In the context of globalization and the intertwining of local cultures, Shanghai XiWai Kindergarten has embarked on a mission to cultivate young citizens with both international perspectives and local roots. Through systematic educational reforms, the kindergarten has pioneered an innovative path in preschool education. Since its establishment in 2005, the school has centered its efforts on the concept of "Chinese Heart, Global Vision," building a distinctive educational system that has achieved remarkable results in curriculum development, teacher training, and educational models, establishing itself as a benchmark in the field of preschool education in China.

Iterative Upgrading of Educational Philosophy: From Quality Cultivation to Cultural Integration

XiWai Kindergarten has adopted a decade-long cycle for educational reform, forming a "three-step" strategic plan. In 2012, the kindergarten launched the "Cultivation of Little Citizens' Qualities in a Multicultural Context" project, innovatively identifying 10 core qualities such as rules, responsibility, and innovation, laying the foundation for quality education. In 2015, the focus shifted to teacher development, establishing teacher quality standards and professional development pathways to create a team of educators who are deeply rooted in Chinese culture while mastering international educational methods. By 2018, the educational practice deepened into the integration of "Chinese Heart, Global Vision,"

embedding local cultural immersion and global awareness into children's daily activities, forming an educational ecosystem where "life is the curriculum." This step-by-step development path reflects the evolution of educational philosophy from single-quality cultivation to cultural identity construction.

Dual Breakthroughs in Curriculum Innovation: Localization and Internationalization in Parallel

In constructing its curriculum system, XiWai Kindergarten has achieved a creative transformation of "traditional foundations" and "international elements." Based on the four activity areas outlined in the Shanghai Preschool Education Curriculum Guide, the school innovatively developed specialized modules such as "walking classrooms," "bilingual drama," and "philosophical dialogues." Among these, the P4C (Philosophy for Children) teaching method guides children to understand cultural differences through critical thinking, while children's drama education deepens cultural cognition through role-playing. The original "24 Solar Terms" thematic activities nourish cultural roots with traditional wisdom. Notably, the kindergarten pioneered a dual-track model of "project-based learning+life integration," naturally embedding the cultivation of little citizens' qualities into games, sports, and other scenarios. For example, children learn about life education through gardening and develop global citizenship awareness through waste sorting practices. This "seamless education" model, awarded the first prize in Shanghai's educational research achievements, validates its innovative value.

Multidimensional Educational Achievements: From Individual Growth to Industry Leadership

After 20 years of exploration, XiWai Kindergarten has achieved remarkable educational outcomes: children have consistently excelled in events such as the Shanghai Children's English Drama Festival and international environmental innovation competitions, with a 98% satisfaction rate among parents regarding cultural identity education. Graduates have demonstrated outstanding cross-cultural adaptability. More significantly, the kindergarten's "cultural immersion" educational model has provided replicable experiences for preschool education. Its The Days We Walked Together, published by Juvenile & Children's Publishing House, has truly realized the leap from "running an excellent

kindergarten" to "advancing the industry." This educational practice, which organically integrates national roots with global awareness, offers a Chinese solution for preschool education in the era of globalization.

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Implications of the Al's Pals Programme for Young Children's Social-Emotional Learning in China

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Keywords: social emotional learning of young children, child development and learning, social emotional learning

Abstract

The World Economic Forum's white paper ‘Schools of the Future: Defining a New Education Model for the Fourth Industrial Revolution’ defines interpersonal skills as quality learning content and experiences in the section ‘Education 4.0: A Global Education Framework for Transforming Learning Content and Experiences for the Future’. Early childhood is the most critical and effective stage for the development of children's social-emotional competence. Al's Pals, one of the highest-quality social-emotional learning programmes in the United States, is a preventive programme with a classroom-based curriculum at its core. In this paper, we will introduce the development history, theoretical foundation and prevention system of the programme, focusing on the objectives, contents, implementation and cases of the classroom curriculum in the prevention system. Based on the traits of the Al's Pals programme and the situations of China’s Early Childhood Education, we have obtained the following recommendations: emphasising emotional learning as the sixth domain; developing a Chinese social and emotional learning programme based on empirical research; implementing collective prevention and developing a preventive

curriculum for all young children; and providing a rich range of practice opportunities through multi-group participation.

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Promoting Key Experiential Growth through Structured Group Physical Activities in Kindergartens

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Keywords: key experiences, structured group physical activities, holistic education

Abstract

While free physical activities have been actively promoted in kindergartens, structured group physical activities are being overlooked. This study adopts "key experiences" as a crucial perspective and approach to enhance the quality of designing and implementing group physical activities in kindergartens. It aims to address prevalent issues including arbitrary implementation, teacher-centered approaches, and skill-oriented tendencies. The research guides teachers to holistically address children's development across four core physical activity domains: athletic abilities, cognition, creative movement, and social interaction through physical activities, thereby fostering holistic education in group physical activities.

Through two primary approaches-redesigning existing group activity plans (primarily based on the Shanghai Preschool Education Teacher Reference Book (Physical Activities)) and generating group activities through observations of free physical activities-this study establishes value orientations for developing key experiences-structured group physical activities. Through implementation verification and optimization, the research has produced: 1) A collection of group activity resources that connect with free physical activities while addressing "developmental gaps" and "ability expansion" in key experiences; 2) Systematic implementation pathways for group physical activities; 3) An innovative evaluation method

incorporating children's verbal and visual descriptions of physical activities into quality assessment. The replicable and disseminable research outcomes provide teachers with scaffolding for proactive activity development, achieving the dual purpose of "giving fish and teaching fishing," thereby facilitating the optimization of kindergarten physical education curricula.

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The Use of Coconut Shells in Improving Children's Numeracy Literacy Skills in Banten Province

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Keywords: learning media, coconut shells, early math

Abstract

This study aims to examine the utilization of learning media made from coconut shells in improving early math skills in early childhood in Banten Province. Media made from coconut shells was chosen because this material is commonly found in the area and has the potential to be an interesting and contextual learning media. This study was conducted in five schools with a total population of 104 children and used a quantitative approach with a comparative design, which compared children's math skills before and after the use of coconut shell media. The instruments used in this study were tests to measure children's ability to count, recognize patterns, and understand the concept of seriation. The results showed a significant increase in children's abilities after using coconut shell media, especially in the ability to count, recognize patterns, and seriation. Thus, coconut shell media proved effective in improving early math skills in early childhood. This research contributes to the development of learning media based on natural materials that can be used to improve the quality of education in the Banten Province area.



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