

Investigating the Implementation of a Kindergarten-Based Curriculum in a Guilin Preschool: A Qualitative Case Study

1.Introduction

In 2024, the Preschool Education Law was officially promulgated, marking China's first legislation specifically regulating preschool education. The law explicitly proposes the educational philosophy that "preschool education should adhere to a child-centred approach," aiming to provide a healthy and equitable educational environment for children's physical and mental development (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2024). The Preschool Education Law not only provides clear guidance for preschool education reform but also reinforces children's central position in education, advancing the development of child-centred educational philosophy. The core spirit of this legislation emphasises that education should be based on children's needs, interests, and developmental stages, transforming the teacher's role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator and supporter (Peng, 2025; Ruan, 2025).

However, before the Preschool Education Law proposed the child-centred educational philosophy, China's preschool education relied predominantly on traditional teacher-led collective instruction models. The traditional kindergarten education model focused on knowledge transmission and skill cultivation, with curriculum content directed by teachers, monotonous teaching activities, and insufficient attention to individual differences amongst children (Zhang & Yu, 2024). Whilst this educational model proved effective during certain periods, with the advancement of educational

theory and society's increasing demand for individualised children's education, the traditional model gradually exposed its limitations. As Li and Chen (2016) pointed out, the traditional collective instruction model neglected children's individual differences and emotional needs, failing to fully stimulate children's initiative in learning and spirit of exploration.

With the transformation of global educational philosophy and deepening research in preschool education, an increasing number of scholars and educational practitioners have begun calling for innovation in traditional curriculum models, proposing child-centred educational approaches. This approach emphasises designing curriculum content according to children's interests, needs, and developmental stages, supporting children's individualised development, and encouraging autonomous learning through exploration and practice (Huang & Wu, 2020). Against this backdrop, kindergarten-based curriculum independently developed by individual kindergartens has gradually entered the field of preschool education. Kindergarten-based curriculum refers to curriculum content independently designed and implemented by kindergartens based on their own educational philosophy, cultural background, and children's needs (Yu, 2002). This curriculum model emphasises flexibility and adaptability, requiring teachers to adjust according to children's actual needs and interests during the teaching process to ensure that each child can develop in the most appropriate educational environment (Wei, 2012).

Although kindergarten-based curriculum has achieved significant results in some regions of China, such as the "Anji Play" in Anji County, Zhejiang Province, play-

based curriculum in Jiangsu Province, and the "Lijin Play" curriculum in Lijin, Shandong Province, these curricula have fully utilised local characteristics and achieved positive teaching outcomes through respecting children's interests and needs and strengthening home-kindergarten cooperation (Niu, 2023). However, as a local city, Guilin still lacks sufficient empirical research and data on the actual implementation of child-centred kindergarten-based curriculum. Whilst preschool education practitioners in Guilin have gradually embraced the "child-centred" curriculum reform in terms of educational philosophy and policy, specific questions remain inadequately researched: how kindergartens in Guilin effectively implement kindergarten-based curriculum in practice, what specific challenges teachers encounter during implementation, and how administrators provide support throughout this process.

To address this research gap, this study selects G Kindergarten in Guilin as its research subject. G Kindergarten is a privately-run kindergarten established 40 years ago, currently operating 12 teaching classes. The kindergarten emphasises the guiding principle of child-centred development and designs teaching activities according to the five developmental domains of children. The kindergarten has introduced various interest-based curricula, emphasises holistic development, and releases children's nature during the teaching process, striving to establish a solid foundation for children's lifelong education (G Kindergarten Admission Prospectus, 2025). Although G Kindergarten emphasises child-centred teaching philosophy in its educational approach and has proposed attempts at characteristic curricula, questions remain

about how these curricula operate in practice, what specific challenges teachers face, and the effectiveness of kindergarten-based curriculum implementation—all of which lack frontline research data. Therefore, selecting G Kindergarten as the research subject enables better understanding of the difficulties and challenges local kindergartens encounter during curriculum reform, thereby providing reference for kindergarten education reform in other regions.

Through in-depth research on G Kindergarten's kindergarten-based curriculum, this study will provide valuable experience for local practice in preschool education and promote the development and improvement of kindergarten-based curriculum in local kindergartens.

2. Literature Review

Kindergarten-based curriculum, as an important component of China's basic education reform, has gradually become a research focus in the preschool education field since 2001. In the literature review chapter, I will systematically examine relevant academic research, introducing Chinese kindergartens, understanding the development process of Chinese kindergarten curriculum, implementation status, challenges faced, and the role teachers play within it. By analysing existing popular research directions concerning this curriculum, identifying gaps in the field, I will propose the research questions and objectives of this study.

2.1 Overview of the Chinese Kindergarten Education System

2.1.1 Organisational Structure of Chinese Kindergartens

Understanding the organisational structure of Chinese kindergartens is crucial for

grasping the implementation context of kindergarten-based curriculum. China's kindergarten system possesses unique organisational forms and operational characteristics that differ significantly from preschool education institutions in Western countries.

In China, kindergartens are primarily classified into three categories: state-run kindergartens, privately-run kindergartens, and enterprise or institutional kindergartens. State-run kindergartens are established and managed through government investment and typically enjoy greater resource support and policy advantages; privately-run kindergartens are operated by social organisations or individuals and often possess greater flexibility in curriculum innovation; enterprise or institutional kindergartens primarily serve the children of their unit's employees, falling between the former two in terms of management and resource allocation (Zheng, 2013). This diversified kindergarten operation system reflects the characteristics of China's educational reform and provides possibilities for the diversified development of kindergarten-based curriculum.

Regarding age grouping, Chinese kindergartens typically establish three grades: junior class (3-4 years), middle class (4-5 years), and senior class (5-6 years) (1996).

Generally, each class functions as a relatively independent unit, maintaining stable teacher-child combinations and fixed classrooms throughout the academic year. This age-grouping model facilitates teachers' in-depth understanding of each child's developmental characteristics but also limits the implementation of mixed-age education to some extent.

Staffing allocation is an important aspect of understanding Chinese kindergarten operations. Chinese kindergartens commonly implement a "two teachers and one caregiver" system, whereby each class is staffed with two full-time teachers and one childcare worker. Full-time teachers are responsible for designing and implementing educational activities—these full-time teachers are what the public generally recognises as kindergarten teachers—whilst childcare workers primarily handle children's daily care, health protection, and environmental maintenance (Shuai, 2023). This division of labour model originally originated in Japan and is deeply rooted in China's educational tradition of "integrating care and education," ensuring both the quality of educational activities and adequate attention to children's daily needs (Xu, 2015).

It should be noted that class size has consistently been a challenge facing Chinese kindergartens. According to the Kindergarten Work Regulations, the appropriate size for each age class should be controlled within a certain range (1996), but actual circumstances often differ due to variations in regional development levels. In economically underdeveloped areas, class sizes frequently exceed prescribed standards due to resource limitations, and this reality of high teacher-student ratios constitutes an important constraint on the individualised implementation of kindergarten-based curriculum (Wang, 2024).

2.1.2 Historical Evolution of Chinese Kindergarten Education

Understanding current kindergarten-based curriculum reform requires tracing the historical development trajectory of Chinese preschool education. According to

Zhang's (2024) research, the development of modern Chinese kindergarten education can be divided into several important stages, each reflecting different sociopolitical contexts and the evolution of educational philosophy.

Modern Chinese preschool education originated in 1903, when the first kindergarten was established in Hubei Province (Zhang & Yu, 2024). Early Chinese kindergartens primarily emulated the Japanese kindergarten model, borrowing Japanese experience in content, methods, the aforementioned staffing allocation, and toy facilities (Li et al., 2011). During this period, the influence of Western missionaries was also widespread, and Froebel's educational thought was indirectly introduced to China through Japan, emphasising the importance of activities such as play, handicrafts, and singing in early childhood education.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Chinese preschool education underwent major transformation. In the 1950s, China comprehensively studied the Soviet educational system, and during this stage, Chinese kindergarten curriculum emphasised systematic knowledge transmission and collective teaching (Yu, 2019). A subject-centred curriculum system was established, emphasising "purposeful, planned, and organised transmission of knowledge to children," establishing the goal of kindergarten curriculum as preparation for primary education—a model whose influence was far-reaching (Li & Chen, 2016).

After the Reform and Opening-up, Chinese kindergarten education began absorbing Western educational philosophies and methods. As Li, Wang and Wong (2011) describe, Montessori education, Reggio Emilia approach, HighScope curriculum, and

various other educational models were extensively introduced to China and adopted and adapted nationwide. The Kindergarten Work Regulations promulgated in 1996 explicitly stated for the first time that "play is the fundamental activity of kindergarten," marking an important shift in Chinese kindergarten educational philosophy (1996).

The promulgation of the Guidance Outline for Kindergarten Education (Trial) in 2001 marked Chinese kindergarten curriculum reform entering a new stage. This programmatic document proposed the concept of child-centred development and established a curriculum framework of five domains—health, language, social, science, and arts—providing policy space and theoretical support for the development of kindergarten-based curriculum (2002).

2.2 Definition of Key Concepts

2.2.1 Traditional Curriculum Model in Chinese Kindergartens

To understand the innovative aspects of kindergarten-based curriculum, it is first necessary to clarify the characteristics of the traditional curriculum model. The traditional Chinese kindergarten curriculum model primarily refers to the teaching model that dominated before the 2001 curriculum reform, which possessed distinctive characteristics.

Firstly, there is the goal-oriented characteristic. Traditional curriculum aimed at all-round development in "morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetics, and labour," a framework emphasising the cultivation of socialist builders through systematic education. Each domain had clear knowledge points and skill requirements, and

teachers needed to ensure all children achieved unified standards. Whilst this goal-oriented curriculum design ensured educational systematisation, it also neglected children's individual differences and developmental needs to some extent (Zhang, 2024).

Secondly, there are characteristics of teaching organisation. As Li et al. (2011) observed in their research, whole-class collective teaching was the most common curriculum organisation model, and direct instruction was the most prevalent teaching strategy. Teachers stood at the front transmitting knowledge to the entire class, whilst children sat in neat rows listening. Whilst this "teacher-centred" model facilitated efficient knowledge transmission, it restricted children's active exploration and creative expression.

Thirdly, there is the pre-determined nature of curriculum content. Traditional curriculum required teachers to teach strictly according to teaching syllabi and textbooks, with every activity requiring detailed lesson plans including elements such as objectives, processes, and methods. This highly structured curriculum ensured basic standards of teaching quality but also limited teachers' creativity and children's autonomy.

Fourthly, there is the positioning of play activities. Although the 1996 Kindergarten Work Regulations proposed play as the fundamental activity, under the traditional model, play was often viewed as an auxiliary means of teaching rather than children's primary learning approach. Play time was limited, materials were prepared in advance by teachers, and children had little choice (1996).

2.2.2 Theoretical Foundation and Characteristics of Kindergarten-based

Curriculum

The concept of kindergarten-based curriculum initially originated from the notion of "school-based curriculum" but possesses particular connotations in the preschool education field (Yu, 2002). According to Yang and Li's (2018) research, kindergarten-based curriculum can be defined as "curriculum developed based in the kindergarten, with kindergarten teachers as the main body, founded upon the kindergarten's own resources and conditions, to meet the developmental needs of the kindergarten's own children" (Chen & Yan, 2001).

From a theoretical foundation perspective, kindergarten-based curriculum integrates multiple educational philosophies. Firstly, there is the influence of constructivist learning theory. Kindergarten-based curriculum emphasises that children are active learners and that knowledge is constructed through interaction with the environment rather than passively received. This concept directly challenges the traditional knowledge transmission model, requiring teachers to shift from "teaching" to "supporting learning."

Secondly, there is the permeation of ecological systems theory. Kindergarten-based curriculum development needs to consider multi-level factors such as the community environment, cultural background, and family characteristics in which the kindergarten is situated. This ecological perspective emphasises the close connection between curriculum and local environment, holding that effective curriculum must be rooted in specific sociocultural soil.

Based on these theoretical foundations, kindergarten-based curriculum displays the following core characteristics:

Subjectivity of curriculum development is the foremost characteristic. Unlike the traditional top-down curriculum model, kindergarten-based curriculum confers subject status in curriculum development upon kindergartens and teachers. Teachers are no longer executors of curriculum but creators and researchers of curriculum (Niu, 2023). This role transformation requires teachers to possess higher professional competence and innovative ability.

Locality of resource utilisation is another important characteristic. Successful kindergarten-based curricula have all fully explored and utilised local resources, including natural environment, cultural traditions, and community resources (Chao, 2018). For example, rural kindergartens utilise field resources to conduct nature education, whilst urban kindergartens utilise community facilities to conduct social learning—all reflecting the organic integration of curriculum and environment.

Flexibility of the implementation process is also a distinctive feature of kindergarten-based curriculum. Kindergarten-based curriculum allows teachers to flexibly adjust teaching content and methods according to children's interests and needs, with curriculum plans possessing openness and adjustability. This flexibility is both an advantage of kindergarten-based curriculum and places higher demands on teachers' professional judgement capabilities.

Additionally, kindergarten-based curriculum also emphasises that curriculum content is not fixed but co-created and determined. In scholar Yu's (2002) research, it is

proposed that kindergarten-based curriculum is jointly constructed by teachers, children, kindergarten administrators, parents, and relevant stakeholders. This also determines that kindergarten-based curriculum is not a "one-man show" but requires collective determination by relevant personnel.

2.3 Current Research on Kindergarten-based Curriculum

2.3.1 Research on Typical Practice Models

In recent years, China has witnessed the emergence of multiple influential kindergarten-based curriculum practice models, amongst which "Anji Play" is one of the most prominent cases. According to Coffino and Bailey's (2019) detailed introduction in *Young Children* journal, Anji Play is a truly child-centred educational model that challenges traditional educational assumptions and redefines the role of teachers and the value of play.

Anji Play was developed by Ms Cheng Xueqin in Anji County, Zhejiang Province. The core philosophy of this model encompasses five interrelated principles: love, risk, joy, engagement, and reflection. These principles not only guide daily educational practice but also embody fundamental trust in children's capabilities (Chao, 2018). The practical characteristics of Anji Play include: ample play time (no less than 2 hours of outdoor free play daily), abundant low-structured materials (such as bamboo ladders, tyres, wooden boards, and other everyday items), teacher observation and documentation (rather than direct instruction), and children's reflection and expression (through sharing play stories). This model breaks traditional curriculum boundaries, positioning play itself as the core content of the curriculum (Cai, 2016).

Beyond Anji Play, other regions have also developed distinctive kindergarten-based curriculum models. As cases studied by Yang and Li (2019) demonstrate, some kindergartens have developed kindergarten-based curricula that integrate Eastern and Western educational philosophies through four stages: "imitation, absorption, integration, and evaluation." These practices indicate that the development of kindergarten-based curriculum is not simple imitation or transplantation but creative transformation within the local cultural context.

2.3.2 Teacher Professional Development and Role Transformation

The implementation of kindergarten-based curriculum presents entirely new challenges for teachers, and teacher role transformation has become an important theme in current research. Under the traditional model, teachers were primarily transmitters of knowledge and executors of curriculum; within kindergarten-based curriculum, teachers need to become observers, supporters, collaborators, and researchers (Xu, 2019).

According to relevant research, teachers face multiple challenges during the implementation of kindergarten-based curriculum. Firstly, there is the gap between philosophy and practice. Although most teachers ideologically endorse child-centred educational views, they still tend to use teacher-led approaches in practice (Xu, 2019). This phenomenon of "inconsistency between knowledge and action" reflects deep cultural influences and practical inertia.

Secondly, there is the challenge of professional competence. Kindergarten-based curriculum requires teachers to possess multiple abilities in observation and

documentation, curriculum design, and resource development (Niu, 2023). However, many teachers lack systematic training and practical experience in these areas.

Particularly regarding how to balance children's autonomous exploration with necessary educational guidance, teachers often feel confused.

Thirdly, there are environmental constraints. Realistic factors such as high teacher-student ratios, insufficient resources, and evaluation pressures all affect teachers' effectiveness in implementing kindergarten-based curriculum (Wang, 2024). When class sizes are large, teachers find it difficult to attend to each child's individual needs, which contradicts the individualised education philosophy emphasised by kindergarten-based curriculum.

2.3.3 Implementation Challenges and Influencing Factors

The implementation of kindergarten-based curriculum faces multifaceted challenges at both institutional and cultural levels (Li, 2023).

Unbalanced resource allocation is the primary challenge. Significant disparities exist between urban and rural areas and between eastern and western regions in terms of teacher quality, teaching facilities, and curriculum resources. Kindergartens in rural areas and economically underdeveloped regions face more difficulties when implementing kindergarten-based curriculum, and this imbalance affects the realisation of educational equity (Wang, 2023).

Conflict of cultural concepts represents a deeper challenge. The traditional Chinese cultural notion that "proficiency comes from diligence whilst play leads to negligence" is deeply ingrained, and many parents and teachers still consider learning

a serious activity and play merely leisure entertainment. This concept conflicts with the "learning through play" philosophy emphasised by kindergarten-based curriculum, affecting the in-depth advancement of curriculum reform (Qi, 2021).

Contradictions in the evaluation system are also important factors. Although developmental evaluation is advocated at the policy level, in practice, pressure from primary school entry preparation persists. This tendency towards "primarisation" causes some kindergartens to hesitate when implementing kindergarten-based curriculum, making it difficult to truly implement the philosophy of play-based, exploratory learning (Du, 2019).

2.3.4 Development and Utilisation of Local Cultural Resources

Kindergarten-based curriculum provides an important platform for inheriting and developing local culture. When developing kindergarten-based curriculum, kindergartens across regions increasingly emphasise exploring and utilising local cultural resources.

The development of local cultural resources primarily includes several aspects: folk arts (such as paper-cutting, clay sculpture, folk songs, etc.), traditional festivals (such as Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, etc.), local customs, and natural resources (Zuo, 2007). These resources not only enrich curriculum content but also strengthen children's connection with local culture, promoting the formation of cultural identity.

In ethnic minority areas, kindergarten-based curriculum becomes an important avenue for ethnic cultural transmission. For example, some kindergartens in the Guangxi

Zhuang Autonomous Region integrate Zhuang cultural elements such as bronze drum culture, Zhuang brocade craftsmanship, and folk song traditions into daily educational activities, both protecting cultural diversity and promoting children's cultural identity (Xu,2015). However, how to effectively transform cultural resources into appropriate educational content remains a challenge facing many teachers.

2.3.5 Policy Environment and Management Support

The evolution of the policy environment has provided increasing support for kindergarten-based curriculum. The promulgation of the Guidance Outline for Kindergarten Education (Trial) in 2001 provided policy basis for kindergarten-based curriculum development. The Learning and Development Guidelines for Children Aged 3-6 in 2012 further clarified the principle of play as the fundamental activity, providing more specific guidance for the implementation of kindergarten-based curriculum.

Support from kindergarten administrators is crucial for the successful implementation of kindergarten-based curriculum. Effective management support includes: establishing democratic decision-making mechanisms, providing adequate resource guarantees, creating relaxed innovative environments, and establishing reasonable evaluation mechanisms. Principals need to find balance amongst government requirements, teacher needs, and parent expectations, ensuring curriculum aligns with policy direction whilst giving teachers sufficient autonomy (Wei, 2012).

However, problems remain in policy implementation. Differences in local government interpretation and implementation of policies, inconsistent evaluation standards, and

unequal resource allocation all affect the realisation of policy effectiveness (Zheng, 2013). How to narrow the gap between policy text and practice remains an issue requiring in-depth research.

2.4 Research Gaps and Research Questions

2.4.1 Limitations of Existing Research

Although research on kindergarten-based curriculum is increasingly abundant, obvious research gaps remain.

Firstly, there is an imbalance in geographical coverage. Existing research is primarily concentrated in the developed eastern regions, particularly Beijing, Shanghai, and Zhejiang. Research on central and western regions, especially prefecture-level and county-level cities, is severely insufficient. As an important cultural and educational centre in Guangxi with unique natural and cultural resources, Guilin has almost no empirical research on the implementation status of its kindergarten-based curriculum. Secondly, there is singularity in research perspectives. Most research adopts macro-level policy analysis or theoretical exploration, lacking micro-level research from frontline teachers' perspectives. Questions such as how teachers understand and implement kindergarten-based curriculum in daily practice, what specific difficulties they face, and what coping strategies they adopt need to be answered through in-depth qualitative research.

Thirdly, there is singularity in kindergarten-based curriculum focus. Currently, much curriculum research in various localities emphasises how to introduce local culture into the curriculum. However, kindergarten-based curriculum is curriculum developed

based on children's interests and also needs to consider children's needs; therefore, concerns should not be concentrated solely on the introduction of local culture.

Whether existing kindergarten-based curricula consider children's interests and needs still requires exploration from the field.

2.4.2 Formulation of Research Questions

Based on literature analysis and identification of research gaps, this study focuses on the implementation of kindergarten-based curriculum in a kindergarten in Guilin and proposes the following research questions:

1. How is the kindergarten-based curriculum implemented in the selected kindergarten in Guilin?
2. What challenges do teachers face during the implementation of the kindergarten-based curriculum?
3. How do kindergarten managers support teachers in developing and executing the kindergarten-based curriculum?

2.4.3 Research Purpose and Significance

This study aims, through in-depth qualitative research, to observe and document the implementation process of kindergarten-based curriculum in a kindergarten in Guilin, analysing its structure, content, and teaching strategies. The research will particularly focus on how teachers seek balance between tradition and innovation and how they realise educational ideals under realistic constraints.

Through in-depth exploration of teachers' practical experiences, this research expects to reveal the complexity and contextuality of kindergarten-based curriculum

implementation. Unlike macro-level policy research or idealised theoretical discussions, this study is grounded in authentic educational settings, presenting dilemmas, wisdom, and innovations in practice.

The research will also explore the mechanism through which management support functions in curriculum reform. By analysing support strategies of principals and other key administrators, it will provide empirical evidence for establishing effective kindergarten-based curriculum support systems. This holds direct reference value for kindergartens undergoing curriculum reform.

From a theoretical significance perspective, this research will enrich empirical research on kindergarten-based curriculum, particularly filling the research gap in local cities. Through in-depth analysis of the Guilin case, it can provide new perspectives for understanding curriculum implementation in different regional contexts. Research findings will also provide experiential material for constructing localised curriculum theory.

From a practical significance perspective, this research's findings will provide referenceable experiences and suggestions for kindergartens in Guilin and similar regions. By identifying key issues and effective strategies in implementation, it will help practitioners better advance kindergarten-based curriculum reform. Research results can also provide reference for teacher training and policy formulation.

This study employs qualitative research methods, utilising multiple data collection approaches including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, striving to comprehensively and thoroughly understand the implementation

process of kindergarten-based curriculum. The research will conduct one week of field investigation in a kindergarten, ensuring data richness and authenticity. As a researcher with work experience in Chinese kindergartens, I will fully leverage the advantages of being an "insider" whilst maintaining research objectivity and criticality.

Through this research, it is hoped to contribute to the theoretical development and practical improvement of China's kindergarten-based curriculum, whilst also providing the international preschool education community with a specific and vivid case for understanding China's curriculum reform. In the context of globalisation, different countries' curriculum practice experiences can mutually inform one another, but this must be based on in-depth understanding of respective cultural and institutional contexts. This research represents precisely such an attempt at cross-cultural understanding.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Epistemological and Ontological Foundations

3.1.1 Constructivist Epistemology

According to Creswell's (2023) definition, constructivist epistemology posits that knowledge and meaning are constructed through human interaction with the world, and the researcher's task is to understand how participants construct meaning in their lifeworld. In other words, constructivism holds that there is no single objective truth, but rather multiple realities constructed by different individuals and groups. This epistemological position maintains that people understand the world based on their

historical and social perspectives, and researchers should also recognise how their own backgrounds influence their understanding of phenomena.

This epistemological foundation holds important guiding significance for this study.

Kindergarten-based curriculum itself is a constructive process, requiring kindergartens to construct appropriate curriculum content based on their own conditions, children's characteristics, and local culture. When implementing kindergarten-based curriculum, teachers do not mechanically execute predetermined plans but construct daily teaching practices based on their understanding of children's needs, interpretation of educational objectives, and judgement of available resources. Therefore, adopting constructivist epistemology enables better understanding of this dynamic, contextualised curriculum implementation process.

Mukherji and Albon (2023) further point out that constructivist research particularly focuses on the process of meaning-making, emphasising participants' subjective experiences and interpretations. This means that in researching kindergarten-based curriculum, one must not only observe visible teaching behaviours but also understand how teachers comprehend these behaviours, what educational meanings they ascribe to these behaviours, and how these meanings are constructed and reconstructed in daily practice.

3.1.2 Interpretivist Research Paradigm

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) define the interpretivist paradigm as a research orientation that emphasises understanding and interpreting the meaning of social action, rejecting the direct application of natural science methods to social phenomena

research, and arguing instead that social reality possesses subjectivity, diversity, and contextual dependency. Interpretivism maintains that human behaviour cannot be understood solely through external observation; one must delve into actors' meaning-worlds to understand their motivations, beliefs, and values.

In the field of educational research, the interpretivist paradigm possesses particular applicability. Educational activities are essentially meaning-rich social practices involving complex interpersonal interactions, cultural transmission, and value judgements. Bryman (2016) emphasises that interpretivist researchers need to adopt a stance of "empathic understanding," striving to view the world from participants' perspectives and understand the subjective logic behind their behaviours. This research orientation does not pursue the discovery of universal laws but seeks in-depth understanding of human behaviour in specific contexts.

This study adopts the interpretivist paradigm because kindergarten-based curriculum implementation involves multi-level meaning construction: policy-level curriculum reform intentions need to be understood and transformed by kindergarten administrators; administrators' curriculum visions need to be understood and accepted by teachers; teachers' instructional designs need to be understood and engaged with by children. Each level of transformation is not simple information transmission but involves active interpretation and creative reconstruction. Through an interpretivist lens, one can better capture this multi-level, multi-subject meaning construction process.

3.2 Case Study Method

3.2.1 Definition and Characteristics of Case Study

Robert Yin (2018) defines case study as an empirical research method that investigates contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The core characteristic of case study is maintaining the holistic and meaningful features of phenomena whilst conducting in-depth detailed examination. Stake (1995) further distinguishes intrinsic case study, instrumental case study, and collective case study. This research belongs to instrumental case study, namely using a specific case to understand a broader phenomenon—the implementation process of kindergarten-based curriculum.

Case study method possesses several important advantages. Firstly, contextual sensitivity. Merriam (2009) points out that case study can capture the complexity and contextual particularity of phenomena, which is especially important for understanding educational phenomena, as educational practice is always embedded in specific sociocultural contexts. Secondly, multiple sources of evidence. Case study allows researchers to use multiple data collection methods such as observation, interviews, and documents, enhancing the reliability of research findings through triangulation. Thirdly, process orientation. Case study focuses not only on outcomes but also on processes, enabling tracking of phenomena's development and change and understanding of causal mechanisms.

This study chooses case study method based on the following considerations:

kindergarten-based curriculum implementation is a complex, multi-faceted

phenomenon involving multiple aspects such as understanding curriculum philosophy, selecting teaching strategies, allocating resources, and children's responses, requiring holistic examination; kindergarten-based curriculum emphasises context-based curriculum development, and discussing kindergarten-based curriculum apart from specific kindergartens is meaningless; there is a need to deeply understand the process mechanisms of curriculum implementation, not merely evaluate implementation effectiveness.

3.2.2 Case Selection and Delimitation

Eisenhardt (1989) emphasises that case selection should be based on theoretical purposes rather than statistical representativeness. The kindergarten selected for this study possesses the following characteristics: it is a privately-run model kindergarten in Guilin with relatively good teachers and relatively adequate resources; it adheres to child-centred teaching and has been exploring the development of kindergarten-based curriculum and characteristic curricula in recent years (G Kindergarten Admission Prospectus, 2025); the kindergarten is open and supportive of research, willing to share authentic practical experiences including difficulties faced.

Flyvbjerg (2006) proposes that information-rich cases are more valuable than representative cases because they can provide in-depth insights. This kindergarten, as an information-rich case, can fully demonstrate the complexity, challenges, and creativity of kindergarten-based curriculum implementation. Meanwhile, as a privately-run kindergarten, the policy environment, resource conditions, and parent expectations it faces possess certain typicality, and its experience holds reference

value for other similar kindergartens.

Case boundary delimitation is also important. This research delimits the case as this kindergarten's kindergarten-based curriculum implementation practice, with the time range being one week of concentrated observation in September 2025 and interview periods before and after, the spatial scope primarily being the Middle Class Two classroom and related activity areas, and participants including teachers directly involved in Middle Class Two teaching, interns, and the principal responsible for curriculum management. This delimitation both ensures research feasibility and enables sufficiently in-depth understanding.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

3.3.1 Non-participant Observation Method

According to Spradley's (1980) definition, non-participant observation involves the researcher observing the research setting as a bystander, not participating in the activities of those being observed, and minimising disturbance to the natural context.

The core of this method is maintaining distance between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied to obtain relatively objective observational data.

Angrosino (2007) further points out that non-participant observation is particularly suitable for researching social contexts with clear boundaries, such as classroom teaching, where researchers can conduct systematic observation without affecting normal activities.

Non-participant observation possesses several important advantages. Patton (2015) emphasises that direct observation can obtain first-hand data at the moment behaviour

occurs, unaffected by participants' memory bias or social desirability. In educational research, teachers may provide idealised responses in interviews, but observation can reveal actual teaching behaviours. Additionally, observation can capture details that participants take for granted and would not spontaneously mention, and these details often contain important information.

In this study, I employed non-participant observation to record one week of teaching activities in Middle Class Two. Each day from 7:40 when children entered the kindergarten until 6:00 when basically all children departed, I observed from a corner of the classroom or around the campus. Observation foci included: how teachers organised various segments of the daily routine, particularly transitions between collective teaching, corner activities, and outdoor activities; how teachers observed children and made teaching decisions, such as whether they adjusted predetermined plans when discovering children were particularly interested in a certain topic; how local cultural resources were integrated into daily teaching, including aspects of environmental arrangement, teaching materials, and activity content; patterns and quality of teacher-child interactions, including teachers' questioning approaches, response strategies, and emotional support; various challenges encountered during implementation and teachers' coping strategies.

Observation records employed a combination of structured and unstructured approaches. Emerson et al. (2011) suggest that researchers should maintain balance between systematic recording and open recording. I used my mobile phone to record as much as possible the basic information of each classroom activity, including

activity type, number of participants, and materials used. After each day ended, I organised the day's events and synthesised them.

3.3.2 Semi-structured Interview Method

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define semi-structured interviews as purposeful conversations in which researchers prepare an interview guide but maintain flexibility during actual interviews, allowing adjustment of question order, in-depth probing, or exploration of newly emerging topics. This method combines the systematicity of structured interviews with the openness of unstructured interviews, both ensuring coverage of key research questions and allowing participants to fully express their views and experiences.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) propose the concept of "responsive interviewing," emphasising that interviewing is a process of co-constructing meaning between researcher and participants. The interviewer is not a passive information receiver but an active dialogue participant, deepening understanding through questioning, listening, and responding. This interview perspective is consistent with this study's constructivist epistemology, viewing interviews as a field of knowledge production rather than simply a data collection tool.

This research conducted five in-depth interviews, each lasting 20 to 45 minutes.

Interview subjects included three teachers, one intern, and the principal. Interviews were arranged after observations concluded, enabling me to pose questions based on specific examples observed, making interviews more concrete and in-depth. Seidman (2019) points out that observation-based interviews can help participants recall

specific contexts, reduce generalised statements, and obtain richer data.

Interview guides were designed around the three research questions as core but maintained sufficient openness. Interviews with teachers primarily explored: how they understood the philosophy and requirements of kindergarten-based curriculum; how they observed and responded to children's needs in daily teaching; how they conducted kindergarten-based curriculum and what teachers' priorities were; main challenges faced during implementation and coping strategies; what kinds of support and resources were needed.

During interviews, teachers' interview times were relatively short with relatively fixed content and questions. However, the interview with the administrator lasted 45 minutes with only a few questions. The administrator conducted exemplary discussions on understanding of kindergarten-based curriculum, teachers' observation of children, and the kindergarten's support for and difficulties with curriculum. This was extremely beneficial for me. Though questions were few, they substantially supplemented areas where I was puzzled about this research.

3.3.3 Document Analysis Method

Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating printed and electronic documents to elicit understanding and develop empirical knowledge. Documents, as stable, non-reactive data sources, can provide background information on research phenomena, supplement other data collection methods, and track trajectories of change and development. In educational research, curriculum documents, policy texts, and teaching materials constitute important

resources for understanding educational practice.

Prior (2003) emphasises that documents should not be viewed as transparent information carriers but understood as social products reflecting specific institutional logics, power relations, and cultural assumptions. Therefore, document analysis should focus not only on document content but also on its discursive modes and the processes of document production, circulation, and use.

Documents collected for this research primarily originated from the target kindergarten's daily operational materials, including: admission promotional materials, activity summary reports, and class management documents (weekly plans, observation records, activity venue arrangements, etc.). These documents authentically reflect the specific embodiment of curriculum philosophy in daily practice.

Atkinson and Coffey (2004) propose four key dimensions of document analysis: textual characteristics (language, rhetoric, format), intertextuality (relationships with other documents), production context (author, audience, writing conditions), and modes of use (reading, citation, execution methods). Based on this framework, this research not only analyses document content but also focuses on the relational network amongst documents and potential tensions between documents and practice. For example, the kindergarten-based curriculum plan explicitly proposes a "child-centred" philosophy, but analysis of weekly plans reveals that most activities remain teacher-predetermined. This gap between philosophy and practice prompts further research exploration: in actual curriculum implementation, how are predetermined

activities adapted to meet children's needs? Through what specific means is children's subject position embodied? Answering these questions helps deeply understand the practical transformation process of kindergarten-based curriculum philosophy.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

3.4.1 Data Preparation and Management

Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasise that qualitative data analysis begins from the first day of data collection. During fieldwork, I organised each day's observation notes every evening, expanding mobile phone records from the scene into detailed descriptions, supplementing details that could not be recorded at the time, and writing preliminary analytical memos. This immediate data processing not only ensured data completeness but also helped me identify issues requiring further exploration.

Transcription of interview recordings is time-consuming but critical work. Poland (2002) points out that transcription is not mechanical technical work but the beginning of interpretation. Transcription must not only maintain the original meaning of teachers but also ensure accuracy after translation into English. I sent Chinese transcripts to corresponding interviewees to confirm the accuracy of their meanings before proceeding to the second step of translation work.

All data underwent systematic coding and filing. Richards (2015) suggests establishing clear data management systems, including different categories such as raw data, processed data, analytical memos, and theoretical notes. I established an electronic folder system, organising data according to multiple dimensions including data type, time, and theme, facilitating retrieval and cross-referencing. Whilst

maintaining data traceability, each file was annotated with information such as source, date, and processing status.

3.4.2 Thematic Analysis Process

This study employs thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). They define thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The advantage of thematic analysis lies in its flexibility—it can be combined with different theoretical frameworks whilst having relatively clear operational steps suitable for beginners to grasp.

Thematic analysis includes six phases. The first phase is familiarising oneself with data. I repeatedly read all transcripts and observation notes, immersing myself in the data and recording preliminary ideas and potential patterns. The second phase is generating initial codes. I analysed text line by line, coding meaningful data segments. Saldaña (2021) distinguishes different types of coding methods; I primarily used descriptive coding (summarising thematic content of data) and process coding (identifying actions and events). For example, I would actively observe characteristic curricula and attempt to understand and classify these curriculum types—these are all examples of descriptive coding.

The third phase is searching for themes. I classified and combined related codes, forming potential themes. This process involved constant comparison and adjustment; some codes could form themes, some might become sub-themes, and others might be discarded. The fourth phase is reviewing themes, checking whether themes have sufficient support in the data and whether there are clear boundaries amongst themes.

The fifth phase is defining and naming themes, clarifying each theme's core content and scope. The sixth phase is writing the report, selecting vivid illustrations to explain various themes.

3.4.3 Inductive Analysis Approach

The inductive analysis method proposed by Thomas (2006) provides important guidance for this research. Inductive analysis refers to the process of deriving concepts, themes, or models through detailed reading of raw data. Unlike deductive analysis departing from theory, inductive analysis allows findings to emerge naturally from data. This method is particularly suitable for exploratory research because it does not presuppose theoretical frameworks, maintaining openness to unexpected discoveries.

The core of inductive analysis is constant comparison. The constant comparison method proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in grounded theory is also widely applied in other qualitative analyses. I constantly compared similarities and differences amongst different data segments and compared different participants' understanding of the same phenomenon. Through this comparison, I gradually identified recurring patterns and unique cases.

Charmaz (2014) emphasises that inductive analysis is not purely inductive; researchers cannot completely abandon theoretical sensitivity. I acknowledge entering the research field with understanding of child-centred education, sociocultural theory, etc., and these theoretical backgrounds influenced what I noticed, how I questioned, and how I interpreted. However, I strove to remain open, allowing data to guide

analytical direction rather than forcing data into predetermined theoretical frameworks.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

This research strictly adheres to the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2024) and obtained approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (approval date: 2 July 2025).

One week before entering the kindergarten on 8 September, I communicated in detail with G Kindergarten's management, participating teachers, and parents of the observed class, explaining to them the research purpose and process. I was acutely aware that in the Chinese cultural context, hierarchical relationships might affect teachers' freedom to express genuine willingness; therefore, I paid particular attention to ensuring each teacher's participation was completely voluntary rather than stemming from concerns about management. During interviews, I repeatedly emphasised to interviewees that they had complete rights to withdraw, remain silent, or refuse to answer any questions, and that I would strictly maintain confidentiality and anonymise all interview content.

To protect participants' privacy, the kindergarten in the research is uniformly called "G Kindergarten," teachers use codes such as T1, T2 and T3 the administrator uses M1, and the intern uses IN1. After interview recordings were transcribed into Chinese text, I returned transcripts to each participant for review to ensure accurate reflection of their original meanings. Any details that might reveal personal identity were

deleted or obscured. All research data are stored on my personal computer; not only is the entire computer encrypted, but data files themselves are also set with independent passwords. More importantly, raw data and participants' identifying information are stored completely separately, ensuring that even if data are viewed, they cannot be traced to specific individuals. These data are used only for this research and will be permanently deleted after module assessment and grade confirmation.

When conducting classroom observations, I equally valued children's own feelings. Although the children were young, I still asked teachers and parents to communicate with them multiple times to confirm they had no resistance to my observing activities in the classroom. Gratifyingly, although the children were curious about my presence during observations, they did not display discomfort or resistance. I employed non-participant observation methods, minimising disruption to normal teaching activities as much as possible and deliberately avoiding photographing children's faces when taking pictures. In fact, all photographs used to record activities were immediately deleted after completing observation records; this research does not directly collect children's personal data.

4. Findings

4.1 Research Background and Observation Overview

This research officially commenced on 8 September 2025, during the second week of the new semester. After obtaining the school's arrangements and consent from relevant teachers, children, and parents, I was assigned to conduct one week of non-participant observation in Middle Class Two. Although I returned to China in July to

begin research preparation, both the school administration and teachers felt that the July curriculum was not formal curriculum and would not be conducive to my research. The week immediately after school started on 1 September was not suitable for immediate field research; rather, it was more appropriate for communication work with parents and children.

During the observation period, I noticed that the special nature of the new semester brought additional workload burdens for teachers. Teachers needed to complete substantial preparatory work for the start of term, and meeting schedules were more intensive than usual, resulting in many courses being in early stages or subject to temporary adjustments. However, through examining the curriculum activity schedules displayed by each class and through in-depth field observation, I discovered that G Kindergarten still maintained complete curriculum system operations, including regular collective instruction and distinctive kindergarten-based curriculum.

4.2 The Three-Pillar System of G Kindergarten's Kindergarten-based Curriculum

Through one week of in-depth observation and interviews, I discovered that G Kindergarten's kindergarten-based curriculum system presents a clear three-pillar structure: enrichment class curriculum, class-based characteristic curriculum, and festival-generated curriculum. These three types of curriculum each have their own emphasis whilst complementing one another, jointly constructing the kindergarten's unique educational ecology.

4.2.1 Enrichment Class Curriculum: Introduction and Integration of External

Resources

Enrichment class curriculum constitutes the first pillar of G Kindergarten's kindergarten-based curriculum system and is also the kindergarten's distinctive selling point for external promotion. Through analysis of admission materials and field observation, I discovered this type of curriculum presents an obvious layered structure.

Characteristic curricula integrated into regular teaching constitute the first tier, including reading curriculum, Montessori mathematics teaching, physical intelligence curriculum, and brain science curriculum. These curricula have become organic components of the kindergarten's regular teaching, require no additional fees, are open to all children, and if any children are uninterested, they can freely use this time to go to vacant classrooms and play with toys under the accompaniment of childcare teachers.

After-school paid enrichment classes constitute the second tier, including Chinese chess, international chess, basketball, handicrafts, drawing, dance, and roller-skating. Due to policy restrictions, these classes can only be conducted after regular hours.

The operating model presents two forms: external organisation partnerships and instruction by the kindergarten's own teachers. Teacher B revealed in an interview: "The fee standards for external partner organisations are generally higher than fees for classes taught by our kindergarten teachers. Enrichment classes offered by our kindergarten teachers typically only charge basic material fees; the main purpose is to meet children's interest needs rather than profit."

During the observation period, I was fortunate to observe a trial lesson for the international chess enrichment class. G Kindergarten provides each child with one free trial lesson opportunity; this "experience before choosing" model reflects respect for parents' right to choose. From the perspective of teaching organisation, enrichment classes generally adopt small-class teaching, with each class controlled at 10-15 people. Although the scale is small, the curriculum still employs collective instruction and teacher-led approaches.

4.2.2 Class-based Curriculum: Innovative Practice Based on Class

Characteristics

Class-based curriculum constitutes the second pillar of G Kindergarten's kindergarten-based curriculum system and is also the most innovative part. If kindergarten-based curriculum is curriculum design at the kindergarten unit level, then class-based curriculum extends to the class level, reflecting more refined curriculum innovation. The stability of Chinese kindergarten classes—fixed groups of children, teachers, and classrooms—provides unique conditions for this innovation.

Through observation and interviews, I identified two different types of class-based curriculum:

(1) Class-based Series Curriculum: Democratic Participation in In-depth

Exploration

This is the form of class-based curriculum explicitly required by G Kindergarten; each class must conduct at least one series curriculum per semester. Its characteristics are distinctive:

The democratic nature of theme generation is the primary feature. T3 described this process in detail: "We collect topics the children have recently been interested in through daily observation and conversations with them. Usually there are multiple alternative themes, then we organise a democratic vote amongst the whole class to select the theme most children are interested in."

Deep participation through home-kindergarten cooperation is another characteristic. After determining the theme, teachers distribute questionnaires to parents to understand children's existing knowledge. Parents not only provide information but also provide materials and accompany outings during implementation.

The design philosophy of domain integration runs throughout. Teachers consciously integrate the five domain objectives from the Learning and Development Guidelines for Children Aged 3-6 to avoid the limitations of single-domain teaching.

The subtle balance of teacher roles is most challenging. The M1 particularly emphasised: "In class-based series curriculum, teachers need to find balance between being supporters and guides. Excessive intervention will limit children's autonomous exploration, but completely letting go may cause activities to lose educational value."

(2) Needs-oriented Simple Class-based Curriculum: Immediate Responsive

Wisdom

This is another type of class-based curriculum I discovered during observation.

Interestingly, teachers had not clearly recognised this as class-based curriculum; their straightforward expression was "children need it, so we teach it."

A typical case occurred during the first two days of observation. I noticed pushing and

shoving behaviour amongst children in the class. After teachers promptly stopped it, they specifically prepared a lesson on civilised behaviour on Wednesday morning. T1 created an attractive PowerPoint presentation and, through case discussion (cleverly mentioning the class situation without naming anyone), guided children to recognise the inappropriateness of pushing and shoving behaviour. That afternoon, this phenomenon visibly improved.

T2 was also preparing similar curriculum: "I'm preparing a lesson about class monitors because I've noticed children are unclear about what class responsibilities middle-class children should undertake."

Although this type of curriculum is simple in form and brief in duration—approximately 15 minutes per lesson—it is entirely based on children's actual needs, reflects teachers' keen observational skills and rapid response capabilities, and should rightly be considered an important component of class-based curriculum.

4.2.3 Festival-generated Curriculum: Cultural Transmission as Educational Vehicle

Festival-generated curriculum constitutes the third pillar of the kindergarten-based curriculum system. This type of curriculum uses festivals and important activities as opportunities, carrying cultural transmission and educational functions.

September's busyness confirmed the intensity of this type of curriculum: Teachers'

Day on 10 September, National Day on 1 October, Mid-Autumn Festival on 6

October, plus the kindergarten's 40th anniversary celebration and autumn parent-child

sports day in October—activity preparation work ran throughout the entire

observation period.

Observation of Teachers' Day activities revealed the operational model of small festival curricula. Although preparation was relatively simple, the educational significance was profound. According to interviewee IN1's description, during the weekend of the first week of school, teachers introduced the date of Teachers' Day and guided children to express its meaning; senior class children entered the kitchen to personally make festival cakes—experiential gratitude education that left a deep impression.

Large festival activities demonstrated comprehensive educational functions. T1 introduced: "Each class creates performance programmes based on previous courses or class-based series curriculum. Last year we adapted a semester's picture book curriculum into a stage play; both parents and children loved it particularly." This practice of transforming daily teaching outcomes into festival displays both summarises learning results and provides children with a display platform.

The unique presentation of regional culture is even more distinctive. T1 mentioned: "Every year during the Zhuang Third Month Festival in March-April, we conduct Zhuang characteristic curriculum, letting children understand local ethnic culture—something other regional kindergartens don't have." This regional cultural curriculum reflects the educational significance of kindergarten-based curriculum for local culture.

4.3 Supporting Conditions for Kindergarten-based Curriculum Implementation

The successful implementation of the above three types of curriculum depends on the

kindergarten's careful arrangements in resource allocation. Through observation, I discovered that innovative utilisation of venue resources is a key factor.

4.3.1 Flexible Utilisation of Indoor Space

G Kindergarten's indoor space design fully embodies the concept of "one room, multiple uses." Taking Middle Class Two as an example, the classroom presents different layouts at different times: during morning activities, the centre is cleared for morning exercises; during collective teaching, small chairs are arranged in a semicircle; during area activities, it is divided into multiple activity zones. This flexible space supports diverse curriculum activities.

The multi-function hall is utilised even more fully. During one week, I observed it undertaking three functions: teacher meeting venue (Wednesday Teachers' Day meeting, Friday Montessori training), enrichment class classroom (dance and roller-skating classes), and intern teacher lunch break room. This flexible arrangement maximised space utilisation.

4.3.2 Educational Transformation of Outdoor Venues

Outdoor venues are carefully planned into functional areas such as sports zones, planting zones, and sand-water zones. Particularly the planting zone—each class has its own plot. Teacher B said: "Planting activities are not only labour education; we combine them with science domain objectives, letting children observe plant growth. Harvested vegetables are also sent to the kitchen—this complete experience from planting to table is particularly meaningful."

4.3.3 The Important Role of Institutional Safeguards

The venue usage system ensures reasonable resource allocation. The kindergarten has specially coordinated timetables at the start of term, both ensuring fairness and reserving flexible time. Each area has clear responsible persons and maintenance requirements, cultivating children's sense of responsibility.

4.4 Multi-level Ecological Model of Kindergarten-based Curriculum

Based on the above findings, through repeated comparative analysis of observational data and interview materials, a multi-level ecological system model gradually emerged. This model was not a preset framework but rather a theoretical construction naturally emerging from the data.

4.4.1 The Four-layer Structure of the Model

Through analysis, I identified four mutually nested and interacting levels:

(1) Policy Environment Layer (Macro Level)

Policy provides legitimacy foundations and directional guidance for kindergarten-based curriculum. The administrator explicitly stated: "All our curriculum innovations must be conducted within the national policy framework." Documents such as the Preschool Education Law and Learning and Development Guidelines for Children Aged 3-6 set basic requirements whilst also preserving space for innovation.

(2) Kindergarten System Layer (Meso Level)

Within the policy framework, G Kindergarten has constructed a unique three-pillar system. The three types of curriculum do not exist in isolation but mutually support one another. As T3 said: "Festival performances display results from enrichment classes and class-based curriculum; parents can see children's all-round development."

(3) Class Practice Layer (Micro Level)

The class is the most active space for curriculum innovation. Two class-based curriculum generation mechanisms—planned series curriculum and responsive simple curriculum—demonstrate innovative vitality at the class level. T2 said: "Although the kindergarten has unified requirements, children in each class are different; we must adjust according to our own class's circumstances."

(4) Child Development Layer (Core Level)

All curriculum innovations ultimately point towards children. The M1 emphasised: "The standard for judging whether curriculum is successful is whether children like it and whether they gain something." Children's needs, interests, and responses continuously influence decision-making at all levels.

4.4.2 Dynamic Interaction Between Layers

The key characteristic of the model is bidirectional flow between layers, rather than a unidirectional execution chain:

- **Top-down guidance flow:** Policy requirements transform into kindergarten planning, further refined into class implementation, ultimately realised in children's experiences.
- **Bottom-up innovation flow:** Children's needs trigger teacher responses, forming class innovations; excellent experiences rise to become kindergarten characteristics.

Needs-oriented simple class-based curriculum is a typical example of bottom-up innovation—starting from children's behavioural problems, teachers design

immediate curriculum responses; successful experiences are borrowed by other classes and may ultimately form kindergarten-level characteristic practices.

4.4.3 The Continuum of Curriculum Forms

Through comparing the characteristics of the three types of curriculum, I discovered they constitute a continuum from structured to generative:

Curriculum Type	Degree of Structure	Resource Source	Children's Participation Mode	Flexibility
Enrichment Class Curriculum	Highly structured	Primarily external	Selective participation	Lower
Festival-generated Curriculum	Semi-structured	Internal-external combination	Whole-class participation	Moderate
Class-based Characteristic Curriculum	Open generative	Internal creation	Democratic participation	Higher

This continuum reflects G Kindergarten's efforts to seek balance between "regulation and innovation" and "collective and individual."

5. Discussion

This study, through one week of in-depth observation and interviews at G Kindergarten in Guilin, systematically explored the implementation mechanisms of kindergarten-based curriculum, challenges faced by teachers, and administrators' support strategies. The research found that kindergarten-based curriculum

implementation presents diversified and contextualised characteristics; teachers face deep-rooted structural dilemmas in role transformation; and management support strategies, whilst stimulating innovation, are also significantly constrained by the survival pressures of privately-run kindergartens. The following sections will analyse these findings in depth, reflect on the research limitations, and explain this study's contributions to the field of preschool education.

5.1 In-depth Analysis of Kindergarten-based Curriculum Implementation

Mechanisms

Through in-depth observation of G Kindergarten, I discovered that kindergarten-based curriculum implementation is far more complex and diverse than theoretical descriptions suggest, presenting three distinctly different implementation logics.

Enrichment class curriculum embodies a quasi-market operation mechanism, with its core lying in partial transfer of choice rights and competition-oriented service quality.

From trial lesson systems to differentiated pricing strategies, this mechanism places parents' and children's needs at the centre of curriculum design. Interestingly, this

seemingly commercial operation method achieves the "child-centred" philosophy to some extent—children express preferences through trial lesson experiences, parents

make choices based on full understanding, and both kindergarten teachers and

external organisations need to win recognition through actual teaching effectiveness.

Class-based series curriculum demonstrates a democratic participation mechanism.

From observing children's interests to democratic voting, then to parent participation,

teachers are no longer the sole determiners of curriculum content but become

observers of children's interests, facilitators of expression, and supporters of implementation. However, this democratic participation is not completely laissez-faire; teachers still need to conduct preliminary screening amongst multiple alternative themes, ensuring selected themes both align with children's interests and possess educational value. This combination of professional judgement and democratic participation reflects an important balance point in kindergarten-based curriculum implementation.

Festival activity curriculum more strongly embodies an administrative coordination mechanism, but in G Kindergarten's practice, this mechanism has not completely suppressed innovative space. Although festival themes and time points are uniformly determined, each class still has considerable autonomy in specific implementation methods. T1's practice of adapting picture book curriculum into stage plays reflects creative expression within a unified framework.

More importantly, I discovered a curriculum generation mechanism rarely emphasised in theoretical literature—rapid response based on immediate needs. When T1 observed pushing and shoving behaviour in the class, she was able to design and implement targeted educational activities within 24 hours. This response speed and flexibility is difficult to achieve in traditional curriculum models. Although this type of curriculum may still adopt traditional collective teaching modes in form, its generation process is entirely based on children's actual needs, reflecting another realisation of the "child-centred" philosophy.

Another important characteristic of kindergarten-based curriculum implementation is

creative resource integration. Within limited physical space, G Kindergarten achieved flexible multi-functional utilisation; the multi-function hall undertook multiple functions within one week: meeting room, dance classroom, roller-skating venue, and teacher rest room. The multiple identity transformations of the planting zone—from labour education venue to science exploration base to life education resource—reflect the important characteristic of resource educationalisation in kindergarten-based curriculum implementation.

5.2 Challenges and Dilemmas in Teacher Role Transformation

Kindergarten-based curriculum requires teachers to transform from knowledge transmitters to learning supporters, from curriculum executors to curriculum developers (Xu, 2019). However, this role transformation is far more difficult and complex than theoretical expectations suggest.

The most prominent challenge is the deep tension between philosophical alignment and practical inertia. Although all interviewed teachers expressed alignment with the "child-centred" philosophy, in actual teaching, the traditional teacher-led model still dominates. This phenomenon cannot be simply attributed to teachers' conservatism or insufficient capability, but should be understood as the result of deep cultural influences and institutional inertia. The traditional Chinese cultural concept that "teachers transmit the Way, impart knowledge, and resolve doubts" is deeply rooted; safety responsibility system pressure makes teachers more inclined to choose teaching methods with stronger controllability; parents' expectations of "learning knowledge" also reinforce the legitimacy of traditional teaching models to some extent.

Role ambiguity is another important challenge teachers face. T1's confusion is very representative: "Sometimes I don't know to what extent I should intervene. If I don't manage at all, I'm afraid of safety problems; if I manage too much, it doesn't seem child-centred." Under the traditional model, teachers' role boundaries are relatively clear—transmit knowledge, maintain order, ensure safety. Under the kindergarten-based curriculum model, teachers need to give children sufficient autonomous space whilst maintaining necessary control, ensure achievement of educational objectives whilst respecting children's interests, and safeguard safety baselines whilst encouraging exploration. Grasping this multiple balance requires high professional wisdom, but existing training systems clearly have not provided sufficient support for teachers.

Structural constraints of time and energy constitute important obstacles for teachers implementing kindergarten-based curriculum. Particularly during the start of term, teachers need to simultaneously handle multiple tasks: establishing routines, curriculum preparation, activity planning, meeting participation, and more. T2's weary words left a deep impression on me: "This week we need to prepare for Teachers' Day activities and rehearse for National Day programmes; preparation for class-based curriculum has been postponed."

A deeper problem is that excessive busyness leads to forced teacher role displacement. Administrator M1 explicitly mentioned that kindergarten-based curriculum needs to give children sufficient response time; teachers' excessive intervention causes children's responses to become unnatural. However, when

teachers are in highly busy states, it is difficult to patiently wait and carefully observe; they often unconsciously accelerate teaching pace, regressing from "supporters" to "guides" or even "controllers." This role displacement is not a regression in teachers' philosophy but a helpless choice under time pressure.

The observation and documentation work emphasised by kindergarten-based curriculum further intensifies this time pressure. Although all interviewed teachers recognised the value of continuous observation for understanding child development and promoting home-kindergarten co-education, they also candidly admitted this substantially increases workload. From organising observation records to preparing teaching materials, from designing activity plans to writing reflective summaries, most of this work needs to be completed outside normal working hours. Under multiple task pressures, this work, which should form the foundation of professional development, is often perceived by teachers as "additional burden."

The constraint of high teacher-student ratios on individualised teaching cannot be ignored. Middle Class Two's 22 children with 2 teachers—this teacher-student ratio is already relatively ideal amongst Chinese kindergartens, but still insufficient for the individualised attention advocated by kindergarten-based curriculum. During corner activities, I observed teachers spending more time maintaining overall order, finding it difficult to deeply observe each child's learning process and individual needs. This structural constraint means the "child-centred" philosophy often regresses to "class-centred" group management in practice.

An obvious gap exists between professional capability development needs and

existing support systems. Kindergarten-based curriculum presents entirely new professional requirements for teachers: systematic observation and documentation capabilities, curriculum design capabilities based on observation, flexible resource development and utilisation capabilities, continuous reflection and improvement capabilities, and more. However, most teachers can only rely on personal exploration and informal exchanges amongst colleagues to enhance these capabilities. This spontaneous learning approach, whilst valuable, lacks systematicity and specificity.

5.3 Complex Effects of Management Support Strategies

Understanding the effects of G Kindergarten's management support strategies requires first understanding its special educational background. As a privately-run kindergarten, G Kindergarten faces survival pressures completely different from state-run kindergartens. The continuing impact of the pandemic in recent years has made privately-run kindergartens' circumstances even more difficult—without government financial support, staff wages need to be entirely self-financed. Administrator M1 has worked at the kindergarten for 31 years; for the first 25 years she focused on teaching management, but in recent years she has had to invest more energy in operational decisions maintaining the kindergarten's survival. This role transformation means her direct oversight of teaching has loosened; this is not a regression in management philosophy but a trade-off choice under realistic pressure.

The administrator M1 emphasises giving teachers "considerable autonomy." This empowerment strategy has achieved obvious effects in stimulating teachers' innovative motivation. Teachers have indeed gained unprecedented autonomous space

in curriculum content selection, teaching method application, time arrangement adjustment, and more. T3 felt this deeply: "Each semester we need to complete corresponding courses for the five domains, plus one class-based series curriculum, but when we teach what specifically, we arrange ourselves." This conferral of autonomy not only improves teachers' work enthusiasm but also strengthens their sense of responsibility and ownership.

However, this empowerment strategy may also bring potential risks of insufficient support. When administrators overly emphasise teachers' autonomy, they may to some extent neglect teachers' needs for professional guidance and resource support. Some teachers, whilst enjoying autonomy, hope to receive more professional guidance and peer support when facing specific curriculum development difficulties.

Regarding resource support, G Kindergarten primarily provides venue support, material support, and activity guidance. However, interviewed teachers generally reported that material resources remain insufficient. T2 mentioned: "Sometimes we need to subsidise material costs ourselves." This practice of teachers personally subsidising teaching material purchases reflects teachers' professional dedication spirit on one hand, whilst also reflecting that under limited funding, material support needed for kindergarten-based curriculum development cannot be completely provided. Class-based curriculum independently developed by teachers relies mainly on creative utilisation of existing resources.

What deserves affirmation is that under limited material resources, management strives to provide spiritual-level support for teachers. M1 particularly mentioned that

many teachers worry about making mistakes when attempting curriculum innovation.

She believes teachers' growth equally requires space for trial and error: "As long as they don't make boundary errors, I hope to give teachers some free space, letting them try more boldly." This management attitude of encouraging trial and error and tolerating failure alleviates teachers' psychological pressure to some extent, creating a relatively relaxed psychological atmosphere for curriculum innovation.

M1 also expressed long-term planning for teacher professional development: "If student enrolment stabilises over these years, I will invite some experts and excellent teachers to provide training for our school's teachers." This statement both demonstrates the administrator's emphasis on professional development and confirms from the side the survival pressure the kindergarten currently faces—basic support like professional training needs to wait until operational circumstances improve before implementation.

A deeper problem lies in the absence of evaluation mechanisms. Although the administrator claims to emphasise process evaluation and multiple evaluation, I did not observe systematic curriculum evaluation systems during field observation.

Teachers mainly rely on their own intuition and experience to judge curriculum effectiveness, lacking objective evaluation tools and standards. This absence of evaluation systems not only affects continuous improvement of curriculum quality but also makes excellent experiences difficult to summarise and promote, whilst problems and deficiencies are difficult to discover and correct promptly.

G Kindergarten's case reveals a reality often overlooked in state-run kindergarten

research: privately-run kindergartens' management support faces stricter economic constraints. Administrators' educational ideals need to find balance points within survival reality. When administrators must invest substantial energy in non-teaching affairs like recruitment and operations, their professional support for teaching inevitably weakens. This phenomenon reminds us that when discussing management support for kindergarten-based curriculum implementation, we cannot ignore the differentiated constraints facing different institutional kindergartens.

5.4 Limitations and Reflections on Data Collection

As a researcher, I must honestly face the limitations existing in this study and deeply reflect on the data collection process.

The limitation of time span is the most obvious limitation. One week of observation is clearly insufficient for understanding kindergarten-based curriculum—a dynamic, cyclical educational phenomenon. The complete implementation process of class-based series curriculum, long-term changes in child development, trajectories of teacher professional growth, and more all require longer-term tracking observation. Particularly as research time occurred at semester start (the first week of September), many curricula were still in preparatory stages; the degree of busyness during semester start, pressure of establishing routines, and more may differ significantly from mid-semester.

Research sample singularity also limits the representativeness of research findings. As a Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region-level model kindergarten, G Kindergarten's resource conditions, teacher levels, and management philosophy are significantly

higher than average. Although as a privately-run kindergarten it faces unique survival pressures, its 40-year educational history, relatively stable teacher team, and relatively complete hardware facilities mean it still occupies a relatively advantageous position. This particularity means research findings may not reflect actual circumstances of ordinary kindergartens, particularly rural kindergartens or newly-established kindergartens. Simultaneously, observing only the middle class age group is an important limitation; children of different age groups have different developmental characteristics and needs; kindergarten-based curriculum implementation in junior and senior classes may present different characteristics and challenges.

Research method limitations need honest confrontation. Although non-participant observation can reduce disturbance to natural contexts, it may also miss some important details and internal logic. When I sat in classroom corners observing, I may not have fully understood the deep meanings of certain teacher-child interactions, and may have missed some important non-verbal information. Semi-structured interviews are affected by social desirability bias; particularly in the Chinese cultural context, interviewees may tend to give positive responses, avoiding direct criticism or complaints. Although I strove to create a relaxed atmosphere during interviews and repeatedly emphasised the research's confidentiality and academic purposes, the influences of hierarchical relationships and face culture remain difficult to completely eliminate.

The influence of researcher identity and stance is an unavoidable limitation. As a researcher with work experience in Chinese kindergartens, my personal background,

educational philosophy, and value judgements inevitably influenced observation focus, interview direction, and data interpretation. My alignment with "child-centred" philosophy may have made me overly critical of certain traditional practices, whilst my academic training background may have made me overly focus on gaps between theory and practice. During observation, I discovered I sometimes unconsciously sought evidence supporting certain preset viewpoints; this confirmation bias requires continuous vigilance and reflection.

The existence of these limitations does not diminish this study's value; rather, they remind us to view research findings with more cautious and critical attitudes. They point directions for future research: longer tracking research is needed, more diversified sample selection, richer research method combinations, and deeper cross-cultural theoretical dialogue.

5.5 Contributions to the Field

Despite the above limitations, this study still offers meaningful concepts to the preschool education research field.

At the theoretical level, although the concept of kindergarten-based curriculum has gained widespread recognition, analysis and understanding of kindergarten-based curriculum's internal layers remain relatively weak. G Kindergarten's practice reveals that kindergarten-based curriculum is not monolithic but contains different levels and types of curriculum forms. Class-based curriculum, as a more microscopic curriculum level closer to children, reflects deepening curriculum individualisation and democratisation. By distinguishing kindergarten-based curriculum and class-based

curriculum, this study provides more refined theoretical tools for understanding the complexity and diversity of curriculum kindergarten-based development.

Revelation of curriculum generative characteristics is an important theoretical contribution. Although "needs-oriented simple class-based curriculum" is relatively simple in form, its generation process embodies kindergarten-based curriculum's essential characteristics—context-based, needs-responsive, flexibly adjustable. This discovery challenges G Kindergarten's traditional understanding equating class-based curriculum with complex, long-term, serialised curriculum, revealing that class-based curriculum can have multiple manifestations; the key lies in its generation logic rather than manifestation form.

At the empirical level, this study provides a detailed and in-depth case for China's kindergarten-based curriculum reform. The "imperfect" practice picture presented in the research—teacher confusion, management dilemmas, resource constraints—possesses greater academic value than cases presenting only successful experiences, because they reveal reform's true face and deep-level problems. Particularly the analysis of how privately-run kindergartens balance operations and teaching under survival pressure fills gaps in existing research.

At the practical level, this study provides specific references for kindergarten administrators, teachers, and policymakers. Findings revealed regarding the dual effects of management support strategies, specific challenges of teacher role transformation, resource constraints facing privately-run kindergartens, and more provide important bases for improving management practice, teacher professional

development, and policy formulation.

Finally, this study contributes to Chinese preschool education research's participation in international academic dialogue. By providing an in-depth and detailed Chinese case, the research provides an important window for international peers to understand characteristics and challenges of China's preschool education reform. The East-West integrated educational exploration reflected in the research also provides different approaches and experiences for international preschool education curriculum reform, enriching the discourse system of international preschool education curriculum reform.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Evaluation of the Research Process

Reviewing the entire research journey, I gained deeper understanding of qualitative research method application. Although one week of field observation was time-limited, through systematic observation records, in-depth interview dialogues, and detailed document analysis, I was able to deeply understand the authentic state of G Kindergarten's kindergarten-based curriculum implementation. Non-participant observation allowed me to capture classroom interaction details from a relatively objective perspective, whilst semi-structured interviews helped me understand teacher thinking and management philosophy behind these practices.

However, the research process also exposed areas for improvement. During initial research design, I only planned to observe one kindergarten; when opportunities arose later to enter other kindergartens, I missed the chance to conduct multi-case

comparisons because the research design included only one kindergarten. Similarly, during fieldwork, I heard many spontaneous discussions amongst teachers about curriculum implementation, but because the research design did not include field-survey-style interviews, these precious "natural dialogues" could not be incorporated into analysis as formal data, limiting research depth to some extent.

6.2 Implications for Future Research

Based on this study's findings, future research can deepen and expand in the following directions.

Firstly, conduct longitudinal tracking research. This study only observed one week and cannot present the complete cycle of class-based series curriculum from theme generation, plan design, implementation process to effect evaluation. Future research should conduct continuous tracking for at least one semester, completely recording the development trajectory of one or multiple class-based curricula, in-depth analysing how curriculum continuously adjusts and improves during implementation, and children's developmental changes during this process.

Secondly, conduct multi-case comparative research. Select kindergartens with different systems (state-run/privately-run), different resource conditions (urban model kindergartens/ordinary kindergartens/rural kindergartens), and different regional cultural backgrounds for comparative research, exploring multiple models and influencing factors of kindergarten-based curriculum implementation. Particular attention needs to be paid to ordinary kindergartens with relatively scarce resources, understanding their strategies and dilemmas in kindergarten-based curriculum

implementation.

Thirdly, expand research method combinations. Whilst maintaining qualitative research depth, introduce more flexible methods like participant observation and field-survey-style interviews to capture natural dialogues and informal interactions amongst teachers. Consider combining methods like visual ethnography and teacher narratives to present the complex picture of kindergarten-based curriculum implementation more three-dimensionally.

6.3 Final Reflections

Completing this research, I gained deeper understanding of educational reform. Kindergarten-based curriculum reform is not simple philosophical transplantation or model replication, but a complex process requiring continuous balance-seeking amongst ideal and reality, tradition and innovation, individual and collective. G Kindergarten's practice showed me that even a model kindergarten with relatively superior conditions still faces numerous challenges when implementing kindergarten-based curriculum—teacher role confusion, structural time constraints, resource limitations, absence of evaluation systems. These dilemmas are not isolated phenomena but common problems in the reform process.

However, these challenges have not diminished my belief in kindergarten-based curriculum's value. On the contrary, through in-depth exchanges with G Kindergarten teachers, I witnessed their genuine attention to children, continuous pursuit of professional growth, and enthusiastic investment in educational innovation. It is precisely these frontline educators' efforts that drive kindergarten-based curriculum

reform from philosophy to practice, from ideal to reality.

As a researcher, this experience also made me reflect on my academic stance. I realised that critical thinking does not mean standing outside practice pointing fingers, but rather offering constructive thinking and suggestions based on understanding and respecting practitioners. Research value lies not only in discovering problems but more importantly in providing possible pathways for problem-solving.

Chinese preschool education is in an important transformation period; kindergarten-based curriculum reform is an important manifestation of this transformation. I hope future researchers pay more attention to this field, using solid empirical research to advance theoretical development, using in-depth practice analysis to serve educational improvement, jointly contributing wisdom to the high-quality development of China's preschool education.

Reference

- Angrosino, M. (2007) *Doing Ethnographic and Observational Research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Atkinson, P. and Coffey, A. (2004) 'Analysing documentary realities', in Silverman, D. (ed.) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. 2nd edn. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 56-75.
- BERA (British Educational Research Association) (2024) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*. 5th edn. London: BERA.
- Bowen, G.A. (2009) 'Document analysis as a qualitative research method', *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), pp. 27-40.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77-101.
- Bryman, A. (2016) *Social Research Methods*. 5th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cai, J. (2016) "安吉游戏"对教师角色的新启示 *New Insights of 'Anji Play' on Teachers' Roles*. *Early Childhood Education Research*, (2), pp. 27-28.
- Cao, Y. and Huang, Y. (2018) 南北幼儿园户外游戏比较研究——安吉游戏与利津游戏的共性与差异 *A Comparative Study of Outdoor Games in Kindergartens Between the South and the North: Commonalities and Differences Between Anji Play and Lijin Play*. *Journal of Chengdu Normal University*, 34(3), pp. 63-67.
<https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:SJXB.0.2018-03-016>.
- Charmaz, K. (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory*. 2nd edn. London: SAGE Publications.

- Chen, S. and Yan, Z. (2001) 论幼儿园的园本课程开发 *On the Development of Kindergarten-Based Curriculum. Early Childhood Education Research*, (2), pp. 27-29.
- Coffino, J.R. and Bailey, C. (2019) 'The Anji Play ecology of early learning', *Childhood Education*, 95(1), pp. 3-9.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2018) *Research Methods in Education*. 8th edn. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. (2023) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 5th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Du, J., Cai, G., He, Z. and Peng, D. (2019) 从编制到理解:我国幼儿园课程改革 40 年回顾与展望 *From Compilation to Understanding: A Review and Prospect of 40 Years of Kindergarten Curriculum Reform in China. Early Childhood Education Research*, (3), pp. 21-30. <https://doi.org/10.13861/j.cnki.sece.2019.03.003>.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989) 'Building theories from case study research', *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), pp. 532-550.
- Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I. and Shaw, L.L. (2011) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. 2nd edn. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006) 'Five misunderstandings about case-study research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), pp. 219-245.
- Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Huang, C. and Wu, X. (2020) 桂西学前教育园本课程体系的建构与实践研究 *Construction and Practice Research of Preschool Education Kindergarten-Based Curriculum System in Western Guangxi. Education Observation*, 32, pp. 54-57.

Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2009) *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Li, H. and Chen, J.J. (2016) 中国学前教育课程的演变：社会文化因素对革新与革命的影响 *Evolution of the Early Childhood Curriculum in China: The Impact of Social and Cultural Factors on Revolution and Innovation. Early Child Development and Care*, 187(10), pp. 1471-1483.

Li, H., Wang, X.C. and Wong, J.M.S. (2011) 中国学前教育课程改革：基于教师信念与实践的视角 *Early Childhood Curriculum Reform in China: Perspectives from Examining Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Chinese Literacy Teaching. Chinese Education & Society*, 44(6), pp. 5-23.

Merriam, S.B. (2009) *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Ministry of Education (1996) 幼儿园工作规程 *Kindergarten Work Regulations. Early Childhood Education Research*, (4), pp. 60-64.
<https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:XQJY.0.1996-04-024>.

Ministry of Education (2002) 教育部关于印发《幼儿园教育指导纲要(试行)》的通知 *Notice of the Ministry of Education on Issuing the Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial). Bulletin of the State Council of the People's Republic of China*, (15), pp. 16-20. <https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:GWYB.0.2002-15-005>.

Mukherji, P. and Albon, D. (2023) *Research Methods in Early Childhood: An Introductory Guide*. 4th edn. London: SAGE Publications.

Niu, C. (2023) 基于三种典型游戏模式的幼儿园课程改革研究 *Research on Play-Based Kindergarten Curriculum Reform in China: Based on the Analysis of Three Typical Play Modes. International Journal of Early Years Education*, 31(2), pp. 401-418.

Patton, M.Q. (2015) *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. 4th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Peng, H. (2025) 善育有法奠基未来——关于《中华人民共和国学前教育法》核心理念的解读 *Good Nurturing Based on Law Lays the Foundation for the Future: An Interpretation of the Core Concepts of the Preschool Education Law of the People's Republic of China. Shandong Education*, (Z6), pp. 13-15.
<https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:SDJY.0.2025-Z6-001>.

Poland, B.D. (2002) 'Transcription quality', in Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. (eds.) *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, pp. 629-649.

Prior, L. (2003) *Using Documents in Social Research*. London: SAGE Publications.

Qi, W. (2021) 幼儿园教师园本课程建设能力发展的现状与困境——基于三所幼儿园的调查 *Current Situation and Dilemma of Kindergarten Teachers' Ability Development in Kindergarten-Based Curriculum Construction: Based on a Survey of Three Kindergartens. Questions and Research*, (30), pp. 141-142.
<https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:STYJ.0.2021-30-071>.

Richards, L. (2015) *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*. 3rd edn. London: SAGE Publications.

Ruan, X. (2025) 幼儿教师专业成长的个案研究——基于《学前教育法》对教师的要求 *A Case Study of Professional Development of Early Childhood Teachers: Based on the Requirements of the Preschool Education Law for Teachers. Journal of*

Heilongjiang Teacher Development Institute, 44(9), pp. 27-30.

<https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:HLJB.0.2025-09-006>.

Rubin, H.J. and Rubin, I.S. (2012) *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Saldaña, J. (2021) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. 4th edn. London: SAGE Publications.

Seidman, I. (2019) *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. 5th edn. New York: Teachers College Press.

Shuai, L. (2023) 幼儿园"两教一保"与"三教轮保"保教模式的比较研究 *A Comparative Study on the Childcare and Education Models of "Two Teachers and One Caregiver" and "Three Teachers Rotating Caregiving" in Kindergartens*. Master's thesis. Shanxi Normal University. <https://doi.org/10.27287/d.cnki.gsxsu.2023.000563>.

Spradley, J.P. (1980) *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stake, R.E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (2024) *Preschool Education Law of the People's Republic of China*. Beijing: National People's Congress. Available at: https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202411/content_6985752.htm (Accessed: 28 July 2025).

Thomas, D.R. (2006) 'A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data', *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), pp. 237-246.

Wang, Y. (2024) 学前教育师资队伍建设的困境及对策 *Dilemmas and Countermeasures in the Construction of Preschool Education Teaching Staff*. *Ningxia Education*, (3), pp. 11-12. <https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:NXYJ.0.2024-03-003>.

Wang, Y. and Zhao, H. (2023) 园本课程背景下我国农村幼儿教师专业发展的现实困境、多维价值与路径选择 *The Reality, Multi-Dimensional Value, and Path Selection of Rural Preschool Teachers' Professional Development in the Context of Kindergarten-Based Curriculum in China*. *Education Observation*, 12(30), pp. 31-34. <https://doi.org/10.16070/j.cnki.cn45-1388/g4s.2023.30.010>.

Wei, X. (2012) 文化视域下幼儿园园本课程建设研究 *Research on Kindergarten-Based Curriculum Construction from a Cultural Perspective*. Master's thesis. Guangxi Normal University. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=dTSX2bdXfeAyYH-SimGebMzCR99QzbO7CbLPrYjpZtcXtDaXmnhDdat7JCARUpvcBbddWTQhMhVhIqBvjzqtQ_t9XLFueteYT6EXxi-hdvHLJyeQvKakJnV9CkHR1dks1lfcom0toImJhxfXsSv3BU08IyGvazS_o5wjCCv4_ceRwNjECIhRw==&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS (Accessed: 28 July 2025).

Xu, L. (2015) 广西幼儿园课程百年之演进 *A Century of Preschool Curriculum Evolution in Guangxi*. *Journal of Guangxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 5, pp. 152-159.

Xu, X. (2019) "幼儿研究与支持"教师职后培训课程框架的建构与验证 *Construction and Verification of the Post-Service Training Curriculum Framework for Teachers on "Child Research and Support"*. Doctoral thesis. East China Normal University. <https://doi.org/10.27149/d.cnki.ghdsu.2019.000067>.

Yang, W. and Li, H. (2019) 'Changing culture, changing curriculum: A case study of early childhood curriculum innovations in two Chinese kindergartens', *The Curriculum Journal*, 30(3), pp. 279-297.

Yin, R.K. (2018) *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Yu, Y. and Sun, Q. (2002) 园本课程开发的思考 *Reflections on Kindergarten-Based Curriculum Development. Early Education*, (8), pp. 5-6.

<https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:ZQJY.0.2002-08-002>.

Yu, Y. and Zhang, S. (2019) 从模仿借鉴到规范创新——新中国成立 70 年来幼儿园课程的发展 *From Imitation and Learning to Standardization and Innovation: The Development of Kindergarten Curriculum Since the Founding of New China 70 Years Ago. Journal of Nanjing Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, (6), pp. 34-48.

<https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:NJSS.0.2019-06-004>.

Zhang, B. and Yu, Y.P. (2024) 百廿年我国幼儿园课程的发展与启示 *Development and Implications of China's Kindergarten Curriculum Over the Past Century. Early Childhood Education Research*, 8, pp. 12-22.

Zheng, Z. (2013) 民办幼儿园政府规制研究 *Research on Government Regulation of Private Kindergartens*. Doctoral thesis. Southwest University. Available at:

https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=dTSX2bdXfeAdZVqxn1NYhPUzisV4iSCHHi4JhniLqijqcRajWe0e2CcHuk1fUSO-R8rBhJTW71oO8_ZpvUnsDXdEEMtwwlSyZK-G0iZwv68vuZxvaaEi_zaAojUxps33bHs3C3VNOKEU-x-629aIGxkbXt9gCeHhFTNyaKbseapW-Fp_uDBC1w==&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS (Accessed: 28 July 2025).

Zuo, W. (2007) 中国传统文化与幼儿园课程整合研究 *Research on the Integration of Chinese Traditional Culture and Kindergarten Curriculum. Science, Education and Culture Review (First Ten-Day Issue)*, (22), p. 91.

<https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:KJWH.0.2007-08-070>.