CSCanada
Higher Education of Social Science
Vol.23, No.1, 2022, pp. 54-58
DOI:10.3968/12775

ISSN 1927-0232 [Print]
ISSN 1927-0240 [Online]
www.cscanada.net
www.cscanada.org

Reasons and Countermeasures of Utilitarian Orientation in Kindergarten Education Scientific Research

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Received 20 June 2022; accepted 30 August 2022
Published online 26 September 2022

Abstract

In recent years, with the state's emphasis on preschool education and preferential policies, it has become a consensus to promote the quality of education through scientific research. The scientific research of kindergarten education has witnessed unprecedented prosperity. However, driven by external forces such as professional title assessment and year-end assessment, the scientific research of kindergarten education has emerged a utilitarian orientation, which is manifested in the research purpose derived from external drive, divorced from reality and application, and the research results directed to the publication and quantity of papers. This paper tries to reflect on the utilitarian orientation of the current scientific research of kindergarten education, point out its causes and disadvantages, and propose possible ways and directions for improvement based on this.

Key words: Educational science research; Utilitarianism; Countermeasures

Wang, Y. L. (2022). Reasons and Countermeasures of Utilitarian Orientation in Kindergarten Education Scientific Research. *Higher Education of Social Science*, *23*(1), 54-58. Available from: URL: http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/12775
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12775

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with the advent of the information age and the knowledge society, education has played an increasingly prominent role in social development, and its social status has been continuously improved. As an important starting point to improve the quality of education, educational scientific research has developed rapidly and has witnessed unprecedented prosperity. In the course of curriculum reform, many kindergartens have taken "prospering the kindergarten through scientific research and establishing the kindergarten through scientific research" as the strategic goal of the sustainable development of kindergartens. Teachers' participation in scientific research can promote the development of teachers' professional cultivation, knowledge and skills, and facilitate the long-term development of kindergartens (Wang & Zhao, 2011). However, due to the deviation of kindergarten teachers' research value orientation and their overemphasis on the external value of research, existing research has appeared such phenomena as utilitarian research purpose, impetuous research style and simplified research methods.

It often sacrifices the improvement of individual academic level for the development of some social interests, which is mainly manifested in scientific research for the promotion of professional titles (Xue, 1988).The scientific research in kindergarten gradually deviates from the real meaning of existence and the scientific spirit of seeking truth from facts and the practical pursuit of guiding practice. It is of great practical significance to understand the concrete embodiment and reasons of the current utilitarianism of kindergarten education and scientific research, and to propose the possible improvement way in the future.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research mainly adopts the interview method. Stratified sampling was used to select 15 kindergartens in the capital city of S province as sample kindergartens, including 5 first-level kindergartens, second-level kindergartens and ungraded kindergartens. One principal

and two teachers of the sample kindergarten were selected as the interview subjects, a total of 45 people. On the basis of literature review, the interview outline of kindergarten teachers and principals was compiled. In order to dispel the doubts of the teachers interviewed, a confidentiality agreement on the interview content was signed before the interview. The interview was conducted one-on-one in the kindergarten meeting room, and the whole process was recorded based on the consent of the interviewers. The content of the interview mainly centered around: What are the problems in kindergarten scientific research? What are the areas that deserve affirmation and improvement? What are the causes of these problems? How can kindergarten science research really help teachers or themselves? In addition to the above core questions, the researcher made timely questioning and adjustment according to the answers of the interviewees. For example, when the respondent does not answer the question, he or she will interrupt or guide him or her back to the question; further questions will be asked if the interviewees do not answer clearly or if there are new ideas.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Utilitarianism is Prominent in Teachers' Scientific Research

3.1.1 The Purpose of Teachers' Scientific Research is More External

The research results show that the current kindergarten teachers in the process of scientific research, personal interest oriented accounting for a small proportion, mainly pointing to external purposes and requirements. The interview found that a large number of teachers' projects were mainly kindergarten level projects and class micro projects, and teachers were required to participate in them as the main researcher or moderator. Asked on the demand for individual professional title assessment and year-end assessment, on the one hand, teachers showed a psychological state of exclusion from the kindergarten's request to participate in research projects, but at the same time, had to "actively" accept and complete the writing of relevant research papers. On the whole, the purpose of teachers' participation in scientific research shows a passive state, pointing to external requirements. See Table 1.

Table 1
Teachers' scientific research objectives

Research reasons and purpose	The number of teachers (N=30)	Percentage
Personal interest	5	16.67%
Kindergarten requirements	19	63.33%
Professional title evaluation	22	73.33%
Year-end appraisal	20	66.67%

3.1.2 Teachers Focus on Quantity Rather Than Quality in Their Scientific Research

The research found that the interviewed teachers published 22 papers and completed 12 research reports in the past three years. However, it can be seen from the types of journals published that only one high-quality paper was produced. A large number of articles were published in ordinary journals, even in journals unrelated to education, and mainly depend on the cost of space to get published. In the interviews, teachers generally said that the paper publication mainly meets the needs of the conclusion of the project research, and can also be used as an important additional material for personal evaluation of career grade and year-end assessment. See Table 2 for details.

Table 2
Number of published papers

Number	Journal type	Published Fee (￥)
0	CSSCI	0
1	Core journals	6,000
6	General journals(Education)	15,000
15	General journals(Non-Education)	33,000
12	Research Report (unpublished)	0

3.1.3 Teachers' Scientific Research Results are Difficult to Apply in Practice

The significance of kindergarten scientific research is to apply the final results into practice and guide teachers to better carry out education and teaching activities。 The research found that there is a lack of connection between teachers' research achievements and their own practical work. The conclusions drawn from the research are more confined to literal expression, and there are few operational achievements with practical application value. The research achievements have become papers or reports on the shelf. See Table 3 for details.

Table 3
Types and application of research results

Results type	Number	Used in educational practice
Research report	12	3
Operating materials	3	3
Educational cases	12	6
Research paper	67	0
Observation records	89	27

3.2 Reasons for Utilitarian Orientation in Teachers' Scientific Research

3.2.1 Requirements of Promotion and Evaluation System on Teachers' Scientific Research Achievements

The existing professional title rating and assessment system is the core reason for the utilitarian orientation of kindergarten education research. The kindergarten's assessment of teachers' work points to the achievements represented by papers, and scientific research

achievements are directly related to subsidies and professional titles. The number of scientific research achievements and published papers directly affect the income and quality of life of educators. Forced by the situation or driven by fame and wealth, teachers do not really pay attention to scientific research, but only care about quantity rather than quality. They either talk about the principles and methods of education, or decorate the old appearances with new ideas. In order to produce more and faster results, research results stay in the level of abstract experience summary from theory to theory, from concept to concept, and lack of realism and operability. At the same time, the researchers' personal scientific research literacy also leads to the low quality of research results. Existing studies have pointed out that educational science researchers have too narrow contacts, low overall quality, and lack of courage to practice, leading to low-level duplication of research (Fang, 2003).Some researchers often apply the concept of pedagogy mechanically based on their one-sided understanding of education, or make some summaries based on their own teaching experience. The result is that there are many summary papers on educational theory, but few really valuable studies.

3.2.2 The Mechanism to Support Teachers to Carry out Innovative Practical Research Needs to be Improved

On the whole, the scientific research of kindergartens started late, and many researches still follow the trend of others. The scientific research of education has more reference than innovation. At present, we are blindly superstitious about western educational science research, and even believe that those educational theories can directly solve the practical problems of education before they are transformed into local educational theories (Yang, 2006). Based on this atmosphere, the kindergarten's support for teachers to carry out innovative practical research is not enough. It is mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, the kindergarten education and research work is generally lack of encouraging institutional guarantee, such as the general lack of corresponding incentive mechanism, teachers' enthusiasm to actively participate in education and research is not high, and the strength of self-reflection and self-criticism is not enough. Teachers often regard teaching and research activities as a routine "business", rather than a "major event" related to their own development. On the other hand, kindergarten teachers cannot be guaranteed in time and place of research, and lack of corresponding financial support. Their daily teaching work is heavy, and sudden increase of huge and complex research tasks often makes them unable to coordinate their relationship. This makes relevant research activities have to be transformed into a form or task rather than a conscious action based on the needs of professional development (Liu, 2010).

3.2.3 Scientific Research in Kindergartens Cannot Effectively Guide Educational Practice

The separation of theory and practice in education has always been the focus of the educational circle. The problem of "two skins" also exists in the scientific research of early childhood education, that is, the disconnection between scientific research and practical application, which has not been effectively solved. Especially in the field of scientific research in kindergartens where utilitarianism is more serious and difficult to get a practical solution. The achievements of researchers in kindergartens cannot produce practical effects and are difficult to be implemented in educational practice. The research attitude of some kindergarten researchers is very casual. They infer from existing anecdotes or draw conclusions only from individual cases. Educational activity is a holistic practical activity. Therefore, educational research should be based on practice, establish its own scientific category and theoretical system on the basis of perceptual knowledge, and study and solve the practical problems in education. Otherwise, there will be no necessity and possibility for the existence and development of kindergarten scientific research.

4. REFLECTION AND SUGGESTIONS

The objection to the utilitarian orientation of current scientific research in kindergartens is not to belittle theoretical research in a disguised way and attach importance to practice, but to point out the alienation or bias in the process of current scientific research in kindergartens. We must be clear about the real purpose of educational science research? Its ultimate purpose is to predict the development trend of preschool education, explain educational phenomena, and effectively guide educational practice. Kindergarten scientific research can only be tested and verified in practice, and ultimately reflected in the guidance of practice. Only in this way can the tree of life of scientific research in kindergartens be evergreen.

4.1 Research Based on Practical Problems and Personal Interests

To carry out scientific research in kindergartens, we must be guided by the actual needs, problems and interests of kindergarten teachers, and truly realize that every research can effectively solve teachers' practical puzzles, and enable teachers to develop in a positive and interesting state. In the process of establishing research topics for children in kindergartens, first of all, we should fully combine the actual situation of the kindergarten, select the key problems that need to be solved urgently in the current education and teaching practice of the kindergarten, and adhere to the basic premise of scientific research to promote teachers' professional growth and children's development in the research. If separated

from the kindergarten education and teaching practice, the kindergarten education research may not only be ineffective, but also may bring teachers' aversion. Secondly, the research topics should be guided by micro practical problems, and the topics should focus on common, practical and achievable problems in the class. Kindergarten teaching itself is practical and applied, so selecting specific and practical application research is not only the requirement of kindergarten education practice, but also based on teachers' professional ability. Third, we should fully consider the existing research foundation and conditions of kindergartens. When determining the topic, we must consider whether the kindergarten has the corresponding research foundation, research conditions and corresponding personnel support. When teachers can carry out research based on practical problems they are interested in, their research results can guide their education and teaching activities well. Then the endogenous motivation of teachers to carry out scientific research will be stimulated, so that the kindergarten scientific research activities will change from "passive" to "active", from "external requirements" to "internal drive".

4.2 Establish a Scientific and Effective Research Guarantee Mechanism and Evaluation Mechanism

In the research and practice of educational science, a scientific guarantee mechanism and evaluation system should be established to avoid the utilitarian ideology of fame and profit and the academic orientation of self-intoxication in theoretical research. First, establish a scientific and reasonable scientific research guarantee mechanism. The concept of "strengthening the kindergarten through scientific research" should be transformed into the conscious behavior of every kindergarten teacher, and we must rely on the kindergarten to actively support teachers to solve various difficulties in scientific research. The significance of these systems does not point to managing teachers or assessing teachers' participation in scientific research, but focuses on how to mobilize teachers' enthusiasm for research and how to support teachers to solve time, space and difficulties in research. For example, experts follow up and guide the research, appropriately reduce the tasks of teachers responsible for scientific research, and provide appropriate space and venues for teachers to discuss and research. Secondly, a reasonable scientific research evaluation mechanism should be established. The evaluation of teachers' scientific research work should change the traditional paper only system, and should fully consider the operability of teachers' research results and the guiding value of solving kindergarten practice problems. At the same time, the scientific research assessment should fully consider the principle of combining the process evaluation with the outcome evaluation, taking into account teachers' attitudes, efforts and innovation in the scientific research process, so as to truly realize the overall evaluation of teachers' scientific research. Finally, the purpose of evaluation should be more oriented to improvement than assessment. Through evaluation, it points out the confusion that may exist in the process of teachers' scientific research and gives timely guidance.

4.3 Adhere to the Integration of Teaching and Scientific Research

The purpose of scientific research is to further promote teachers' education and teaching. However, due to the utilitarian orientation, scientific research and education and teaching in kindergartens have been separated for a long time. Teachers regard scientific research as an additional work and burden. Based on this, the kindergarten must adhere to the mode of integration of teaching and scientific research. The so-called "integration of teaching and scientific research" mode refers to the organic integration of teaching research and scientific research, the spirit and methods of scientific research to solve various puzzles encountered in the education process, the real problems in teaching practice as the research object, the establishment of the idea of "teaching is research" and "problems are courses" in the scientific research process, and the in-depth and systematic research on teaching practice (Zeng et al., 2012).In this new research mode, through scientific research and teaching, teachers can achieve interaction, communication and dialogue, communication and cooperation, and collision and blending. Teachers can not only improve their cognition and skills, so that teaching can be sublimated, but also their personality and advantages can be further explored and expanded. In this way, the research achievements among teachers are transformed into an interactive resource, which becomes the content for everyone to explore and learn together, and ultimately realizes the sharing of scientific research achievements among all teachers. Research is no longer a burden for teachers, but a valuable opportunity for individual professional growth. In addition, the topic selection, implementation process and achievements transformation of kindergarten scientific research should return to educational life. The process of kindergarten education research should be closely combined with daily education life, because the "root" of kindergarten education research is the whole life of kindergarten. Kindergartens should find problems in the ever-changing educational practice and choose the most urgent and suitable topic among the colorful problems (Zhao, 2005). After the research topic is selected, in the process of scientific research, teachers involved in teaching and research should always respond to the needs of daily education life, adhere to daily education life as the carrier, based on daily education events, take the practical education problems as the starting point, formulate scientific research plans, carry out action research, explore problem solving strategies in

daily education life, and test the effectiveness of scientific research through daily teaching and child development (Yu, 2006), Timely reflect and adjust scientific research methods and strategies to promote the continuous improvement of kindergarten education quality.

In the pursuit of high-quality development of preschool education today, scientific research in kindergartens must change the existing utilitarian tendency, return to the nature of scientific research, focus on the educational practice itself, and settle in teachers' educational life. Only in this way can there be greater innovation and breakthrough, can scientific research really help teachers to improve their education level, and thus radiate new vitality and vitality in kindergartens.

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