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Current Response and Future of Preschool Education in China

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Abstract: *At this stage, the development of early childhood education provides a glimpse of the future cultural quality of Chinese people. This paper finds from previous research findings that the political system, multi-ethnicity, multiculturalism, and multi-regionalism all have different effects on education due to China's unique national conditions. Before China's reform and opening up, the term "preschool education" did not exist at all. Until the 1990s, the term "life is based on the early education" was formed. Preschool education was seen as the beginning of lifelong learning, and people's expectations and demands for kindergartens were no longer just "childcare" or "childcare services" but quality preschool education for children. With the emergence of hot mama, parents are educating their young children with a lot of classical literature. In an era of globalization, what was once considered "corrupt and outdated" is being actively used by many Chinese parents to educate their children, due to the deep-rooted Chinese culture and the high cultural quality that comes from classical literature education.*

Keywords: *Preschool Education; Policies and Regulations; Financial Investment; Geographical Differences; Early Education in China*

Introduction

This paper discusses the current public interest in preschool education in China and briefly identifies new directions for its future development as a reference point for South Korea's understanding and study of China. Chinese society in the 21st century is no longer the slow growing, isolationism, mystical oriental nation it once was. China has made great achievements in the fields of economy, culture, science and Technology and military affairs, all of which are closely related to education and personnel training. The importance of education as the foundation of a strong country and the path to a strong country has been recognized worldwide since ancient times, and is one of the key areas of concern for the ruling parties and scientific researchers of various countries, and naturally, it is also a key area of close attention for the ruling parties and scientific researchers of China.

The political system of the country aside, the general public has also attached great importance to education since ancient times, and "a hundred years of life is established in early childhood education", "correct the child's mind in childhood", and "the formation of human talent begins with children". Although the idea of child education started from Confucianism, it also reflects the Chinese attitude toward early childhood education, which takes "nurturing the righteousness" as the basis for children's establishment.

As an important part of basic education, preschool education not only acts on the hundreds of millions of

preschool children in China today, but also continuously influences the healthy growth of these school-age children and the popularization and development of basic education, and it is closely related to the long-term development of the country.

In our understanding of the current state of preschool education in China, we can get a glimpse of the qualities of the new generation that will influence the future development of China in the next ten or twenty years, which will also serve as a lesson for the future South Korean generation that will compete with China in society. After all, China and South Korea are separated by a strip of water, and the two countries are closely linked in culture, geographical location, people-to-people exchanges, economic interaction and other aspects.

Response to Preschool Education: Centered on Government and Preschool Institutions

Implementation of National Policies

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese scholars and experts have been calling for legislation on preschool schooling, and the legislature and relevant departments have also put preschool education legislation on the agenda. 2003, the Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) began research on preschool education legislation; in 2006, the Committee of the NPC officially commissioned the Ministry of Education to draft and research preschool education legislation; in 2007, the Ministry of Education included preschool education legislation in the next five-year legislative plan; in 2010, the Committee of the NPC recommended that the relevant departments of the State Council initiate preschool education legislation procedures; in 2011, the Ministry of Education included preschool education legislation in its annual work highlights. In 2007, the Ministry of Education included preschool education legislation as a legislative plan for the next five years; in 2010, the Committee of the National People's Congress recommended that the relevant departments of the State Council start the legislative process of preschool education; in 2011, the Ministry of Education included preschool education legislation in its annual work highlights. Legislation on preschool education has become a hot topic of discussion during the National People's Congress every year. In 2011 alone, the fourth session of the 11th National People's Congress called for the enactment of a preschool education law with 412 NPC deputies, involving a total of 13 motions. In addition, there are 9 NPC deputies' suggestions and 3 CPPCC members' proposals involving preschool education legislation. However, so far, preschool education legislation, including the positioning of preschool education in the overall Chinese education system, funding, etc., has not been implemented.

In 2019, new measures were introduced almost every month, including the "Notice of the General Office of the State Council on the Governance of Kindergartens in Urban Districts" issued by the State Council in January, the "Action Plan for Promoting the Formation of a Strong Domestic Market by Enhancing Public Services in the Social Sector to Make Up for Shortcomings and Strengthen Weaknesses" issued by the Development and Reform Commission in February, the "Guidance on Promoting the Development of Infant and Toddler Care Services for Infants and Toddlers Under the Age of 3" issued by the State Council in May, and the "Measures for Supervising Kindergartens by Responsible Supervisors" issued by the Ministry of Education in June. In addition, there is the "Shanghai Three-Year Action Plan for Preschool Education (2019-2021)"

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issued by the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission and other local government agencies. These are all measures to actively support the government's goal of "universal access and benefits".

State Funding

With the rapid development of China's economy and the constant improvement of its GDP, the income levels of the government and individuals are also increasing at the same time. According to the survey data, China's GDP reached the level of 10 trillion yuan in 2000, maintained an annual growth rate of more than 7% until 2014, and reached 91.92 trillion yuan by 2018. The rapid development of economy provides a solid foundation for social education expenditure.

From the perspective of national education investment, China's total investment in education and national financial investment in education continued to grow. Total investment in education increased from 1.96 trillion yuan in 2010 to 4.61 trillion yuan in 2018, an increase of about 135%. State financial expenditure on education increased from 1.47 trillion yuan in 2010 to 3.70 trillion yuan in 2018, an increase of about 152%.

Preschool Education Institutions

Since 2012, the number of children aged 3 to 6 in China has been on the rise, from 11,700 in 2001 to 266,700 in 2018, an increase of about 138.76% in the past 18 years. Assuming an equal distribution, universal kindergartens would serve about 73 million people. The increasing size of school-age children brings about the continuous increase in the demand for education and care services for children of corresponding age groups, which is finally reflected in the substantial increase in the demand for kindergarten degrees. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that the carrying capacity of preschool education institutions needs to increase rapidly in a short period of time, which will cause the problem of "difficulty in entering kindergartens".

If the above content is the latent social problems of public preschool education institutions, then the following is the latent social problems of private preschool education institutions. In 2001, the total number of children in kindergartens in China was about 20.218 million, among which the proportion of private kindergartens was about 16.91%, nearly 2.8426 million people chose private kindergartens. By 2018, a total of 46.5640 million people had entered kindergartens, of which 26.3978 million chose private kindergartens, accounting for nearly 56.69%. In about 18 years, the number of private kindergartens has increased nearly tenfold. Unlike public kindergartens, which accept the government's pricing and price limit, private kindergartens mostly adopt the market pricing mechanism, and their service content can match the price. Therefore, in the process of development, some kindergartens choose relatively high pricing, which further aggravates the pressure of entering public kindergartens and increases the burden of families in preschool education. The problem of "expensive kindergarten enrollment" gradually emerges.

The "difficulty" and "high cost" of entering kindergartens have gradually intensified and become one of the factors affecting China's fertility rate, which has become a key problem to be solved at the policy level. Promoting the stable development of preschool education, meeting the basic needs of the people, and guiding social forces to participate in the reform of inclusive supply have obviously become the main tasks to be

urgently solved in China at present and in the future. In 2018, The State Council issued several "Opinions on The Deepening reform and Standardized Development of Preschool Education", which not only clarified the development goals and direction of preschool education, but also promoted the industry integration process by "cutting off" the path of asset capitalization.

The Future of Preschool Education in China

According to the survey data, the average child care attendance rate is about 34.95% in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries and about 32.7% in the EU countries. Among all OECD countries, Luxembourg has the highest child care rate of 63.34%, Korea has a rate of 56.25%, and Japan has a rate of 29.55%. China's enrollment rate is close to that of countries such as Mexico and Costa Rica. Thus, the penetration and popularity level of China's preschool early childhood education industry has a lot of room for improvement.

From 2000 to 2021, the number of newborns in China increased by more than 15 million per year. Especially between 2010 and 2016, the number of newborns in China continued to rise, from 15.92 million to 17.86 million. Since 2017, the number of newborns in China has declined to 17.23 million, 3.5% lower than that in 2016. In 2018, there was a sharp decline to 15.23 million. The rapid decline in the number of newborns in China in recent years has a far-reaching impact on the overall development of the country. Since 2019, the Chinese government has released a positive signal on the early childhood education industry, encouraging the increase of the supply of inclusive childcare services and encouraging social forces to participate in the supply. While the overall direction of promoting fertility remains unchanged, we should try our best to obtain sustainable policy support.

In the field of preschool education, kindergartens have a longer period of development and a higher degree of social acceptance in China than nursery schools. At the same time, the kindergarten market in the development process is accompanied by policy guidance and norms, forming a relatively stable market system. In the process of constant market competition, the kindergarten has formed the space and the personnel disposition which adapts to the local situation. With the gradual implementation and popularization of kindergarten education in China, the distribution of kindergartens in China has gradually deepened from densely populated areas to sparsely populated areas. The most populous provinces, such as Shandong, Henan, and Guangdong, continue to have the largest number of kindergartens, while Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Guangxi have seen an increase in the density of kindergartens that gradually matches the number of local populations. Xinjiang, Heilongjiang, Shaanxi, and other provinces have also seen a relatively significant increase in the number of kindergartens. Combining the national average of 1,300 square meters of usable area, staffing of about 17 people, about 6 classes, and 170 children, it is not difficult to calculate the corresponding profit model and input-output ratio. According to the data: the national level of gross enrollment rate will be close to about 90%, but the impact of the number of newborns decline, the size of the country's school-age children is about 56.7 million or so, keeping the ratio of 80% inclusive and 20% high-end park unchanged, because the inclusive park is supported by the state, so the tuition level remains unchanged, high-end park to China's consumer price growth rate of about 3% increase in the level of the forecast to 2025 The market size of early childhood education is predicted to be about 1.43 trillion in 2025.

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In such an environment of livelihood demand and improvement, policy introduction, and reform, the development of preschool education is both an opportunity and a challenge. In view of the current situation, (1) In order to solve the problems of "difficult" and "expensive" enrollment, the Chinese government will increase support and guide social forces to open more inclusive kindergartens. (2) At the same time, the standards and regulations will become more and more detailed. For example, in 2019, China issued relevant regulations, such as "Provisions on School Food Safety and Nutrition And Health Management", "Architectural Design Specifications for Nurseries and Kindergartens", and "Professional Certification Standards for Vocational And Technical Teacher Education". Is not hard to find the strength of the standardized specification, and increased differentiation, and the detailed specification can be more effectively promote preschool education industry-standard management and operation, standardized specifications refined also calls for the preschool education institutions should strengthen their own reform and management, those who do not conform to the specifications of institutions will eventually be eliminated by the market. (3) The central government will spare no effort to speed up the legislative process in order to ensure that schools are run in accordance with the law and the healthy and sustainable development is guaranteed by law. China has always advocated "Rule by Law", which can only be implemented smoothly if there are laws to follow, and the bottleneck problems in the reform and development of preschool education, which have been restricted for a long time, can be solved quickly and effectively through laws. (4) High-quality teachers will be urgently needed in the future. With the progress of society, the rapid development of information technology, and the improvement of people's living standards, preschool education has been paid more and more attention by all walks of life, so the expectation of preschool teachers' professional quality and professional ability is getting higher and higher. In order to meet the sustainable development of preschool education, a large number of high-quality teachers will be urgently needed to change the status quo of the overall quality of teachers is not high. In the future, teachers will be more diversified, professional, and professional. (5) High-quality preschool early education services are still scarce. Due to the widespread existence of utilitarian and comparison psychology, and the quality of teachers in preschool education institutions has yet to be improved, many institutions have teaching methods and contents that are not suitable for children's development, such as teaching primary school content in advance and strengthening knowledge and skill training. Therefore, it is still an important task for educators to study and understand the characteristics of preschool children (including infants and young children) and provide an education suitable for different ages. Research and development of high-quality preschool education products, design of high-quality teaching content, to create an excellent teaching team, short for the long-term development of preschool education institutions and based on the need to solve the major problems. (6) Due to the "Internet plus" thinking and the emergence of online classes due to the impact of COVID-19, preschool education will also enter a new period of transformation. Compared with traditional preschool education, "Internet +" brings not only the update and iteration of technology, but also the geometric improvement of teaching quality and education concept. "Internet +" will also maximize the fairness of preschool education, accelerating the education reform in the information age is the inevitable development trend of the preschool education industry in the future. AI and big data can be regarded as the second stage of development, which will become an important research direction of new technology in preschool education with the development of "Internet +". The application of big data can improve the imbalance of educational resources and help educational institutions to quickly occupy the current undistributed cities by online means. However, the continuous investment in technology will also become a big challenge. (7) Vigorously developing public institutions in China. Based on the policy of accelerating the development of inclusive private kindergartens, private institutions must accelerate the radiation while improving the quality. In addition to the hardware and software

capabilities that can compete with public institutions, they must rely on distinctive branding as a long-term development strategy. Brand is an exclusive symbol representing the quality of education and conservation, which is an intangible asset. To create more high-end characteristics of the direct brand, in order to remain invincible in the fierce competition.

In short, under the overall deployment and promotion of the government, a variety of policies have been introduced, making the whole preschool education market tends to be rational, preschool education institutions are also facing great challenges and adjustments. However, under the combined action of market demand and policy guidance, preschool education is still a sunrise industry full of potential. The strong support from the government and the diversified demands of the market will promote the rapid development of China's preschool education industry.

Concluding Remarks

In essence, the demand for preschool education is the change of demographic structure and market acceptance. As the only-child generation enters the childbearing period, their conception of childbearing is also changing. The concepts of singlehood, late childbearing and dinks are accepted by more school-age people. The rising cost of education, housing and medical treatment also restrain the childbearing willingness of school-age people to a certain extent. As a result, the number of newborns dropped sharply in 2018, despite the overall improvement in people's economic living standards and the continuous introduction of policies to encourage birth control. The decline in the number of newborns has prompted parents to invest more, not less, in "little princes" and "little princesses". Most of the parents of this generation are post-90s (ages 22 to 31) and post-80s (ages 32 to 41), a group of well-educated women, including numerous overseas returnees. Their new values and views on education are directly reflected in the education of their children. What is interesting is that those born in the 1980s and 1990s, who have been exposed to foreign culture, studied, lived and worked in a free and democratic environment, are more and more choosing "classics of Chinese culture" to educate their children when they return to China. What made them value classics that were once considered "decadent and backward"?This interesting phenomenon also seems to be worth thinking about.

"In the Account Books of China" is full of stories, and the amount of money spent on preschool education in each one is staggering. It also shows that parents are focusing on their children's physical and mental health, language skills, social interaction, scientific learning, artistic interests and more. Specifically, in addition to physical health, physical and mental health also includes good self-care habits and mental adjustment ability. Language ability refers to the ability to speak clearly. Children can not only express their ideas correctly, but also learn to listen and understand. Speaking Mandarin and being polite is one of them. Social communication refers to the ability to communicate, cooperate and share with others on the basis of self-confidence, and then build a sense of responsibility, and know-how to love parents, elders and hometown. Scientific curiosity and artistic interest are to cultivate children's curiosity and thirst for knowledge, discover children's interests and further cultivate them as far as possible. The reality of life in such households is the best evidence of China's current development and future trends. At the same time, it seems to help us to answer the reason for "attaching importance to the classics of Chinese culture". Advocating the education concept of "being a man first, learning skills later" and "Self-discipline and Social Commitment" can improve the moral cultivation of

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children and make moral concepts deeply rooted in the hearts of people. The "Analects of Confucius: Wisdom in Chinese Proverbs" teaches children to know filial piety, gratitude, distinguish right from wrong, and often self-examination. In addition, poetry of Tang and Song dynasties not only cultivate children's sentiment, enhance their literary accomplishment, cultivate their external behavior and internal temperament, but also enable them to learn empathy, resonance, empathy. Basic principles such as "be good", "say good things", "do good things" and "be human" have gradually become difficult problems in education, which is also the most important education focus of parents, can not be ignored.

In this respect, the similarities between China and South Korea in terms of preschool education status, progress and social problems show how deeply rooted the eastern stereotypes of "hold high hopes for one's child". And by understanding the international status quo, in the future development environment, how to let the children have international competitiveness and play in the international environment, this is the responsibility and obligation of parents and society. Understanding the current development status, more understanding of the development trend of other countries, take its essence, remove its coarse meal, can create a relatively higher education environment. A child is like a blank sheet of paper, which needs to be carefully drawn.

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