

The Value of Reggio's Educational Experience to the Cooperative Education of Kindergartens and Communities in China

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Abstract: This work summarizes the theories, strategies and experiences of the Reggio education system, analyzes the causes and proposes feasible strategies for cooperation between kindergartens and the community to enrich the theory of community preschool education in the light of the current situation and dilemmas of kindergarten-community cooperative education in China. This study focuses on China's kindergartens, identifies and solves existing community preschool education problems, combines Reggio's educational experience and improves kindergarten-community cooperative co-education policies, and promotes kindergarten-community cooperation as well as young children's own development. This study uses the literature analysis method, by searching for literature and reading and analyzing related literature, to summarize and analyze the literature related to the Reggio education system, kindergarten-community cooperative coeducation and community preschool education, to understand the current status of the research in this field and the unsolved problems, and to use it as an inspiration for the study.

Keywords: Reggio; Community Preschool; Cooperative Education.

1. Introduction

Reggio is a small town in northeastern Italy. After decades of research by Loris Maragucci and local early childhood educators, the world-famous "Reggio Emilia Educational System" was formed, which is a model for preschool education reform in the world. Since the 1980s, research on the Reggio education system in China has focused on theory and practice. Among them, community preschool education is an important object of concern in the Reggio education system. In view of the importance of community preschool education and the problems of unbalanced regional development, shortage of community early education resources, and insufficient national funding for community preschool education, this study selects the theme of "community and kindergarten cooperation and coeducation" as a starting point for research, and the purpose of the study is to summarize the successful experiences of community preschool education in the Reggio education system, and to explore how the community preschool education system has been implemented in China. The purpose of this study is to summarize the successful experience of community preschool education in the Reggio education system, and combine it with the current development of preschool education in China, in order to provide new ideas for the reform and development of preschool education in China.

2. Literature Review

2.1. A Study on the Current Situation and Influencing Factors of Cooperation Between Kindergartens and Communities for Co-Education in China

Most of the domestic research on cooperative co-education has been interpreted in terms of the three components of home and family co-education, home-school-society cooperative

education and kindergarten-community cooperative co-education. At present, the research generally refers to the integration of school, family and community education, and the mechanism of home-school-community cooperative education. The number of scholars focusing on "kindergarten-community cooperative education" and "community preschool education" is relatively small, and most of them believe that kindergarten-community cooperative education in China has been gradually developing, but there still exists regional development imbalance, shortage of early education resources in the community, and lack of national support for community preschool education. However, there are still problems such as unbalanced regional development, shortage of community early education resources, and insufficient State funding to support community preschool education.

In previous studies, scholars have found that there are many factors that will affect the development of cooperation between kindergartens and communities in China. Some scholars mentioned that there are economic level differences in community preschool education in China, and the level of economic development will affect the level of development of community preschool education in the region, including community education experience, community education management system and the use of resources within the community. The root cause of this phenomenon is the uneven distribution of educational resources due to economic differences [1]. Some scholars have mentioned that China's policies also have an impact on the cooperation between communities and kindergartens. Some scholars have mentioned that China's policies related to "communities and schools" are gradually being promulgated, but there are still problems such as inadequate safeguard mechanisms for the cooperation between communities and schools, insufficient funding, and insufficient integration of resources due to a lack of in-depth knowledge of the concept of community-based preschool education. Insufficient resources and other problems [2]. Some scholars have found that the nature of

kindergartens has an impact on the quality of cooperation between kindergartens and the community, and it is most obvious that public kindergartens are better than private kindergartens in terms of overall management, funding, teaching and so on. Moreover, most kindergartens perform well in terms of home and family co-education, but do not pay attention to the cooperation between the community and kindergartens in terms of co-education [3]. Some scholars have found that the perception of the status of the community and the school in educational thought has an impact on the cooperation between kindergartens and the community, and the scholars mentioned that the status of the community and the school is not equal in educational thought in our country, and it is generally believed that the knowledge of the school subjects is more important than the knowledge of social life. Moreover, the lack of resources and the unequal division of resources between the school and the community have also led to a gap between the school and the community, resulting in the cooperation between the two co-education only exists on the surface [4].

2.2. Research Related to the Reggio Education System

The earliest research on Reggio education in China was published in 1999, in which scholars introduced the curriculum forms and core concepts of the Reggio education system, which stimulated the interest of domestic scholars in the study of the Reggio education system [5]. Since then, domestic research on Reggio education has covered many aspects of its theory and practice, and has achieved certain research results. There are a large number of papers on “Reggio Education” in many famous education academic journals, in which most scholars mainly focus on the core concepts, kindergarten activity curriculum, kindergarten environment, teacher's role and so on under the Reggio education system, and some scholars pay attention to the ideas of Reggio education system in cooperative coeducation, but our scholars pay less attention to the cooperative coeducation between kindergartens and communities. cooperative co-education between kindergarten and community is less concerned.

Regarding the teacher's role in the Reggio philosophy, the teacher should be the main focus of the children in the teaching and learning activities, as the planner of the children's activities, the advocate of their lives and the guide of their growth [6]. Other scholars have argued that in addition to being caregivers, early childhood teachers should also serve as partners, listeners, and resources for young children in times of trouble [7].

With regard to the kindergarten environment, some authors refer to the Reggio philosophy of education, which states that “space is an important component of the educational orientation” and that educational spaces are rich in important educational meanings, which young children extract from the environment on the basis of their own experience and knowledge [8]. Some scholars have mentioned that the environmental view in the Reggio philosophy of education emphasizes the need to create an environment that is comfortable for young children's sensory experience, and attaches importance to the role of kindergarten environment creation in the construction of young children's knowledge [9].

With regard to teaching and learning activities, some scholars mentioned that the Reggio philosophy of education emphasizes that emphasis should be placed on the close

integration of local culture with the curriculum, and stresses that kindergarten activity curricula should be based on the needs and interests of young children and should be close to their daily lives. The scholars have mentioned that the most important feature of the Reggio curriculum is that it focuses on the differences in the personality and abilities of young children, adjusts the objectives of the activities at any time according to the characteristics of young children, and develops a flexible curriculum plan [10].

With regard to co-operation and co-education, in terms of co-education between the family and the school, some scholars have mentioned that Reggio's educational ideology has successfully resolved the dilemma of whether education should be child- or teacher-centered, and proposes that education should be centered on a “group center” comprising mainly children, parents, teachers and relevant community members. The original authors also suggested that education should be centered on the “group center” of children, parents, teachers and community stakeholders. The author of the original book also proposed that the complete copy of the Reggio education system is not suitable for China's national conditions, so the development of China's preschool education on home and family co-education should be guided by the Reggio education idea of “all the development of young children as the supreme principle, and give full play to all the factors of education,” in order to find a home and family co-education model suitable for our country [11]. In terms of community and school co-education, some scholars have discussed the background and characteristics of the Reggio community participatory preschool education management model, and have proposed that preschool education should be positioned as a social public service in which all citizens can participate, in accordance with the current situation of China's preschool education management model being unsound and the degree of participation in community education being relatively low [12]. Some scholars have also analyzed the connotation, characteristics, theoretical basis and operation mode of the Reggio community management model and put forward a management model that can be used as a reference in our country, such as promoting the cyclical relationship between home, school and government, letting young children become the main body of education, and letting young children get rid of the closed educational environment [13].

Through sorting out the research results of cooperative education between kindergartens and communities, we find that although China has realized the indispensability of community education in the process of preschool education and has achieved certain results in cooperative education, community preschool education in China is still in the initial stage and still faces many difficulties and challenges in concepts, management systems and other aspects. Moreover, most of the scholars focus on the research of “cooperative education” on the content of “home education”, while the number of scholars who study the cooperative education between the community and kindergartens is relatively small. Through the study of the Reggio education system, it can be found that the Reggio education ideology focuses on the community preschool education of young children, and has more mature theories and strategies. Therefore, the researcher believes that China can refer to the experience of Reggio education and combine it with the national conditions of China to put forward more perfect and advanced measures for community preschool education in China, and to know the

cooperation and practice between kindergartens and communities.

3. Advantages of Co-Education Between Kindergartens and the Community

3.1. Definition of the Concept of Cooperation Between Kindergartens and the Community for Co-Education

In 2002, Li Chunsheng and Kang Yu proposed the term “community” in their thesis, which is generally regarded as a living body constituted by people living in a certain area [4]. Community education is to take the area as the basic unit and carry out various kinds of extensive educational activities for the residents. In 2004, Zhang Yan mentioned “community preschool education”, “community preschool education” is to take all the young children who are developing in the community from birth to the preschool stage, as well as their parents and all members of the society as the target of education, and give full play to their respective advantages to create a good community environment for the preschool children in the community so as to promote their comprehensive development. Community preschool education” is to take all young children who develop in the community from birth to the preschool stage, as well as their parents and all members of the society, as the targets of education, and give full play to their respective strengths in order to create a favorable community environment for the preschool-age children of the community and thus promote their comprehensive development[14].

3.2. Advantages and Effectiveness of Cooperation Between Kindergartens and the Community in Co-Education

“Early childhood pro-social behavior” refers to the social interaction behaviors of preschool children that are beneficial to others and society. Research has found that young children's pro-social behaviors have far-reaching positive impacts on their current lives and long-term social development. Therefore, it is necessary to organize appropriate social education activities for young children in order to cultivate and promote their pro-social behaviour. The role of the environment is all-encompassing in the development of young children. The living environment of young children consists of the family, the community and the school. As their level of cognition rises and as they accumulate experience in social interaction, young children gradually develop a strong interest in the community in which they live, in the interpersonal relationships in the community and in their mode of operation, and so the scope of their interactions gradually expands from the family, which is the first place where they come into contact with young children, to the school and the community. Therefore, young children's horizons should be broadened in a gradual manner, and they should be encouraged to move from their own small circle to a wider social arena. At the same time, members of the community should maintain a harmonious relationship with each other and play an active role through various interactions, promoting close ties between community members and young children and fostering the development of self-esteem and self-confidence in young children.

3.3. Making Full Use of Existing Educational Resources

According to the American scholar Bronfenbrenner, the development of young children is influenced by the ecological environment with which they are directly or indirectly linked, which consists of a number of inter-nested systems manifested as a series of concentric circles[15]. At the microsystem level, the environment that directly affects young children includes the family, kindergarten, school, community, neighborhood and so on, which are the places where young children live and their surrounding environment. Therefore, kindergartens, families and communities play a vital role in the development of young children. Strengthening cooperation between kindergartens and the community and establishing a positive and benign two-way interactive relationship will help to improve the educational quality of the entire community, especially that of parents. Improving the parenting style of parents can create a better home education environment for young children. At the same time, as the educational quality of community residents improves, interactions between people will become friendlier and more harmonious, which will have a subtle positive influence on young children and create a harmonious community environment.

Communities have a wealth of learning places and facilities, providing community members with diverse learning resources. At the same time, kindergartens can also make use of their own resources to provide community members with diversified learning courses and activities, cultivate community members' awareness of learning through a variety of ways, means and methods, enhance the educational quality of the community as a whole, and promote harmonious interpersonal relationships. This will help to optimize the environment in which young children grow up and promote their physical and mental development.

4. The Reality of the Dilemma of Community-Based Preschool Education in the Country

4.1. “School-centered” Thinking

First, the idea of “school-centeredness” is deeply rooted in people's consciousness. Although the idea that “the school is always right” has been broken, the school is still in a dominant position in education because of the high value placed on school knowledge [4]. In our educational thinking, the status of the community and the school is unequal, and it is widely believed that school subject knowledge is more important than social life knowledge. Even when the community tries to cooperate with the school in co-education, the school is reluctant to involve the community for fear that its dominant position will be shaken. Thus, although efforts have been made to strengthen cooperation between the community and the school in various aspects, such cooperation is often only a combination of specialized knowledge and other educational supplements. This can lead to social education being dependent on schooling rather than actually working in partnership with young children.

4.2. Open Access to Resources Faces Greater Challenges

The opening up of resources continues to face greater challenges and is at a relatively conservative stage. As society

develops and resources become increasingly scarce, the drive for economic benefits gradually overtakes the importance of social responsibility and educational obligations. Because of systemic problems, public social resources are always categorized for a particular use, which not only restricts the sharing of resources, but also creates obstacles to the cooperation of resources between schools and communities. Schools and communities are supposed to complement each other and work together to promote education, but in practice there are many barriers to the cooperation of resources.

In addition, under-utilization of resources is another major shortcoming of open access. Due to the far-reaching influence of traditional school-centered thinking, schooling resources are often considered superior and more important than community education resources. School education resources are regarded as the main pillar of formal education, while community education resources are regarded as merely an adjunct and supplement to school education. Because of this perception, community education resources are always easy to be neglected and their potential is not fully developed and utilized. The conservative openness and underutilization of resources not only limits cooperation between schools and communities, but also hinders educational innovation and the cultivation of creative talents.

5. Effective Measures and Achievements in Community Education in Reggio

5.1. Child-centered

A child-centered educational philosophy is at the heart of a Reggio education. Maragucci, the founder of Reggio, once said, "The most fundamental aspect of our educational system is that it is centered on the young child [16]. Education should fully respect the characteristics of children's physical and mental development, recognizing that each child has his or her own unique rhythms and needs in the process of growing up. Educators and parents should give children enough space to grow freely through exploration and experience, rather than fettering their development with adult standards and expectations. Adults should play more of a guiding and supporting role in children's development rather than controlling and dominating children's behaviors in an authoritative manner. Adults identify children's interests and needs through observation and understanding, and provide them with appropriate resources and opportunities to help them grow in ways that suit them. Supporters, on the other hand, should provide encouragement and assistance to children when they encounter difficulties and challenges, and help them build up self-confidence and independence. Such an approach to education will not only better promote children's all-round development, but also foster their autonomy and creativity, so that they will be more confident and proactive in their future learning and life.

5.2. Multi-party Cooperation for the Comprehensive Development of Children

In Reggio's educational practice, teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge, but also partners and guides in learning with children. They stimulate children's interest in learning and creativity by observing and listening to their ideas, and by discussing and exploring with them. The school then encourages the participation of a wide range of parents

and community members. Teachers, parents, and community representatives form a community advisory committee that participates in decision-making and management of the school, creating a collaborative, participatory management model that fully embodies the theme of "engaging the whole community in early childhood education". In this organization, there is no class relationship, and each individual and group shares the common goal of "the development of young children through these interactions." Under this cooperative model, education is no longer a one-way process, but one in which multiple parties interact, help each other and respect each other, and in which the opinions and suggestions of each participant are fully valued. This democratic and cooperative approach to education not only promotes the holistic development of young children's minds and bodies, but also fosters close cooperation between the school and the community, forming an educational community with a strong sense of integrity. This kind of educational practice allows children to grow up in a free and democratic environment, in which they also learn how to interact and cooperate with others, thus laying a solid foundation for their future social life.

5.3. Social Interaction for the Holistic Development of the Child

Vygotsky emphasized the key role of social interaction in the development of the child's psyche. This idea is widely used in Reggio education, where educators place great importance on the relationships and interactions of each child with other children, teachers, parents and the surrounding social and cultural environment. They believe that children's learning occurs not only in their personal interactions with the physical world, but also deepens and expands in their interactions with others and the social environment. By emphasizing these interactions, Reggio education creates a rich and varied learning environment for children, enabling them to learn to understand others, share their experiences, and gradually develop self-knowledge and social cognition in the process of cooperating and communicating with others. This approach to education not only promotes the holistic development of individual children, but also develops their social skills and sense of teamwork, laying a solid foundation for future learning and social life.

5.4. Integration of Community Resources for the Holistic Development of Young Children

In the practice of the Reggio philosophy of education, the "home-community" model of co-education is highly valued, especially the use of community educational resources, which is seen as an important way to enhance the effectiveness of education. Through the integration and effective use of various educational resources in the community, Reggio educators are able to design richer and more targeted teaching and learning activities, provide diversified learning opportunities for young children, and help them better integrate into the community and understand the community, as well as effectively promote the social development of young children. Each community has its own unique resources and cultural background, which provides the conditions for the development of an education management model that suits local needs. Therefore, advocates of Reggio education advocate giving full play to the unique advantages of educational resources in different communities and

developing diverse management models tailored to local needs. These models not only maximize the use of community resources, but also highlight the uniqueness of community education and provide solid support for the holistic development of young children, so that each young child can get the best out of the environment that suits him or her.

6. Summarize Community-Based Preschool Education Methods and Policies Suitable for Implementation in China, Taking into Account the Experience of Education in Reggio.

6.1. Sharing of Resources Between Kindergartens and the Community

Communities and kindergartens maximize the use of educational resources by sharing educational resources, facilities and activity spaces. This model not only enhances the efficiency of the use of educational facilities, but also provides more diversified learning experiences for young children. For example, community libraries, sports stadiums and cultural centers can support kindergarten's educational activities so that young children can achieve more comprehensive development in a diverse environment. In order to realize the true sharing and efficient use of educational resources, it is necessary to change attitudes, break down traditional sectoral boundaries and ownership restrictions, and promote open cooperation of resources, so that educational resources can truly serve the overall development and progress of society.

6.2. Integrated Service Model for Communities and Kindergartens

The community works with kindergartens to provide integrated services, including medical care, psychological counseling and educational tutoring, to promote the development of young children in a holistic manner. This model combines medical, mental health and educational services to provide one-stop support for young children and their parents, ensuring that young children receive all-round care and guidance in physical, psychological and cognitive aspects. Under this model, the community and kindergartens jointly design and organize a variety of activities, including knowledge talks for parents on the healthy development of young children and recreational activities for parent-child cooperation, in order to meet the different needs of different young children. This integrated service model can help parents better understand and support the development of young children and promote their healthy physical and mental development through regular training and counseling.

6.3. Regular Cooperation between Kindergartens and the Community in Organizing Activities

Kindergartens, in cooperation with community organizations, carry out projects such as celebrating major festivals and conducting regular traditional cultural activities to create a good platform for young children to integrate into society and develop their social skills, and to promote community interaction and the development of young children's social skills. Through participation in these activities, young children not only learn about various

cultures, but also practice their social skills in real life. These activities also help children to develop a sense of belonging to the community and to realize from an early age that they are part of the community, thus helping them to develop a sense of responsibility.

7. Conclusion

The cooperative co-education model between kindergartens and the community has been remarkably effective in promoting the development of pro-social behavior in young children. This cooperation not only has a positive impact on the current development of young children, but also lays a solid foundation for their long-term growth. Through participation in various social activities, young children are able to develop self-esteem and self-confidence in interaction and form good social behavior. In addition, close cooperation between kindergartens and the community can maximize the use of the educational resources of both sides, improve the quality of parents and members of the community, and thus create a positive and supportive environment for young children's growth and further promote their all-round development.

However, in China, community-based preschool education faces a number of practical dilemmas. First, the idea of "school-centeredness" is deeply rooted, and people generally regard school education as the dominant factor, ignoring or even rejecting the importance of community education. Secondly, due to institutional constraints and limitations in people's concepts, the sharing of resources between communities and schools is often hindered, limiting the space for educational innovation. These problems have seriously affected the effective implementation of community-based preschool education.

In contrast, the Reggio model of education has achieved remarkable results in community education. The model emphasizes a child-centred approach, providing young children with sufficient space for development and encouraging them to explore freely in the community environment so that they can attain all-round development. In addition, through the establishment of a community advisory committee comprising teachers, parents and community representatives to participate in the decision-making and management of the school, Reggio has realized a multi-party collaborative management model. This democratic education model not only helps young children learn how to interact and cooperate with others in a free and democratic environment, but also lays a solid foundation for their social development. Reggio also customizes its educational management model to meet the local needs of each community based on its unique socio-cultural background and resources, thus better promoting the social development of young children.

Drawing on the successful experience of Reggio, China can adopt the following measures and policies in implementing community-based preschool education. First, communities and kindergartens can maximize the use of resources by sharing educational resources, facilities and activity spaces. Secondly, communities and kindergartens should work closely together to combine medical, mental health and educational services to provide comprehensive, one-stop support for young children and their parents and to ensure that young children develop in a healthy and holistic manner, both physically and mentally. Finally, kindergartens and community organizations can work together to carry out a series of activities, such as holiday celebrations and

traditional cultural activities, to create a good platform for young children to integrate into society and develop their social skills, and to promote community interaction and the development of young children's social skills.

Through the implementation of these strategies, China's community-based preschool education will be able to better serve the growth and development of young children and promote the education level of the whole society to a new level.

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