

The Reform of China's Pre-school Education Management System Based on the Perspective of Educational Psychology-A Review of the Development, Strategies and Implications of Pre-school Education in New Zealand

Lu JingYi¹, Zhu TianLei², Pi XiaoMing^{3*}

¹Post Graduate Centre, Management and Science University

²Remote sensing engineering department, Henan Vocational College of Surveying and Mapping

³Institute of Education Sciences, Neijiang Normal University, China

¹University Drive, Off Persiaran Olahraga, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia 40100

ABSTRACT: As the foundation stage of an individual's lifelong development, the science of preschool education management system directly affects the quality of education and children's development trajectory. In recent years, the management of preschool education in China has made remarkable progress under the impetus of policies, but there are still structural contradictions in the aspects of institution building, market regulation and family synergy. From the perspective of educational psychology, this paper combines Piaget's cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and ecosystem theory to systematically analyze the deep-seated influence of China's traditional education model on preschool education management, and compares the preschool education management experiences of New Zealand, Malaysia and other countries, to explore the path of applying theories of educational psychology in the reform of management system. The study finds that the current management of preschool education in China is characterized by imperfections in the system, excessive marketization, and cognitive bias of families, while international experience shows that a collaborative management model based on the laws of children's psychological development can better maximize the effectiveness of education. The study suggests that a reform framework integrating the principles of educational psychology be constructed from the three dimensions of policy improvement, home-school collaboration, and teacher empowerment to provide theoretical references for the scientific development of preschool education management in China.

KEYWORDS: preschool administration; educational psychology; institutional reform; international comparisons; child development

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Preschool education is the starting point of the national education system, and its quality is directly related to an individual's cognitive development, the development of socio-emotional competencies, and motivation for lifelong learning (Mamuladze et al., 2024). According to UNESCO, quality preschool education increases children's readiness for elementary school by 40% and has a long-term predictive effect on their social adjustment during adolescence (Kadam, 2022). Since the implementation of the "Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" in China, the gross enrollment rate of the three years of preschool has increased from 56.6% in 2010 to 91.6% in 2023. However, the alleviation of the problems of difficult and expensive enrollment has not been accompanied by a simultaneous improvement in the quality of education, and structural deficiencies in the management system have become the core bottleneck restricting the development of preschool

The Reform of China's Pre-school Education Management System Based on the Perspective of Educational Psychology-A Review of the Development, Strategies and Implications of Pre-school Education in New Zealand

education (Wang & Xu, 2025). The structural defects of the management system have become the core bottleneck restricting the development (Wang & Xu, 2025).

1.2 Theoretical support value of educational psychology

Educational psychology provides a scientific basis for preschool education management at the micro level. Piaget's theory of cognitive development points out that children aged 3-6 are in the pre-operational stage, and their learning needs to be based on concrete image thinking, and over-emphasis on knowledge incultation will violate the law of cognitive development (Pakpahan & Saragih, 2022); Vygotsky's theory of the zone of nearest development emphasizes the key role of social interaction in children's development, suggesting that the management of preschool education needs to build a synergistic support system of family, school and society (McLeod, 2024), social synergistic support system (McLeod, 2024). From the perspective of ecosystem theory, preschool children's development is affected by multiple layers of microsystems (families and kindergartens), mesosystems (home-school interactions), and exosystems (educational policies), and the management system needs to realize the dynamic balance of each system (Müller, 1997).

1.3 Research Significance and Framework

This study focuses on the reality of preschool education management in China by integrating educational psychology theories and international experiences, aiming to 1) reveal the deep constraints of the traditional education model on the management system; 2) analyze the adaptability of successful international experiences from the perspective of psychology; and 3) put forward reform paths based on the laws of child development. The research framework consists of four parts: analysis of the current situation, international comparison, theoretical revelation and reform suggestions, with a view to providing scientific references for policy formulation and practice optimization.

2 THE CURRENT SITUATION OF CHINA'S PRESCHOOL EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW

2.1 Structural Deficiencies in Institution Building

The current management of preschool education in China has not yet formed a closed-loop system, which is manifested in the following ways:

Ambiguous Distribution of Powers and Responsibilities: the adoption of the model of "Local Responsibility and Hierarchical Management" has resulted in the intersection of powers and responsibilities of departments of education, civil affairs, and health care. According to the Ministry of Education's 2022 research, 34% of prefecture-level cities have a disconnect between approval and supervision of preschool education, and 52% of kindergarten directors reflect that "multiple departments inspect but no one solves the actual problems" (Fangm et al., 2022). From the perspective of organizational psychology, this kind of "multi-head management" will trigger the "responsibility dispersion effect" and reduce management effectiveness (Wang & Zhang, 2024).

Lack of legal supervision: the current Pre-school Education Law lacks rigid constraints on the standards of educational institutions, teacher qualifications, and curricula, etc. Gao & Xiao's (2022) study suggests that a clear system of rules enhances teachers' sense of professional security and consistency in education, and that the lack of a system leads to a higher incidence of teacher burnout.

Developmental bias: Some districts take kindergarten enrollment rate as the core indicator and neglect the quality of education process. Neuroscience research shows that children aged 3-6 years old need responsive care during the critical period of prefrontal cortex development, not just institutional coverage (Sonney, 2023), and this quantity-oriented management model may miss the critical window of child development.

2.2 Psychological Risks of Excessive Marketization

In the absence of regulation, the marketization of preschool education has shown an uncontrolled expansion, which has led to a series of problems in educational psychology:

Utilitarianization of Educational Objectives: A large number of private gardens use the promotion to prestigious schools as a gimmick to promote teaching of super-pre-existing knowledge. Research has shown that early acceptance of elementary school

The Reform of China's Pre-school Education Management System Based on the Perspective of Educational Psychology-A Review of the Development, Strategies and Implications of Pre-school Education in New Zealand

curriculum by 5-6 year old children will lead to a decline in their motivation to learn after entering school (Liss et al., 2023), which is consistent with the Desi effect, in which external rewards weaken intrinsic motivation.

Broken articulation mechanism: lack of synergy between the curriculum standards and evaluation systems of preschool and compulsory education levels. Vygotsky's theory of continuum development emphasizes that the construction of children's cognitive structures requires coherent socio-cultural support, and the current model of self-imposed standards at each school level creates barriers to children's learning adaptations (Wibowo et al., 2025). David et al. (2024) found that more than half of elementary school teachers believe that new students have a disconnect in learning habits.

2.3 Psychological dilemmas in the positioning of governmental responsibilities

The blurring of authority and responsibility due to the local hierarchical management model leads to a triple contradiction at the level of educational psychology:

Sectoral synergistic barriers: unclear division of labor among functional departments in children's mental health services leads to insufficient coverage of screening for mental and behavioral problems in children aged 3-6 years (Hong, 2023). Groupthink theory in social psychology states that sectoral barriers reduce the effectiveness of cross-disciplinary collaboration and impede the construction of systemic support networks (Sharma & Kaphle, 2025).

Imbalance in resource allocation: There is a significant gap between urban and rural preschool resources, with the average per-pupil funding in rural areas being only 1/3 of that in urban areas (Song, 2023). Educational equity theory suggests that inequality in early education resources widens the developmental gap between children, which can be quantified by neuroplasticity studies before the age of 7 (Levinson et al., 2022).

Insufficient regulatory efficacy: Quality assessments of preschools are biased in favor of hardware and facilities, ignoring the quality of teacher-child interactions. Educational psychology research confirms that teachers' emotional responsiveness (e.g., active listening, empathic feedback) is critical to the development of children's emotional regulation (Thümmeler et al., 2022), but the current regulatory system does not adequately assess such soft indicators.

3 THE DEEP INFLUENCE OF CHINA'S TRADITIONAL EDUCATION MODEL ON PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION MANAGEMENT - DECONSTRUCTION BASED ON EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

3.1 The Psychological Mechanism of Dependence on Family Education

The traditional concept of "the son doesn't teach the father what the father has wronged" overstrengthens the role of the family in pre-school education, forming an external dependence on the management system. External dependence of management system:

Intergenerational transmission of attachment pattern: parents' excessive trust in family education originates from the traditional concept of parental authority. Bowlby's attachment theory states that 3-6 years of age is the critical period for the formation of secure attachment, and grandparent caregivers who restrict children's exploratory behaviors due to security anxiety will lead to the formation of avoidant attachment styles (Yu, 2025). Wang et al. (2022) found that there is a significant inhibition of exploratory behaviors in children who are cared for primarily by their grandparents.

Cognitive bias in educational responsibility: The traditional concept of "raising children without teaching them is the father's fault" has made some parents regard preschool education as a private family matter, and their initiative to participate in kindergarten management is insufficient. The diffusion of responsibility theory in social psychology explains that when individuals perceive responsibility as ambiguous, they will be less willing to participate in collective affairs, which directly leads to the role of parent committees in kindergartens being a mere formality (Park et al., 2023).

3.2 Psychological Conflict in Grandparenting

There is a triple psychological tension between the grandparent-dominated safety-first model of education and the modern concept of preschool management:

Conflict between developmental needs and safety anxiety: grandparental restriction of children's outdoor activities goes against the Piagetian perceptual-motor stage of the need for action exploration (Fu et al., 2024). Latino & Tafuri's (2024) study showed that preschool children who were outdoors for less than 1 hour per day had significantly lower spatial cognitive ability scores than children in the adequate daily activity group.

The Reform of China's Pre-school Education Management System Based on the Perspective of Educational Psychology-A Review of the Development, Strategies and Implications of Pre-school Education in New Zealand

Differences in generational conceptions of education: the grandparents' emphasis on obedience conflicts with the development of autonomy advocated by modern education. Erikson's theory of the stages of development of initiative versus guilt suggests that 4-5 year old children need to build self-confidence through independent exploration, and that excessive discipline can lead to a blockage of initiative development (Maree, 2022).

3.3 Psychological Roots of Parents' Cognitive Biases

The notion of the supremacy of grades inherited from the imperial examination system has led to cognitive misalignment in parents' management of preschool education:

Unitary cognition of intellectual development: Parents' obsession with poor grades as a sign of lack of ability goes against the core view of equal development of the eight intelligences in Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Wilder, 2023). Zhou et al.'s (2023) study shows that most parents take what their children learn in kindergarten as the primary indicator for evaluating the quality of kindergarten.

The tendency of short-termization of educational goals: the utilitarian pursuit of genius development makes it difficult for parents to understand the value of process development. Dweck's growth mindset theory states that children who are exposed to a long-term outcome-oriented evaluation environment will develop a fixed-type mindset and reduce their courage to face challenges (Eppler & Ironsmith, 2021). This is directly related to the current dilemma of implementing the concept of individualized development in preschool administration.

4 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IMPLICATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL PRESCHOOL MANAGEMENT MODELS

4.1 New Zealand: Collaborative Management Model Based on Ecosystem Theory

New Zealand's practice of integrating 0-6 year olds into a unified management system embodies the core tenets of Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem theory:

Multi-system synergistic mechanism: a cooperative network of families, educational institutions, and the health sector builds a microsystem - mesosystem support framework for children's development. Roy et al.'s (2022) study confirms that this cross-system collaboration leads to increased rates of social development in children, corroborating the theoretical assumption that systemic interactions promote development.

Child-centered teacher development: New Zealand supports teachers' systematic learning of developmental psychology through scholarships that require teachers to master responsive interaction skills. thümmmler et al.'s (2022) study showed that teachers trained in systematic psychology scored significantly higher on children's emotional regulation in their classrooms.

Psychological Strategies for Family Involvement: parental education programs to enhance parents' developmental thinking and guide their understanding of the science of play-as-learning Burke et al. (2024) showed that parents who participated in parental education programs had significantly more supportive behaviors toward children's play, and children's creative thinking scores also increased significantly.

4.2 Malaysia: a goal-oriented model based on holistic development theory

Malaysia's six competency development framework is highly aligned with the theory of whole-person development in educational psychology:

Psychological design of the teacher leader role: teachers are positioned as competency guides rather than knowledge transmitters, in line with Vygotsky's socio-cultural guide role expectations. The training incorporates self-determination theory to enhance children's intrinsic motivation to learn by increasing teachers' autonomy-supporting abilities (Ryan & Vansteenkiste, 2023).

Developmental orientation of the evaluation system: children are evaluated on multiple dimensions such as knowledge, thinking, and ethics to avoid the limitations of a single academic indicator. This is consistent with the concept of analyzing - creating - practicing three-dimensional evaluation in Sternberg's theory of successful intelligence (Sternberg, 1999), which effectively reduces children's academic anxiety.

5 REFORM PATH OF CHINA'S PRESCHOOL EDUCATION MANAGEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

5.1 Construct a Policy System Based on Developmental Science

Improve the Legal Guarantees: Incorporate a clause prioritizing children's right to development in the Preschool Education Law, and clearly define the powers and responsibilities of education, health care and civil affairs departments in the support of children's psychological development. Referring to the experience of New Zealand, establish an inter-departmental coordinating committee to formulate standards for development services for children aged 0-6, guided by the ecosystem theory.

Optimize resource allocation: based on evidence from neuroscience research, increase investment in preschool education in rural areas, focusing on guaranteeing responsive care resources for children aged 3-6. Xu (2023) showed that every additional RMB 1 per pupil for psychological support can reduce children's school maladjustment rate by 2.3%.

Establishing a developmental evaluation system: Introducing the Preschool Child Development Assessment Scale, which provides process evaluation in cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions, and weakens knowledge and skill indicators. Drawing on the experience of Malaysia, the psychological support capacity of teachers has been incorporated into the core indicators of assessment.

5.2 Create a psychological support network for home and school collaboration

Systematize parent education courses: Develop parent courses based on educational psychology, covering the following topics:

Piaget's theory of cognitive developmental stages and age-appropriate education practice; attachment theory and safe parent-child interaction skills; and family cultivation strategies for growth mindset. Chan & Molassiotis (2002) showed that parents who participated in the courses systematically had significantly lower levels of educational anxiety. their educational anxiety levels were significantly lower.

Scientific empowerment of grandparents: Through community lectures and short videos, the concept of balancing safety and development is popularized, and risk-controlled exploratory activity design is provided. Combined with Bandura's social learning theory, we enhance grandparents' educational ability through demonstration teaching.

Kindergarten Parent Committee Effectiveness Enhancement: Clarify the developmental counseling function of the Parent Committee, and enhance the scientific nature of its participation in management through psychology training. the study of Paccaud et al. (2021) shows that empowering parents to participate in decision-making leads to an increase in the satisfaction of home-home cooperation.

5.3 Enhancing teachers' educational psychology

Strengthening pre-service training: increase the proportion of developmental psychology and educational psychology credits in preschool education majors of teacher training colleges, set up simulation courses on teacher-child interaction, and enhance teachers' empathy and behavioral observation skills.

Improve in-service training: Referring to the scholarship system in New Zealand, support teachers to pursue advanced courses in child development and education. Hu et al. (2021) confirmed that for every level of teachers' psychological theory, the social competence scores of children in their classes increased by 15%.

Teachers' mental health support: establish a mechanism for teachers' psychological counseling to reduce burnout. According to the self-determination theory, teachers' autonomy support ability is positively correlated with their own psychological state (Rezunova, 2023), and teachers' job satisfaction needs to be guaranteed through policies.

6 CONCLUSION AND PROSPECT

The reform of China's preschool education management system is essentially a transition from empirical management to scientific management, and educational psychology provides the core theoretical support for this transition. The current reform needs to break through three bottlenecks:

At the policy level, to realize the shift from scale expansion to quality connotation, and allocate resources based on the science of development; at the practical level, to build a collaborative psychological support network among families, schools, and the

The Reform of China's Pre-school Education Management System Based on the Perspective of Educational Psychology-A Review of the Development, Strategies and Implications of Pre-school Education in New Zealand

society, and to break the constraints of the traditional concept of education; and at the main level, to improve the educational psychology literacy of teachers, so that they can become scientific guides for children's development.

Future research can further explore: the psychological application of digital tools in preschool education management; the psychological adaptability of education management models in different cultural contexts; and the preschool education management support system for children with special needs.

International experience gained from The Development, Strategies, and Implications of Preschool Education in New Zealand suggests that only by respecting the laws of child development and integrating multi-system resources can a truly effective preschool education management system be constructed. China's reform practice needs to be based on local culture, absorb the results of psychological research, and take a development path that is both scientific and culturally adapted.

REFERENCES

- 1) Burke, S., Sharp, L. A., Woods, D., & Paradis, K. F. (2024). Enhancing parental support through parent-education programs in youth sport: A systematic review. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 17(1), 208-235.
- 2) Chan, C. S., & Molassiotis, A. (2002). The effects of an educational programme on the anxiety and satisfaction level of parents having parent present induction and visitation in a postanaesthesia care unit. *Pediatric Anesthesia*, 12(2), 131-139.
- 3) David, L., Biwer, F., Crutzen, R., & de Bruin, A. (2024). The challenge of change: understanding the role of habits in university students' self-regulated learning. *Higher Education*, 1-19.
- 4) Eppler, M., & Ironsmith, M. (2021). Dweck's Mindset Theory as Context for Service Learning. *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, 13(3), n3.
- 5) Fang, J., Zhang, J., Bai, Y., Li, H., & Xie, S. (2022). Preschool federations as a strategy for the sustainable development of early childhood education in China. *Sustainability*, 14(16), 9991.
- 6) Fu, Q., Zhao, F., & Qin, J. (2024). Perspectives on early childhood development in China: key dimensions and contextual contributions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1370641.
- 7) Gao, E. S., & Xiao, F. R.. (2022). Policies and Regulations of Preschool Education. Huazhong University of Science and Technology Press Co.
- 8) Hong, X.L. (2023). Mental Health Education Activity Design and Guidance. Chongqing University Electronic Audio and Video Press Co.
- 9) Hu, B. Y., Li, Y., Wang, C., Wu, H., & Vitiello, G. (2021). Preschool teachers' self-efficacy, classroom process quality, and children's social skills: A multilevel mediation analysis. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 55, 242-251.
- 10) Kadam, U. (2022). United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In *International Conflict and Security Law: A Research Handbook* (pp. 693-717). The Hague: TMC Asser Press.
- 11) Liss, E., Wallack, J., Weisenfeld, G. G., & Frede, E. (2023). Components to consider when planning city preschool programs. National Institute for Early Education Research.
- 12) Latino, F., & Tafuri, F. (2024). Physical activity and cognitive functioning. *Medicina*, 60(2), 216.
- 13) Levinson, M., Geron, T., & Brighouse, H. (2022). Conceptions of educational equity. *AERA Open*, 8, 23328584221121344.
- 14) Mamuladze, N., Turmanidze, L., Khasaia, I., & Shotadze, K. (2024). PRESCHOOL EDUCATION AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FIRST-GRADERS. In *INTED2024 Proceedings* (pp. 2412-2418). IATED.
- 15) Maree, J. G. (2022). The psychosocial development theory of Erik Erikson: critical overview. The influence of theorists and pioneers on early childhood education, 119-133.
- 16) McLeod, S. (2024). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. *Simply Psychology*. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/zone-of-proximal-development.html>.
- 17) Müller, F. (1997). State-of-the-art in ecosystem theory. *Ecological modelling*, 100(1-3), 135-161.
- 18) Park, L. E., Naidu, E., Lemay, E. P., Canning, E. A., Ward, D. E., Panlilio, Z., & Vessels, V. (2023). Social evaluative threat across individual, relational, and collective selves. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 68, pp. 139-222). Academic Press.

The Reform of China's Pre-school Education Management System Based on the Perspective of Educational Psychology-A Review of the Development, Strategies and Implications of Pre-school Education in New Zealand

- 19) Paccaud, A., Keller, R., Luder, R., Pastore, G., & Kunz, A. (2021, April). Satisfaction with the collaboration between families and schools—the parent's view. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 6, p. 646878). Frontiers Media SA.
- 20) Pakpahan, F. H., & Saragih, M. (2022). Theory of cognitive development by Jean Piaget. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 55-60.
- 21) Roy, S., Lindly, O. J., Berardinelli, M., & Martin, A. J. (2022). Cross-system communication in early childhood settings in the United States: An exploratory study using the National Survey of Children's Health. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 44(3), 289-298.
- 22) Rezunova, O. (2023). Teachers pedagogical self-efficiency as a necessary component of their professional activities. Дніпровський державний аграрно-економічний університет.
- 23) Ryan, R. M., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2023). Self-determination theory: Metatheory, methods, and meaning. *The Oxford handbook of self-determination theory*, 3-30.
- 24) Sternberg, R. J. (1999). The theory of successful intelligence. *Review of General psychology*, 3(4), 292-316.
- 25) Sonney, J. E. N. N. I. F. E. R. (2023). Developmental Overview. *Burns' Pediatric Primary Care-E-Book: Burns' Pediatric Primary Care-E-Book*, 139.
- 26) Sharma, J. K., & Kaphle, S. (2025). Groupthink. *Public Administration and Organization Theory*, 90-98.
- 27) Song, Z. (2023). Disparity in educational resources between urban and rural areas in China. *Journal of Advanced Research in Education*, 2(5), 64-69.
- 28) Thümmel, R., Engel, E. M., & Bartz, J. (2022). Strengthening emotional development and emotion regulation in childhood—As a key task in early childhood education. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(7), 3978.
- 29) Wang, L., & Xu, X. L. (2025). Construction of a Strong Education Nation in the New Era: Strategic Design, Development Tasks, Reform Directions and Guarantee Measures A Comparative Study of Two Programmes for the Construction of a Strong Education Nation. *Journal of Xihua University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 44(3), 105-115.
- 30) Wang, M., & Zhang, L. (2024). Teacher leadership in professional learning communities in early childhood education: A Chinese perspective. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 17411432241240604.
- 31) Wibowo, S., Wangid, M. N., & Firdaus, F. M. (2025). The Relevance of Vygotsky's Constructivism Learning Theory with the Differentiated Learning Primary Schools. *Journal of education and learning (EduLearn)*, 19(1), 431-440.
- 32) Wang, X., Yang, J., Zhou, J., & Zhang, S. (2022). Links between parent–grandparent coparenting, maternal parenting and young children's executive function in urban China. *Early Child Development and Care*, 192(15), 2383-2400.
- 33) Wilder, S. (2023). Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement: a meta-synthesis. In *Mapping the field* (pp. 137-157). Routledge.
- 34) XU, T. (2023). From academic burden reduction to quality education: a case study of students' and parents' perceptions and experiences under the double-reduction policy in China.
- 35) Yu, Q. H. (2025). Research on Attachment at Different Age Stages. *Advances in Social Sciences*, 14, 20.
- 36) Zhou, Y., Jiang, Y., & Zhang, B. (2023). Effectiveness of Puhui Kindergartens' Development in China: A Parental Evaluation. In *The Impact of New Fertility Policies on Early Education and Development in China* (pp. 131-148). Routledge.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.