

The Current Situation, Problems and Development Path of Chinese Preschool Pre-Service Teachers Education: The Empirical Research Based on Students' Satisfaction

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Abstract

Being the first part of integration of preschool teacher's education, preschool teachers' pre-service education lays significant foundation for the development of teachers' education and development of teachers. On the foundation of students' satisfaction, the research takes quantitative research as the main methods to investigate the fundamental situation of Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education. As the result shows, students are not so satisfied with Chinese preschool pre-service teachers education. The main problems are: lacking cares for students and completed life and shortage of the consideration of educational situations. In order to prompt the education of Chinese preschool pre-service teachers education, the value of "students oriented" should be determined, the comprehensive "whole person education" should be realized and the education mode of "experience-inspiration" should be established.

Key words: Students' satisfaction; Preschool pre-service teachers education; Current situation; Development path

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INTRODUCTION

Being the first part of integration of preschool teachers' education, preschool teachers' pre-service education lays significant foundation for the development of teachers' education and development of teachers. At present, the pre-service education of Chinese preschool teachers is undertaken by preschool educator colleges, vocational and technical college school, and institutions of higher education. The evaluation of education quality is always conducted from up to down, led by the government, and takes government, institutions for higher education and intermediary organizations as the main parts. As the beneficiaries of preschool teachers' education, students are main elements which participate in the training process directly and have the right of speech about the education quality. Besides that, the investigation of satisfaction is taken as the primary source of information (Laurie, 2004). The real experience and evaluation of preschool pre-service teachers' education are obtained with students as samples from the aspect of satisfaction, which can remedy the shortcomings of evaluating from up to down and provide preschool pre-service teachers education with information based on students. The research takes the three kinds of students mentioned above as the target group to investigate the actual situation of Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education, analyze and provide suggestion for existing problems and prompt the development of Chinese preschool pre-service teachers education.

Following scientific processes of table preparation, the research forms "investigation questionnaire for students the satisfaction of preschool teachers education" to get aware of students' satisfaction about curriculum provision, classroom teaching, practical teaching, teaching facilities and education management. The questionnaire is composed of two parts. In the first part, it includes fundamental information, such as gender, grade, school type, voluntary reporting, job intention etc., The second part contains 25 single choices, which uses likert five

levels: one score for very dissatisfied, two scores for mostly dissatisfied, three scores for half satisfied, four scores for mostly satisfied, five scores for very satisfied. In the statistics, the positive questions will be counted with positive scores, while the negative questions will be counted with negative scores. The correlation coefficients among different dimensions of questions are between 0.514 and 0.697, while the correlation coefficients between various dimensions and the general questionnaire are between 0.716 and 0.935, which means that the questionnaire has acceptable construct validity. In the questionnaire a, the reliability coefficient is 0.939 and the Split-Half coefficient is 0.861, which means that the questionnaire has good internal consistency.

The research is conducted in Chongqing, Sichuan, Shanxi and Henan with a total of 800 questionnaires, among them, 685 effective questionnaires collected and the recovery rate is 85.6%. In the sample, there are 254 students from universities, 228 students from preschool education colleges and 203 students from vocational-technical schools.

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT CHINESE PRESCHOOL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS EDUCATION ON THE BASIS OF STUDENTS' SATISFACTION

1.1 Students Have Low Overall Satisfaction for Chinese Preschool Pre-Service Teachers' Education

The research begins from five aspects: curriculum provision, classroom teaching, practical teaching, teaching facilities and teaching management etc., to explore students' satisfaction towards preschool pre-service teachers' education. As the investigation result shows (Table 1), students have low overall satisfaction for Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education.

Table 1
Overall Condition of Satisfaction for Chinese Preschool Pre-Service Teachers Education

Dimensions	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teaching management	2.53	0.68
Classroom teaching	2.75	0.62
Curriculum	2.42	0.69
Teaching facilities	1.76	0.84
Practical teaching	1.45	0.53
Overall satisfaction	2.51	0.65

It can be inferred from Table 1 that the overall satisfaction of students for Chinese preschool pre-service teachers education is 2.51, which is between "mostly dissatisfied" ($M=2$) and "half satisfied" ($M=3$); the average value of five dimensions is between 1.76

and 2.75, which has not reached "half satisfied", which implies that there is great potential for the improvement of Chinese preschool pre-service teachers education quality and then the demands of students will be satisfied. In all five dimensions, students' high great praise for classroom teaching, which means that students have relatively high subjective evaluation for teachers' teaching. On one hand, under the background that the quality of higher advanced education quality is generally focused on, teachers pay much attention to classroom teaching and improve teaching quality; on the other hand, it is the recognition of most teachers' good quality of caring for students, loving and respecting their work and winning the favor and acceptance of students. As the investigation shows, the most dissatisfied part of students is practical teaching. It not only reflects the significance of practical teaching on the cultivation of students' ability and students' great attention on practical teaching, but also implies that the demands of practical learning of students are not satisfied.

1.2 Analysis of Current Satisfaction for Dimensions of Preschool Pre-Service Teachers Education

Firstly, teaching management is the activity or process that managers plan, execute, coordinate, supervise and evaluate teaching activities in accordance with the fundamental principle of teaching and management activities to reach stated objectives. It is also the guarantee for the successful development of teaching and reaching education target. The teaching management dimensions in the research investigate the system, method and effect of teaching management, involving learning styles, exam habits and the support and guidance provided by schools in students learning and employment. As the statistics shows, among the satisfaction degree of teaching management, students prefer to learn styles and exam habits and the average score of the two factors has exceeded 3, which reflects the strength and effects of teaching management to some degree. On the contrary, among teaching management, students are most dissatisfied about the embodiment of management system "students-oriented" ($M=2.30$). In most circumstances, students will be managed and accept the supervision of managers. They have great large sense of distance with managers so that it is difficult for them to establish a familiar and intimate relationship with teachers of various subjects. It can be inferred that schools are in a shortage of the principles of students-oriented and providing services for students.

Secondly, classroom teaching is the main part of preschool pre-service teachers' education and the main method for realizing education, which is greatly focused on by teachers. "For teachers, classroom teaching is a fundamental part of their vocational life so that the quality of classroom teaching directly influences teachers feeling and attitude towards their jobs, the development of professional career and reflection of their own

values.” The research of classroom teaching involves in teachers’ teaching attitude, content, method and results, being the highest item among all satisfaction ($M=2.75$). Among all questionnaires, the item which has the highest average score and greatest satisfaction is that teachers teach carefully and have full preparation of teaching plan ($M=3.18$); along with the satisfaction degree that teachers take students advices carefully and make prompt improvement ($M=2.71$), it can be reflected that teachers have good teaching attitude. Teachers are responsible, full of enthusiasm and widely accepted by students. Besides that, the satisfaction score is between 2.7 and 2.7 for teachers grasping the key points and difficult points; bending in the content from “outline”, “guidance” and “professional standards” into the curriculum and pay much attention to the connection with reality, which shows that teachers can master teaching content and win the recognition of students. In the various dimensions of classroom teaching, students have low dissatisfaction towards the combination of various teaching means ($M=2.58$), which implies that teachers have simple teaching methods and the internal value which constrain teachers’ teaching behavior should be concerned. As it is well known, interest is the best teacher. Learning interests affect the initiative and effect of study. However, students are not satisfied with the classroom teaching’s effect on arousing learning interest ($M=2.42$), which means that teachers ignore the stimulation and cultivation of students’ learning interests in classroom teaching and also reflects teachers’ ignorance of non-intelligence factors.

Thirdly, it is the curriculum system that greatly decides the quantity and quality of knowledge obtained by students, which are the cutting point and the key point of the reform of teachers’ education. The curriculum dimensions of the research involves the logistics of curriculum arrangement and the occupation of various curriculum etc., from the fact that the satisfaction of curriculum dimensions ($M=2.42$) has not reach the half value, it can be inferred that the arrangement of curriculum and the occupation of various curriculum should be further adjusted and improved. Among all curriculum dimensions, the part that students are most dissatisfied with is the distribution of credit hours ($M=2.31$), which means that there is serious unbalanced distribution of curriculum period and it is not good for students’ reasonable plan and utilization of time. Both the occupation of theoretical curriculum and skills curriculum and the logistics of curriculum arrangement order are reasonable ($M=2.49$ and $M=2.45$, respectively). However, both of them have not reached the half value. On one hand, it is restricted by many factors, such as the qualification of teachers so that there is unscientific phenomenon in curriculum settings; on the other hand, it may also be limited by the cognitive competence that students can not make a scientific judgment.

Fourthly, teaching facilities are the essential foundations for students’ studying. In the teaching facility dimension, the piano, dancing room, handmade room, laboratory, books and reference materials are investigated, but the average score is only 1.76 and the satisfaction ranks last but one. It can be inferred that schools have not provided enough learning conditions for students. From the result that the standard deviation is large, it can be concluded that there are great differences between students, which may imply that different students have distinct or unfair opportunity for using teaching facilities. Besides that, the satisfaction of dancing room and piano room ($M=1.32$) has the lowest score in questionnaire, which mean that students pay much attention to dancing and piano skills and also implies that the conditions can not meet the demands of students and schools neglect students’ need and right of study. It is found in the investigation that, students also have low satisfaction ($M=1.90$) of modern teaching facilities, such as multi-media and micro teaching laboratory. The value indicates that students are mostly dissatisfied about it, which may have some connection with the fact that teachers have not made full use of multi-media and the using frequency of laboratory. In addition to that, students have relatively high satisfaction ($M=2.06$) towards the books and reference materials and database, which means that schools can provide materials they need. However, there is still the phenomenon that most students have no knowledge about “CNKI” and “Superstar Electronics Book” until they have to prepare graduation thesis, which implies that most students are shortage of initiative study.

Fifthly, practical teaching is the combination of a series of activities for obtaining perceptual knowledge, mastering techniques and skills under the guidance of teachers and with practical operations as the principle. Practical teaching is the significant way for cultivating students’ practices ability and key part for improving students’ comprehensive quality. In the practical teaching, internship, time and guidance from teachers are included, which is the lowest dimension of satisfaction ($M=1.45$). It can be inferred from the low standard deviation that students have a high consistency in the perception of the dimension, which implies that enough attention should be attracted to the development of practical training and quality. As the statistics shows, students are most dissatisfied with the few internship opportunities ($M=1.35$). To seek for the reasons, it can be found that it is not resulted from the subjective ignorance of teachers and schools, but limited by various factors, such as the intense class hours, shortage of funds and large number of students etc., In general, it is shown on the training scheme that the probation period is one week while the internship lasts two months. In addition to that, the satisfaction towards the experience and guidance of tutors is also low ($M=1.80$). Even though guiding teachers will be appointed by universities and kindergartens,

the guidance will be casual for unclear responsibility and rights, undefined guidance thought and insufficient supervision force. However, under such circumstances, students still think that probation and internship contribute great for cultivating teaching ability in kindergartens ($M=2.88$). The satisfaction of the pertinence with future employment is still large ($M=2.68$), which can reflect students' emphasis and desire for practices teaching.

2. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT CHINESE PRESCHOOL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS EDUCATION PROBLEMS FROM STUDENTS' SATISFACTION

2.1 Lacking Care for Students

Students are one of the main bodies of education and all work in schools, such as curriculum provision, teaching management and practical training etc., is centered by students. In fact, nevertheless, schools lack the care for students and the dominant position of students is not reflected. In recent years, under the background that Chinese preschool education has prosperous development, some schools expand their enrollment of students despite their real conditions. The sharply increased number of students makes the soft and hard resources in shortage. For example, the number of teachers with good professional skills is limited so that students can not have enough guidance; the number of pianos and dancing rooms is insufficient and students should use equipment in turns in a limited period of time. However, the lacking of fundamental learning facilities affects the learning results of students and causes students' dissatisfaction. However, the phenomenon of expanding enrollment still exists. In fact, the continuous expanding enrollment, the number of students is far beyond the capacity of internship bases. In order to reduce the pressure of schools, students have to seek for internship opportunities by themselves and they can get scores through certificates from kindergartens. In order to seek for development and convenience, schools do not hesitate to ignore the right demands of students. How can students be care for? There is another circumstance that teachers are taken as the center: the curriculum provision is conducted for the convenience of teachers without any consideration of students' learning demands; the training scheme has provided various selective courses, while the actual opening ones can be counted; besides that, the teaching content is decided by teachers, while students can do noting but sit and listen in the classroom passively. To prepare for examinations, students should recite the content of "ranges" circled by teachers and lack their initiative in learning. Since education is focused on the requirements of teachers and schools, the demands, rights and initiative of students are abandoned.

2.2 Lacking the Care for Whole Person

The component of students' life can be "cognition, emotion, will and behavior" or "moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetics and labor education" and can also be "technology, spirit". Any kind of expression manifests the abundance and integration of life. However, in the social development, Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education puts the emphasis on "employment". In order to improve the employment rate, the teaching of knowledge and training of skills is taken the key points. However, the spiritual pursuit of human beings and the care for students' whole person education are lacked.

At present, there are two orientations of Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education. The first is knowledge orientation and the teaching of knowledge is considered as the core part of education. It is mostly applied by universities which take teaching students independent situations and commonly used education theories as the main task, but ignore the cultivation of students' ability, teachers' ethics, dream and belief etc., Another is technology orientation, which emphasizes on students' master of skilled in future teachings. The main target is to cultivate skillful teachers familiar with teaching, which puts the emphasis on technologies, but care little about knowledge, teachers' moral, dream and belief. It is mostly chosen by most preschool education schools and vocational technical schools. It tends to build and train students "from up to down" and "from outside to inside". The two orientations and three kinds of schools focus on either knowledge transference or technical skills training. However, all of them ignore students' spirit, emotion, moral and belief and also the complete care for students' life. The result is that students can not experience the happiness from exploration and findings, can not enjoy the joyful of formation of thought and also can not have the interests in learning and work. It leads to students' lack of enthusiasm and motivation for study and their education attitude towards children's education in future.

2.3 Shortage of the Consideration for Education Situation

The situation is one of the main features of education and teachers' work. The recognition of education problems and judgment for what can be done and what to do are constrained by specific circumstances. It is useless to talk about education beyond real circumstances. However, the current Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education is far from actual education circumstances. It can be reflected in the following aspects: firstly, the education content comes from the textbook which simply, logistically and systematically presents knowledge, which is far from the actual situation of education and the lively life. Secondly, classroom teaching is taken as the main teaching method, which mostly take single and one-side teaching as the main methods and lacks

the communication between students and teachers and the initiative exploration and thinking of students; skills oriented education focuses on training, but ignores the self-examination of teaching circumstances and behaviors. Thirdly, the evaluation of students mainly applied the method of checking text knowledge, but ignore the generation, obtainment and utilization circumstances. The evaluation is rigid and students' practical problem-solving ability can not be evaluated. Fourthly, practical teaching is intended to provide students with the platform which stimulates the real field of preschool education. However, the serious shortage of practical education makes students loss the rare opportunities to communicate with children, parents and teachers in kindergartens, which results in students lack of observation, experience, analysis and thinking of actual education circumstances. It can be inferred that the consideration of education circumstances is lacked in current Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education. Besides that, it also ignores the actual experience and understanding of students in education fields—classroom environment and the kindergarten activity fields. On one hand, students' knowledge, skills and education practices are separated, which causes students do not know what to do in actual education circumstances; on the other hand, students are lack of the actual experience in education circumstances so that they can not have the feelings of teachers in kindergarten and it is difficult for them to form recognition and love for preschool education and the position of being kindergarten teachers.

3. SEEKING FOR CHINESE PRESCHOOL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS EDUCATION PATH

Since the final target of education is the care for human beings so that Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education should provide students with enough attention.

3.1 Determine the Value of "Students Orientation"

Education is equipped with the connatural function and social function. However, "the connatural function of education is the foundation of education social function. Without the connatural function, there is no social function of education. The relationship between the two is continuation and cause and effect, instead of two parallel functions (Wang, 1983)." As the social practices activity for developing human beings, the final target of education is to cultivate talent so that education should insist the principle of students oriented and students' development originated. Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education should take students' development as the orientation to realize the transference of the main body from schools and teachers to students and make students the dominant position in education.

Firstly, as the fundamental requirement, "Students oriented" requires students' development, which can be taken the principle for the evaluation of education effects. The principles, paths and strategies of Chinese preschool pre-service teachers education should take students' development as the guidance and focus on students acquiring knowledge, improving ability, perfecting personality and enriching emotions; which can not only meet students' current development demands, but also lay good foundation for future development. Secondly, the subjectivity of students should be strengthened, which is the internal requirements for "students orientation". Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education should focus on the cultivation of students' subjective consciousness, stimulation of students' subjective enthusiasm, mobility of students' subject initiate and finally realize transformation of the education from others to self-education. Especially in teaching process, students should be encouraged to have initiative participation so that students can experience the generation and finding of knowledge and the proposal and solution to questions. Students can learn to study and think in the process. Besides that, the value of providing services for students should be strengthened, which is the external reflection of "students' orientation". Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education should manifest the service principle, strengthen service functions and guarantee the fundamental benefits of students, realizing the transformation form "education orientation" to "service orientation". Education and management work should solve problems from the reality and sincerely provide services and solve problems for students. For example, the learning resources, such as books, piano rooms and activity rooms should be sufficient to provide fundamental learning conditions; improve the quality of resources, such as curriculums and qualification of teachers and enhance students' development.

3.2 Turning into Comprehensive "Whole Person Education"

The one-side employment education can not lay firm foundation for students' comprehensive and freedom development in future. Based on future society which may be full of infinite possibilities, the comprehensive "whole person education" prompts to cultivate students with the possibility of multi-development, the potential of multi-development and the foundation of various qualities. On the foundation, Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education should combine knowledge of various subjects, increase the categories of public elementary courses, widen the range of curriculum, enlarge the percentage of self-regulated courses and reflect comprehensiveness to establish students a platform with comprehensive, self-regulated and personality development.

The comprehensive "whole person education" requires Chinese preschool pre-service teachers education not

only provides students with knowledge and skills, but also the cultivation of students' abundant life and the forecasting spirit in order to realize the care for students' whole person. As the first ring of teachers' education and professional development, besides teaching professional knowledge and training professional skills to equip students with the fundamental conditions for the job, preschool pre-service teachers education should also focus on the spiritual pursuits, such as the cultivation of teachers' moral, ambition and dreams etc., to realize the whole person development of students. Meanwhile, during education, students' vocational feeling should be nurtured, the recognition of the career should be cultivated, the dream and enthusiasm of the career should be lightened, the awareness and ability of lifelong studying should be established and the initiative awareness of reflection of education practices, which can provide professional development motivation, keep the continuousness of professional ability development, lay foundation for future development and manifest the care for whole life.

3.3 Establishing "Experience-Inspiration" Teaching Mode

Students' internal psychological structure has the integrity and needs the participation of cognition, emotion, will and behavior; education is the practical activity aimed for the cultivation of person and should be implemented in situations. Therefore, the development of students is greatly depended on the actual understanding, experience and practices of students in real education environment. During the process, students will feel the environment with their heart and soul, the knowledge is injected into their life and the learning process is expanded into deeper psychological range. On the foundation, Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education should establish the mode of "experience- inspiration: to make students understand, experience, communicate and inspire from the actual circumstances. It is not the denying of classroom teaching, but requiring education strategies and organization forms in knowledge sharing, cases research and learning community etc., should be strengthened to prompt students' development from communication with teachers and classmates.

On the other hand, based on the integration requirements of teachers' education, the education form is transferred from closed and single university education to the open form and preschool teachers' cultivation organizations are strengthening the cooperation with primary and middle schools and kindergartens and the linkage mechanism is established with kindergartens. In fact, the establishment of linkage mechanism provides wider space for "experience-inspiration" teaching mode. Besides that, Chinese preschool pre-service teachers' education should provide students with more opportunities to have earlier participation in education practices and communication with teachers in kindergartens, parents and children. Students will be able to integrate in education places and understand, experience, reflect and get inspiration from actual circumstances. Through the participation in the interaction with children, communication with teachers and parents and cooperation with partners, students can experience all kinds of feelings as a teacher in kindergarten, get aware of the innocence and kind heart of children, understand education methods and wisdom of teachers, find the problems and solutions in actual education and gradually generate individual practices wisdom, form and improve their own education ability.

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