

# Exploration of Problems and Countermeasures in Kindergarten Life Education

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**Abstract:** Life education holds paramount importance for young children, enabling them to construct their individual lives and realize the value of life in the process of knowing and experiencing life. Kindergartens possess inherent advantages for the implementation of life education, but practical challenges hinder the effective execution of life education within these educational settings. Thus, this study starts from the problems of life education in kindergartens, thereby unveiling the existence of various predicaments in this realm, such as lack of conceptualization of teachers, dearth of comprehensive curricula, absence of a robust evaluation framework, and disparities in education between urban and rural areas. Through a comprehensive analysis of subjective and objective factors, it is believed that the primary determinants can be attributed to the profound influence exerted by the Chinese traditional concept of life and mortality, as well as the paucity of external support within the life education. An exploration into corresponding strategies is undertaken: firstly, enhancing teacher training to augment their proficiency in life education; secondly, standardizing the curriculum content to establish a comprehensive framework for life education; thirdly, devising an evaluative system for life education through multiple assessment methodologies; and fourthly, fostering mutual learning between urban and rural areas to facilitate the localized implementation of life education in both settings.

**Keywords:** Life Education, Kindergarten, Countermeasures

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## 1. Introduction

Life education was first proposed by American scholar Jay Donnell Walters in response to the growing mental health problems of youth at the time, including drug abuse and suicide. It is an educational activity that advocates a happy and successful life for students and aims to enhance their spiritual life [1]. It originated in the U. S. and was developed in Britain, Japan and other countries. At the end of the 20th century, the United Kingdom began to pay attention to life education. They established life education courses, defined life education content, and identified life education approaches. In Japan, in the teaching guidelines of 1989, respecting human life and cultivating a spirit of respect for others were set as the goals of life education [2].

China's research on life education can be traced back to the

relevant theoretical and practical explorations in Taiwan and Hong Kong, China in the late 1990s. Taiwan was the first to conduct research on life education and put it into practice, extending it from junior high school and high school to elementary school and university, and forming a complete system of life education. In Hong Kong, on the other hand, life education is geared towards all age groups, with both life education programs for children aged 4-6 years old and teaching materials for the elderly [3]. In the 21st century, life education was introduced and promoted in the mainland, and scholars launched a series of studies on it, which were continuously improved and enriched in theory and practice, and the areas involved began to expand to pre-schools [4]. Since 2019, in the wake of the COVID-19, the value orientation and educational practice of life education have taken on new connotations and requirements, and life education-related research has since set off a boom [5].

Under the changing background of the times, China's rapid economic development has entered a new stage, where the satisfaction of material life and the lack of spiritual needs form a contradiction, and people's outlook on life and values are under attack. The social impact brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic is equally objective. Under the dual pressure of self and society, adults' life education for children may be misplaced, thereby giving rise to a series of social problems, such as the phenomenon of a decrease in the age of suicide. The fall of young lives is alarming. Advocating for life education and emphasizing its significance, as well as the cultivation of independent individuals who love life, have become the needs of personal development and social development.

## 2. Connotation of Life Education for Young Children

Since the exploration of life education in the preschool education sector, the connotation level, value and meaning, and goal orientation of life education have been continuously enriched and sublimated. By conducting a search on CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) for life education, we found that the earliest research on life education in China's preschool education sector was conducted by Tang Jingfen, a scholar from East China Normal University, who emphasized that life education is to enable children to acquire the concepts and experiences of life sciences in the early stages, feel the importance of the harmony and unity between human beings and nature, and stimulate children's interest in learning life sciences so that they will be aware of the importance of the life sciences [6]. Scholar Yue Yaping puts forward life care and life understanding from the perspective of life value, emphasizing the ontological significance of life, and taking the pursuit of the ontological value of life as the origin of thinking in early childhood education [7]. Scholar Liu Xiaohong discussed the connotation of life value orientation in early childhood education, including the law of life development of young children as the logical starting point of life value orientation; life emotion education as the core content; letting children enter nature as the requirement; realizing healthy and harmonious physical and mental development of young children as the ultimate goal; and giving full play to the characteristics of teachers' love as the fundamental guarantee [8]. Scholars such as Zhou Jufen believe that life education refers to education that helps young children recognize, respect and cherish life, promotes the positive and healthy development of young children's lives, improves the quality of life, and realizes the meaning and value of life [9]. According to Zhang Weimin, the content of life education is to guide or help students to realize the meaning and value of life. Life education is an educational activity that takes life as the object and content of learning, and guides or helps students to know life, cherish life, respect life, appreciate life, develop life, stimulate life, and realize the meaning and value of life [10].

It can be seen that, in the process of continuous exploration,

life education is constantly enriched in its connotation, meaning and orientation, and is gradually expanded into educational activities that are rich in meaning, such as increasing the knowledge of life, experiencing the emotions of life, and realizing the value of life. For young children, it is to educate by life, to experience life as a means, so that young children can construct individual life and realize the value of life from the aspects of life cognition and life ability.

## 3. Analysis of Problems and Causes of Life Education in Kindergartens

### 3.1. Problems

Life education in kindergartens has a unique advantage, and the development of life education is intrinsically feasible and externally supportive [11]. On the one hand, the curious and inquisitive nature of young children provides an opportunity for the development of life education, and their curiosity about life and death is the endogenous logic of life education in kindergartens, so seizing the interest of young children and grasping the growth point of education can make life education land efficiently; on the other hand, the relevant national laws and regulations on education provide strategic support for the implementation of life education. On the other hand, the relevant national education laws and regulations provide strategic support for the implementation of life education, such as the "Learning and Development Guidelines for Children Aged 3-6", "Guidance Outline for Kindergarten Education (Trial)", "Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on the Deepening of Reform and Standardizing the Development of Pre-school Education" and other documents, all of which refer to the need to guarantee the life, health and security of young children. Therefore, the implementation of life education to cultivate children's awareness of life and enhance their life skills is not only a policy requirement but also a strategic necessity.

In fact, in pre-school education, unlike the five education areas of morality, intelligence, physicality, aesthetics and labor, life education has received relatively little attention, and the content of life education in kindergartens is not clear and its scope is relatively vague. Life education in kindergartens basically involves six aspects: health education, safety education, survival education, death education, life knowledge education and life value education [12]. However, the existing education content emphasizes more on safety and health education and neglects the education content of spiritual guidance such as the value of life, knowledge of life and death education [13]. There are a number of problems in the conceptual orientation of life education, the curriculum of life education, the methods of implementation of life education, and the evaluation system of life education, as shown below:

#### 3.1.1. Lack of Conceptualization of Teachers

Life education has a unique role to play in young children's understanding of life, love of life, respect for life, and the

promotion of young children's healthy physical and mental development; education is the process of teacher-student interaction, and life education is the process of life awakening life. In the process of education, teachers' own cognitive conception of life education, degree of attention and knowledge reserve are the basic guarantee for the efficient landing of life education activities in kindergartens. In kindergarten, life education has not yet entered into the educational vision of teachers, and the corresponding educational concepts of teachers are insufficient, and they do not pay enough attention to life education. Relevant research on a kindergarten teacher's view of life, teacher's attitude towards life education, and the status quo of life education carried out by teachers shows that: early childhood teachers have a correct cognition of life and the phenomenon of life, but emotionally do not fully accept some of the normal phenomena of life, and teachers have not yet formed the correct viewpoints and attitudes towards life and death [14]. Teachers have not yet formed a correct attitude towards life and death. Kindergarten life education will be affected by this. On the one hand, teachers will not be able to set an example for children in education. On the other hand, teachers will consciously avoid life and death in the process of education because of their own viewpoints, and they will not be able to seize the opportunity of education to carry out life education activities effectively.

### **3.1.2. Dearth of Comprehensive Curricula**

School education is the main form of education, but at present, the life education curriculum in kindergartens is in a marginalized position and has not yet formed a systematic life education curriculum. On the one hand, there is no complete theoretical system to support life education in preschool education, and on the other hand, front-line teachers lack theoretical and practical knowledge about the construction of life education curriculum, which leads to the absence of life education curriculum in kindergartens. Some studies have pointed out that the kindergarten life education curriculum has problems such as unclear objectives, narrow selection of the content of the kindergarten life education curriculum, and a single form of implementation of the kindergarten life education curriculum [15]. The curriculum of life education in kindergartens is not clear. Specifically manifested in the curriculum to carry out knowledge fragmentation is not systematic, the form of the curriculum is detached from the actual life of young children, young children lack of experience, the curriculum content overlapping with health and safety education. In this case, there is no basis for carrying out educational activities, and it is difficult to carry out activities for teachers; the educational content is monotonous, and the form is single, so it is difficult for young children to be interested, and it is difficult for kindergarten life education to be implemented.

### **3.1.3. Absence of a Robust Evaluation Framework**

At present, the kindergarten life education program mainly creates thematic activities through picture book teaching, animal and plant corners, etc., to increase young children's life

experience and promote their life awareness and ability. In the process of building the life education curriculum, the rationality of the curriculum objectives, the appropriateness of the curriculum content, the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation, and the quality of the curriculum results are the guarantees for the physical and mental development of young children. At present, kindergarten curriculum evaluation has multiple orientations, including different types of process evaluation, outcome evaluation, children's participation in curriculum evaluation, CIPP curriculum evaluation model and so on. The evaluation system of life education program has not been finalized yet. For different types of life education activities and different parts of the activities, the way of evaluating lessons, teachers and children is the key to the construction of kindergarten life education program, which is the guarantee for the implementation of life education in kindergarten.

### **3.1.4. Disparities in Education Between Urban and Rural Areas**

The education gap caused by urban-rural differences is a typical problem in education, and life education is no exception. The difference in material conditions between urban and rural areas creates a gap in the external support for life education between urban and rural areas, and the social and cultural differences between urban and rural areas also lead to differences in the internal experience of children's life knowledge between urban and rural areas.

There is a gap between the external support for life education in urban and rural areas; on the one hand, the corresponding educational and teaching equipment in rural areas is insufficient, and the hardware facilities lag behind those in rural areas. On the other hand, life education for young children in rural areas is weak in theory and practice, and with a relatively low level of teachers, there are fewer studies on life education for young children in rural areas, and there is a lack of relevant guidance for education, so that life education programs are not well developed.

There are differences between rural and urban children in terms of their knowledge of life, which are manifested in terms of the level of cognition, the content of cognition and the way of cognitive expression. Specifically, in terms of cognitive level, urban children's cognition of life is higher than that of rural children; in terms of cognitive content, urban children's knowledge of health sciences is better than that of rural children; in terms of cognitive mode, urban children acquire life cognition through indirect experience, while rural children acquire life cognition through direct experience [16]. In the way of cognition, urban children acquire life cognition through indirect experience and rural children through direct experience. Based on this, there is a gap between urban and rural life education in terms of educational foundation, educational support, and educational direction, and it is necessary to carry out localized life education according to local conditions.

## **3.2. Analysis of Causes**

Based on the above problems the causes can be analyzed

from both subjective and objective aspects.

As far as subjective reasons are concerned, they are mainly manifested in the influence of traditional Chinese concepts of life and death [15]. Since ancient times, under the influence of traditional concepts, China usually avoids talking about death, whether in the family, school or social settings; death is considered a taboo, and people are in awe and fear of death. Even adults are not allowed to talk about death or face it openly. If they do not talk about death, they naturally cannot truly recognize life. Under such circumstances, educators, who are still immature in their own concept of life, usually adopt an evasive attitude when young children ask questions about life and death, for example, to take care of young children's emotions by beautify death, or to avoid embarrassment by avoiding young children's asking questions such as "how was I born". Life education is naturally flawed when it is conducted in isolation from life and death education. Avoiding life and death is not conducive to the establishment of a scientific understanding of life and death among young children, and it does not enable them to form a correct outlook on life.

As far as objective reasons are concerned, they are mainly manifested in the lack of external support for life education. First of all, the lack of teachers' professional knowledge of life education, kindergarten teachers know less about life education, the corresponding in-kindergarten training is less involved in the aspect of life education, teachers do not have the professional knowledge and professional ability to build a life education program, life education can not be efficiently implemented in kindergartens. Secondly, the corresponding policy support for life education is insufficient, and the degree of importance attached to life education is still low. Compared with the five education areas of morality, intelligence, physicality, aesthetics, and labor, life education is now more of an educational concept and educational vision, scattered in different educational areas, and the development of the life education curriculum is not formally put forward. The existing policies only emphasize safety education and health education, and there is no clear policy document to guide how to carry out life education and what kind of life education to carry out. In such a situation, kindergarten teachers and parents do not recognize life education in kindergartens and do not pay enough attention to it. Also, the standard of life education curriculum has not been standardized, and there is no certain standard in the process of constructing the life education curriculum, and teachers have doubts about the goal, content, and implementation pathway of the life education curriculum, which cannot be unified. Finally, there are constraints in the social environment. In the information age, the mass media are developed, and most of the young children come into contact with the network media at an early age. Under the rendering of some online games, violent images and some funereal cultures, young children's cognition is easily influenced, and they may even be harmed in the process of unconscious imitation.

## 4. Strategic Recommendations

### 4.1. *Strengthening Training to Enhance Teachers' Capacity in Life Education*

Kindergartens should regularly carry out life education in-kindergarten training, in the concept of life education, to help teachers to establish a reasonable concept of life and death and its related topics, to deepen the teachers' own thinking about life, and to improve the quality of self-life. In addition, education methods, teachers need to explore more targeted education principles, so that young children can understand life more effectively, while avoiding adverse effects, early childhood teachers can use the appreciation and discussion method, random teaching method for life education for life education. Ultimately, in the realm of curriculum construction, educators undergo comprehensive training encompassing both theoretical foundations and practical strategies to enhance their competence in designing and implementing curricula.

### 4.2. *Standardize the Content and Create a Paradigm for Life Education Courses*

Standardize the content of life education and create a paradigm for life education curricula, so that life education can be more systematized, making it easier for teachers to carry out activities and for young children to learn and absorb. Specifically, it is necessary to standardize the content of life education, clarify the goals of life education, and set up life education curricula. On the one hand, it is necessary to clarify the dimensions of life education, unify the contents, and set up life education goals with reference to the Kindergarten Care and Education Evaluation Guidelines, so that there is a basis for life education to follow. On the other hand, we can draw on existing life education curriculum paradigms to create a life education curriculum with garden-based characteristics, such as the CLC curriculum. That is to say, it is designed and implemented from the three aspects of natural life education, social life education and art education; through the synthesis, interaction and learning in multiple ways and modes, it enables children to feel life and know life in the activities, and then protect life, love life and respect life [17].

### 4.3. *Multiple Evaluations, Building a Life Education Evaluation System*

Based on the concept of life education, build a curriculum evaluation system under the vision of life education. For different types of educational activities, break down different educational links, and carry out accurate evaluation of whether the curriculum objectives are reasonable, whether the curriculum content is appropriate, and whether the implementation of the curriculum is effective. For different subjects, use a variety of evaluation orientations, adopt different evaluation methods, and conduct multiple evaluations on the results of curriculum implementation. Evaluation promotes teaching, evaluation promotes development, so that life education can be truly implemented, so that young children

can truly grow in life awareness, acquire life skills and realize the value of life.

#### **4.4. Drawing on Urban and Rural Areas to Implement Localized Life Education in Urban and Rural Areas**

The urban-rural gap in life education exists objectively; to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas and to promote educational development, it is not feasible to copy the urban education model; what should really be done is to tailor it to local conditions and to analyze specific problems. We should respect the cultural differences between urban and rural areas and objectively evaluate rural life education.

Rural life education is objectively lagging behind urban life education, but there are still places where urban life education cannot reach. The unique educational environment, cultural traditions and curricular resources of rural education are the best breeding ground for life education, and young children in rural areas have unique advantages in the acquisition of direct experience and the feeling of life experience. Urban and rural areas should learn from each other, and urban life education should strengthen young children's acquisition of direct experience and increase their opportunities for life experience. Rural life education strengthens the indirect scientific cognitive education of young children, improves their scientific cognition, and implements more effective and scientific life education on the basis of regional advantages. Both urban and rural life education should take into account their own unique development processes, development problems, development resources, development needs, development environments and development methods, and learn from each other to implement urban and rural localized life education.

## **5. Conclusion**

Young children's love for individual life and respect for other life is a matter of great importance for personal development and social development, and the cultivation of independent individuals who love life is where the needs of personal development and social development lie. Carrying out life education in the early childhood stage is conducive to stimulating young children's respect and love for life and nature, and forming an optimistic and positive concept of life [18]. Kindergarten life education has natural advantages, but due to a series of subjective and objective reasons for the limitations, kindergarten life education has a realistic dilemma. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the reasons behind the real problems and propose corresponding measures to promote the implementation of life education in kindergartens. This study starts from the common problems in the implementation of kindergarten life education, and finds that the implementation of kindergarten life education has the problems of insufficient teachers' educational concepts, lack of curriculum, incomplete evaluation system, and gap between urban and rural education, and then analyzes the reasons and puts forward a series of measures such as strengthening teachers' training, standardizing the content of the curriculum, constructing the

evaluation system, and strength mutual learning between urban and rural areas. Kindergarten life education is also affected by many aspects, and requires attention, support and cooperation from many parties to help young children stimulate life potential, improve life quality and implement life value [19].

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