

Investigation on the Integration of Chinese Traditional Culture Into Kindergarten Curriculum

—Take Jinshan District of Shanghai as an Example

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Abstract

There is a dearth of research content about the integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture and kindergarten curriculum in research studies related to kindergarten curriculum. Most studies begin with the integration of minority cultural characteristics or regional characteristics with the kindergarten curriculum, with only a few studies on kindergarten curriculum with the integrity of Chinese excellent traditional culture as the entry point. We investigated kindergarten teachers' awareness of the connotation of Chinese traditional culture, the teaching objectives, content, form, and existing problems of the Chinese cultural characteristics curriculum in Jinshan District, Shanghai, using a questionnaire to obtain authentic and reliable research materials.

Keywords: traditional culture, preschool course, preschool teacher

1. Introduction

Chinese traditional culture covers a wide range of subjects, including writing, language, music, martial arts, chess, festivals, folklore and so on. Since 2007, when the State put forward the idea that “the transmission of excellent Chinese traditional culture should be carried through the enlightenment and basic education stages” in the Opinions on the Implementation of the Project of the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Chinese Traditional Culture, kindergartens have responded positively by exploring the basic framework and offering special traditional culture courses for preschool children of different levels. However, according to the objectives set by education department previously, the form of traditional culture education in kindergartens is very limited. Most of them combined with traditional Chinese festivals but rarely involving the teaching of other contents. Therefore, what should be taught in kindergartens exactly and how to avoid a single, uninspired approach to preschoolers' traditional culture education has attracted the attention of researchers.

2. Study Design

2.1 Background of the Study

The document “Kindergarten Education Guideline (Implementation)” issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001 mentions that it is necessary to “make full use of social resources to guide young children to actually feel the richness and excellence of the motherland's culture to inspire them to love their homeland and love their country.” This is a good example of how the transmission of traditional Chinese culture should begin with young children. Appreciating the art of shape-shifting ancient Chinese characters through calligraphy and feeling the rhythm of ancient Chinese sounds through music, which are beneficial for children to learn Chinese ancient literature. Furthermore, the understanding and learning of Chinese martial arts and chess is a great way for children to experience the different charms of “martial arts” and “literature”, thus promoting their all-round development.

During my internship, the kindergarten I worked in featured the Chinese traditional culture of “Weiqi”. Although the children in my class discussed the topic of “Weiqi” after tea and dinner, calling their friends to play “Weiqi” together during independent play time, they did not have a clear understanding of the real meaning of “Weiqi”. The kindergarten is committed to incorporating traditional Chinese culture into the curriculum and has succeeded in arousing the children's interest, but the question of whether the children only see it as a form of

play or a toy, and whether the kindergarten has really succeeded in transmitting traditional Chinese culture to the children, has caused the author to ponder.

2.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the current situation of the integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture and preschool curriculum in Jinshan District of Shanghai and analyze deeply and systematically about the problems arising from it. By investigating kindergarten teachers' awareness of the connotation of Chinese traditional culture, the teaching objectives, contents, forms and existing problems of courses with Chinese cultural characteristics, it provides excellent strategic guidance for kindergarten courses integrating Chinese excellent traditional culture, so that children of different ages can deepen their understanding of the characteristic courses taught in the kindergarten within their existing cognitive scope, get effective learning, and promote children's all-round development.

2.3 Research Questions

- (1) How well do early childhood teachers understand and know about good Chinese traditional culture?
- (2) Are the resources available to kindergartens on Chinese traditional culture suitable for children's learning?
- (3) How well do the children understand the content taught by the teachers about good Chinese traditional culture (teacher's target achievement)?
- (4) Which activities (such as group teaching activities, area play activities, outdoor play activities, etc.) about good Chinese traditional culture are more accessible to children?
- (5) How supportive and involved are parents in offering special courses in Chinese traditional culture in kindergartens?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Subject of Study

Kindergartens in Jinshan District of Shanghai were used as the research subjects for this study. Six public kindergartens and three private kindergartens in Jinshan District of Shanghai were selected according to the needs of this study. The author used the questionnaire method to issue questionnaires to 41 teachers of the selected kindergartens in Jinshan District of Shanghai, with a valid return rate of 100%.

The types of kindergartens in which they are located are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of kindergartens

Type of kindergarten	Public School	Private Garden
Number	33	8

The age of children is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Age of children

Age of children	3-4	4-5	5-6
Number	13	14	14

The teachers' qualifications are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' qualifications

Academic qualifications	Secondary school and below	Tertiary	Bachelor's degree and above
Number	0	4	37

The teachers' teaching experience is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Length of teaching experience

Teaching experience	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	3-10 years	10 years or more
Number	20	9	5	7

3.2 Research Tools

The research instrument was selected from the Questionnaire on Traditional Culture Education in Kindergartens developed by Qiu Yanjuan (2019). The questionnaire consists two parts, which are the basic information of teachers and the specific survey contents. The basic information includes the teachers' education, teaching experience and position. The main research content is the development of traditional culture education in kindergartens in Jinshan District, which includes four latitudes of goal achievement, parental involvement, activity difficulty and resource utilization, with a total of 23 sub-questions. The questions in the questionnaire were cross-arranged, which required multiple choice and manual input were marked.

In Chinese researcher Qiu Yanjuan's master's thesis, 'A Study of Traditional Culture Education Activities in Kindergartens', the retest reliability of the same questionnaire was 0.91 and the internal consistency reliability coefficient was 0.94, indicating that the questionnaire had a fairly high level of consistent reliability and validity.

3.3 Research Process

Firstly, ask the research questions. Clarify the research direction and purpose; Find the literature, organize and classify the related literature.

Secondly, analyze the research problems. Determine the research object and research methods, and use the questionnaire survey method to carry out empirical research on the excellent traditional Chinese culture characteristic courses in kindergartens in Jinshan District; Collect survey data and make statistics; Combined with the survey results and theoretical basis, the problem is analyzed.

Finally, solve the research problems. According to the analysis results, this paper puts forward the optimization strategy of integrating Chinese excellent traditional culture into kindergarten curriculum.

3.4 Data Processing Methods

The data from the questionnaires were statistically analyzed by SPSS22.0 to determine the differences in the degree of achievement of objectives, parental involvement, ease of activity and use of resources.

4. Study Results

4.1 Attainment of Educational Objectives

Differences in key variables were tested for differences in educational goal attainment, coverage, resource availability, and parental involvement. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Analysis of the degree of achievement of educational objectives

Group statistics	Type of kindergarten	Number of cases	Average	Standard deviation	P	t	df
Educational goal attainment	Public School	33	2.33	0.777	0.900	-0.127	39
	Private Garden	8	2.38	1.061	0.919	-0.105	8.908

In terms of educational goal attainment, the mean value for public schools was 2.33, which that for private schools was 2.38. In terms of mean value, the difference in educational goal attainment between public and private schools was not obvious. The standard deviations of the two schools were 0.777 and 1.061 respectively. $p=0.909$ (>0.05) indicates that there is no significant difference in the achievement of educational goals between public and private schools, and that both schools have an average level of it.

4.2 Coverage of Traditional Cultural Education Content

The coverage of the various elements of traditional culture was measured through data statistics. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Statistics on the coverage of traditional cultural education content

	Coverage
1. Traditional Festivals	75.60%
2. Traditional games	39%
3. Traditional Literature	31.70%
4. Traditional Arts	36.60%
5. Traditional architecture	31.70%
6. Traditional clothing	31.70%
7. Traditional Technology	26.80%
8. Traditional Interview Category	4.90%
9. Tea Culture	2.40%

The coverage rate refers to which aspect of traditional culture education has a higher percentage. The table shows that the coverage rate of different content. Among all the figures, traditional culture has the highest coverage, occupying almost the most important part of the content of traditional culture education, while tea culture and traditional noodles are less well covered.

As can be seen from the table above, traditional culture in kindergartens in Jinshan District of Shanghai has a wide range of content and a high degree of coverage in all areas. It has the highest proportion of traditional culture due to its accessibility and inclusiveness. Traditional culture can usually be combined with various other traditional activities for education. For example, traditional festivals can be combined with Chinese traditional food because dumplings and noodles are eaten at Chinese New Year. What is more, many traditional festivals include representative poetry, so traditional festivals can be combined with the traditional literature. Because of their broad and inclusive nature, traditional festivals make up the highest proportion of traditional cultural education. Tea culture, on the other hand, is more difficult to learn and explore more extensively and in depth in kindergartens as the materials and tools required can be more expensive and under-utilized.

4.3 Availability of Traditional Cultural Education Resources

A regression analysis was conducted to analyze the differences in resource availability across the two dimensions of public and private schools. The statistical results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Analysis of the availability of educational resources

Group statistics	Type kindergarten	of Number of cases	of Average	Standard deviation	P	t	df
Resource availability	Public School	33	2.7	0.918	0.127	1.558	39
	Private Garden	8	2.13	0.991	0.168	1.485	10.12

As can be seen from the above table, the mean value of 2.7 for the public school and 2.13 for the private school, with standard deviations of 0.918 and 0.991 respectively. It can be seemed that the difference between the availability of resources in traditional culture education in the public and private schools is not significant and the mean value is around 2.41, indicating that the availability of educational resources is at a low level. The $p=0.147 (>0.05)$ between the two can indicate that there is no significant difference between the variables.

In summary, there is no significant difference between public and private schools in terms of the availability of resources for traditional culture education, and the level of it in both public and private schools is relatively low.

4.4 Involvement of Parents of Young Children

Table 8. Statistics on parental involvement of young children

Level	Number of times	Percentage	Effective percentage	Cumulative percentage
1	4	9.8	9.8	9.8
2	10	24.4	24.4	34.1
3	18	43.9	43.9	78.0
4	8	19.5	19.5	97.6
5	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	41	100	100	

As can be seen from the above table, the number of times that the parents of were involved in Level 1 “very low” was 4, the number of times that Level 5 “very high” was 1, and the highest percentage was Level 3, at 43.9%. It can be seen that the level of parental involvement is medium, indicating that parents are not very interested in participating in traditional cultural education activities in kindergartens.

4.5 Variability in Parental Involvement of Young Children

The results of the test of variance on parental involvement in traditional culture in kindergarten are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Variability in parental involvement of young children

Group statistics	Type of kindergarten	Number of cases	Average	Standard deviation	P	t	df
Parental involvement	Public School	33	2.85	0.379	0.559	0.589	39
	Private Garden	8	2.63	1.061	0.597	0.546	9.838

The above table shows that the mean values of 2.85 and 2.63 for the public and private schools indicate that the level of parental involvement in traditional culture education is similar between the private and public schools. The p-value for the public school = 0.127, which that for the private school = 0.168 indicating that there is no significant difference between the variables. So it can be determined that there is little difference in parental involvement between the private and public schools.

In general, parents’ interest and participation in traditional culture education is relatively average and there is not much difference between public and private schools.

4.6 Level of Difficulty of the Activity

The results of the test of variance on the ease of implementation of traditional cultural education activities are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Ease of implementation of activities

Group statistics	Type of kindergarten	Number of cases	Average	Standard deviation	P	t	df
Difficulty and ease	Public School	33	3.03	1.104	0.430	-0.798	39
	Private Garden	8	3.38	1.061	0.431	-0.818	10.990

The table above shows that the mean for the public school is 3.03 and the mean for the private school is 3.38 with standard deviations of 1.104 and 1.061 respectively. The significance of $p=0.430$ (<0.05) between the public and private schools in terms of the ease of implementation of activities indicates that the two variables do not have equal variance. There is a significant difference in the ease of implementation of activities between the

public and private schools and that the private schools have more difficulty in implementing traditional culture education than the public schools.

5. Discussion

The study focuses on five areas: achievement of educational objectives, types of traditional cultural activities, availability of resources, parental involvement and ease of implementation. In the previous section, p-values and t-values were analyzed and compared for each section. In this section, we focus on the reasons behind the phenomenon and the current situation of the corresponding sections.

5.1 Achievement of Traditional Cultural Education Objectives

In terms of educational goal attainment, the figures for public schools are higher than those for private schools. I believe that both two schools uphold the Ministry of Education's concept and the objectives of the kindergarten curriculum. Curriculum objectives define what kind of knowledge children need to learn, what kind of skills they need to acquire and what kind of feelings they need to develop. The social area in the Guidelines for the Development of Children aged 3-6 years presented that children need to have patriotic sentiments, to understand Chinese Culture and so on. There are certain learning requirements for things of Chinese identity under the general agenda of the country. Therefore, it is important to cover the relevant content for each kindergarten.

Even though private and public schools may be organized differently, the essence of the objectives behind them is the same. So it is quite reasonable that there is little difference between the two in terms of educational goal attainment.

5.2 Types of Traditional Cultural Education Activities

In terms of course topics, the author investigated broadly in nine areas. According to the data in the table, we can find that the coverage of traditional cultural education themes in kindergartens in Jinshan District is not very large. For example, only 4.90% of the traditional food and 2.40% of the tea culture. The highest coverage rate is in the category of traditional festivals.

The author believes that a large factor influencing the figure is the ease of implementation of the curriculum. Traditional festivals are more well known to the general public than other cultures, making it less difficult to organize the curriculum. Parents and the community are more aware of the subject, so a good atmosphere is created. For example, on the eve of the Dragon Boat Festival, the television and websites are full of content related to the festival. Not only can dragon boat races be shown on TV, but also the internet is full of golden festival skins. So with the whole atmosphere, children's interest in participating is high and teachers are better able to carry out their work, using themed wall decorations and other means as an entry point to popularize knowledge about the Dragon Boat Festival.

But the implementation of the tea culture curriculum is difficult because children have very little prior experience of tea and the knowledge associated with tea is rather abstract. So it is difficult to integrate the knowledge into a curriculum that children can understand. Teachers may not know much about tea culture either.

The other figures are more evenly spread, and the author believes that the likes of gaming, literature, art and so on cover a wider range.

In this regard, the author supposes that kindergartens in Jinshan District of Shanghai can develop activities in accordance with the characteristics of the district in the subsequent education and teaching. For instance, in the aspect of traditional art, the popularization of marine culture and art can be carried out in combination with the geographical characteristics of Jinshan District near the sea. At the same time, traditional games and traditional literature can be interspersed. Characterized by this area, it can be cut into better, and children's acceptance is also higher. In the following courses, we can talk about universality from particularity. This not only avoids the problem of "false, large and empty" content in the teaching process, but also develops the regional characteristics well.

Another factor is the characteristics of kindergartens. Because of this factor, its pertinence is strong, so the author thinks that the impact on the data is not great. The author came to a kindergarten in Jinshan District during his internship, which is characterized by dough sculpture, so in the process of organizing various activities, it will involve the production of dough sculpture and the understanding of dough sculpture culture. If the characteristics of kindergartens involve traditional culture, the coverage rate of traditional culture-related content in this characteristic activity must be extremely high. Of course, this is still a small part of the situation. At present, there are very few kindergartens with traditional culture or traditional literature as their kindergarten characteristics in Jinshan District, but the author thinks that this is also a good development direction, because

Chinese traditional culture is extensive and profound, and there are many places that can be excavated and carried forward. Each region can combine its diversity with the general tone of culture, so that children can subtly accept the influence of traditional culture from the day they enter the park, which is also very conducive to enhancing children's cultural self-confidence.

5.3 Resource Availability and Difficulty of Implementation

In terms of resource availability, the figures for both public and private schools are very similar. It is interesting to note that the average of resource availability for private and public kindergartens is only 2.3, which indicates that both two kindergartens have very low levels of resource availability. In the research, the author found that the implementation of traditional culture education in kindergartens mainly depends on their own planning, while social resources, family resources and other external help is relatively small. The implementation means of kindergarten curriculum planning mainly comes from teachers, but the way of teachers' curriculum implementation has been discussed before, which is actually relatively simple, and teachers are more than capable, and it is more difficult to implement on some topics that are not suitable for children's life. In addition, due to the wide range of traditional culture education, teachers need to have professional qualities in related fields, and their involvement in various fields can improve children's learning in various traditional cultures. Therefore, it is also a great challenge for teachers.

Resources are difficult to be used, which is the biggest factor that makes it difficult to implement the curriculum. Under the current conditions, the network is developed and the information is abundant, so the resources themselves are not lacking, but there are few contents suitable for children to learn, which need to be transformed and reformed. Therefore, the author thinks that the biggest difficulty at present is to create and transform the form of traditional culture.

5.4 Parental Involvement

The table shows that the average level of parental involvement in both public and private schools is relatively low, with public schools being slightly more involved than private schools. Firstly, I believe that the lack of parental involvement will inevitably affect home cooperation. Parents, as a large part of the influencing factor in early childhood education, are not involved enough and will have a great resistance to the implementation of traditional culture education in kindergartens, which in turn will directly affect the achievement of traditional culture education goals. The author believes that parents' lack of involvement is mainly in two aspects. On the one hand, parents are more averse to cooperating with kindergartens and collecting materials related to traditional culture in terms of attitude. On the other hand, parents do not know how to co-operate with teachers in carrying out relevant activities. This requires kindergartens and teachers to give parents clear directions in a timely manner so that they can help their children consolidate what they have learnt after school.

6. Educational Recommendations

6.1 To Carry out Various Forms of Educational Activities on the Excellent Chinese Traditional Culture to Achieve the Goal of Comprehensive Education

According to the study, kindergarten teachers use the culture of our traditional festivals to teach children humanistic general knowledge significantly more than the organization and implementation of other types of content. Traditional culture education in kindergartens faces the problem of teachers focusing more on the results of teaching and neglecting the process of teaching activities and the cultivation of patriotic feelings in children. To address these two problems, we can adopt the following strategies: firstly, teachers can add elements of good traditional Chinese culture education to the kindergarten environment, such as posting pictures of the 24 solar terms in the corridors and putting window flowers on the windows; Secondly, infiltrate good traditional culture education everywhere in the day, creating situations that are close to children's lives; Thirdly, fully explore, utilise and integrate social and parental resources in the education of traditional culture, and carry out traditional culture education in a co-educational and cooperative manner.

Chinese traditional culture education in kindergartens has many manipulative games using both hands, which can promote the development of young children's creativity and the interplay of the left and right brains. Liu Qian and Li Ya (2021) suggest in "An Analysis of Strategies for Incorporating Excellent Chinese Traditional Culture into Kindergarten Curriculum Construction" said that there is great moral value in setting up excellent traditional culture education in kindergarten as a basic kindergarten curriculum. By starting with traditional cultural education content in daily life (e.g. traditional festivals and folk stories), kindergarten teachers can promote the development of children's social cognitive dimension and help them to form good moral qualities. Teachers can also integrate the basic concepts of abstract Chinese traditional culture education into playful

kindergarten teaching, which can foster children's interest in and understanding of reading and contribute to the formation of a good sense of cultural heritage mission from an early age.

6.2 Promote the Implementation of Education Policies and Further Increase Support for the Education Sector

At present, the Jinshan District Education Bureau does not provide sufficient resources for kindergartens to carry out education on Chinese traditional culture, and it is imperative that the corresponding education policy is put into practice so that it can play its proper role.

Educational leaders should pay attention to the importance of traditional culture education at the preschool level, to the development of traditional culture education activities in kindergartens, and to the provision of appropriate human, material and financial support. The school's curriculum is designed to enable children of all ages to deepen their understanding of the specialities taught in the school and to learn effectively.

The education sector should also strengthen the training of teachers. Teachers should start with their own cultural literacy, so that they can have a correct view of Chinese traditional culture, and precisely define the objectives of curriculum planning, change the concept of curriculum development, and promote a deeper integration between Chinese traditional culture and the curriculum through various initiatives.

6.3 To Fully Explore and Utilize Traditional Cultural Education Resources

In addition to the specific educational strategies required in the distinctive cultural curriculum set by kindergartens, teachers can also integrate the teaching of Chinese traditional culture into the five areas of the kindergarten curriculum. For example, folk music can be incorporated into group teaching activities in the arts area, using playful forms to experience the style of folk music and learning the rhythms of it to build a different schema from children's popular music. Teachers can also incorporate Chinese folk tales into language education area, which are appropriate and interesting to children, helping kindergartens develop folk tales to integrate into the curriculum.

7. Conclusions

By comparing and analyzing the teaching practices of different kindergartens in the Jinshan District of Shanghai, the author has come up with a kindergarten curriculum that is more suitable for the new age characteristics of Chinese traditional culture.

In terms of research content, the author explores the integration of Chinese traditional culture into the kindergarten curriculum as a whole (including children's day-to-day life and group teaching activities), without limiting it to a single minority or regional culture or a particular activity in the kindergarten. It is able to fill the research gap in the integration of traditional Chinese culture such as chess and games into the kindergarten curriculum and provide more comprehensive theoretical support for the integration of excellent Chinese traditional culture into the kindergarten curriculum.

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