

Pathways for Curriculum Development in Ethnic Minority Region Kindergartens from the Perspective of Strengthening the Chinese Nation Community

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Abstract: Strengthening the Chinese Nation Community is the path to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, encompassing the construction and development of all ethnic regions. As the initial stage of the education system within the Chinese Nation Community, kindergartens in ethnic regions shoulder the responsibility of cultivating new generations capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation. Starting from the perspective of strengthening the Chinese Nation Community, this study analyzes the significance and implementation pathways of curriculum development in ethnic minority region kindergartens and proposes how to scientifically and effectively integrate the Chinese Nation Community with the construction of kindergarten curricula in ethnic regions. By proposing pathways such as institutional safeguards, promoting cooperation across various platforms, updating educational concepts, and fostering teacher competencies, this study aims to construct a kindergarten curriculum in the new era that aligns with the Chinese nation, providing insights and inspiration for curriculum development in ethnic minority region kindergartens.

Keywords: Chinese Nation Community, Ethnic Minority Regions, Kindergarten Curriculum Development.

1. Introduction

Throughout history, the Chinese people of all ethnic groups have formed an indivisible Chinese Nation Community characterized by unity and collaboration. Whether in politics, economy, culture, or other vital aspects, they have become an inseparable whole. Based on a review of existing research, studies on strengthening the Chinese Nation Community are mostly conducted from theoretical and practical perspectives. Research on education in ethnic minority regions predominantly focuses on higher education and primary and secondary education, with scarce research on preschool education in these areas. Theoretically, academic debates have been conducted from multiple dimensions, such as the internal structure from the Chinese nation to the Chinese Nation Community^[1], the meta-concepts of community and community consciousness^[2], and others. Some studies have also used bibliometrics to summarize researchers' understanding of the connotation of the Chinese Nation Community consciousness^[3]. In practice, each scholar has their own research dimension, such as examining it from the four dimensions of politics, economy, culture, and society^[4], or from the three aspects of ideology, ideological ecology, and ideological mindset^[5], or presenting research dynamics at different levels from macro to micro^[6]. Supported by these broad theoretical research directions, recent studies on Chinese Nation Community education in ethnic minority regions have begun to focus on higher education. Research has shown that to strengthen Chinese Nation Community education in ethnic minority region higher education, efforts can be made in various aspects such as educational mechanisms^[7], teaching modes^[8], and educational resources^[9]. In compulsory education, it is possible to start with regular teaching, leveraging its foundational and crucial role^[10], making school education an important driving force in the construction of the Chinese Nation Community^[11].

In summary, China has achieved fruitful research results on

the Chinese Nation Community, with studies related to ethnic minority regions mostly focusing on higher education institutions. Research on strengthening the Chinese Nation Community in preschool education in ethnic minority regions is scarce, with existing research only providing theoretical analyses. Research on kindergarten curriculum development remains blank, making it urgent to conduct such studies.

2. The Significance of Curriculum Development in Ethnic Minority Region Kindergartens from the Perspective of Strengthening the Chinese Nation Community

President Xi Jinping once pointed out, "It is necessary to deeply carry out education on the consciousness of the Chinese Nation Community among cadres and masses of all ethnic groups, especially starting from youth education."^[12] Ethnic minority children's education is one of the essential pathways to strengthen the consciousness of the Chinese Nation Community, and curriculum development is a crucial basis for implementing education in ethnic minority region kindergartens. Therefore, it is necessary to consider both aspects.

Strengthening curriculum development in ethnic minority region kindergartens is conducive to fostering the consciousness of the Chinese Nation Community among ethnic minority children and consolidating ethnic unity. Children are a valuable resource for the country's future and are the inheritors and innovators of values and culture. Curriculum development from the perspective of the Chinese Nation Community must be integrated and interconnected across early childhood, primary, secondary, and higher education, with children's education being a continuously spiral and progressive process. This approach not only ensures seamless connections between coherent educational content and methods, avoiding staged disruptions, but also

enables children to receive nurturing education across cognitive, emotional, and skill-based dimensions: deepening their understanding of solidarity, evoking a sense of shared destiny, and cultivating patriotic behaviors from the inside out.

Strengthening curriculum development in ethnic minority region kindergartens is beneficial for cultivating appropriate social emotions among ethnic minority children and promoting ethnic exchanges. Kindergarten-aged children are at the starting point of their lives and have not yet developed strong feelings of love for their country, hometown, or fellow citizens, urgently requiring guidance and instruction from teachers and caregivers. Integrating Chinese culture into curriculum development in ethnic minority regions helps children understand their national, local, and family cultures, thereby evoking a sense of national pride, ethnic pride, and family pride. Through the interaction between general education and ethnic education, it inspires prosocial behavior, patriotic sentiments, and a sense of shared responsibility among children.

Strengthening curriculum development in ethnic minority region kindergartens is conducive to cultivating positive cultural discourse among ethnic minority children and promoting ethnic identity. The Chinese Nation Community is the root of Chinese national culture, while the ethnic cultures of various regions are the intricate branches intertwined with each other, forming the most distinctive Chinese culture. Ethnic culture is also a product of a nation's continuous exploration and advancement through history, preserved after undergoing selection and elimination, and needs to be passed down through ideal curricula. Firstly, integrating ethnic culture with curriculum development allows for the effortless transmission of culture through nurturing curricular activities, replacing tedious cramming with game-based forms to create engaging and valuable ethnic curricula. Secondly, integrating ethnic culture with curriculum management enables administrators to effectively mobilize various resources such as personnel, materials, and finances during the curriculum development process, encouraging kindergarten teachers to proactively develop locally-specific curricula. This approach helps children become advocates for their own ethnic cultures and active voices for Chinese culture through osmosis.

3. Pathways for Curriculum Development in Ethnic Minority Region Kindergartens from the Perspective of Strengthening the Chinese Nation Community

3.1. Institutional Safeguards and Status Elevation

Accelerate the introduction of laws and policies, incorporating the essential requirements of strengthening the Chinese Nation Community into the curriculum development of preschool education in ethnic minority regions through legislation. Currently, there are no laws directly related to the preschool education stage in China, so teachers are only encouraged to conduct curricular activities related to patriotism, revolutionary spirit, traditional culture, etc. Laws are mandatory regulations that, once established, must be adhered to and practiced by all citizens. Compared to informal institutions, the provision of legal institutions is characterized by clear authority, procedural rigor, and seriousness. [13] Ethnic minority regions have their specificities, and

China's vast ethnic system endows it with unique history and characteristics. To achieve national prosperity and strength and maintain an invincible position in the ever-changing and turbulent international environment, it is essential to unite the 56 ethnic groups to form an unbeatable synergy, enhancing our voice in the global arena. Kindergarten curricula in China are mostly conducted in the form of activities across five domains. The term "domain" refers to a curricular concept that defines different scopes or modules of children's developmental experiences or educational content. [14] Recognizing the unique value of strengthening the Chinese Nation Community, it is clear that our country's future is closely linked to it, and it is firmly believed that only through education on the consciousness of the community at the preschool stage can the patriotism, pride, and fighting spirit of ethnic minority region children be further inspired. Therefore, strengthening the Chinese Nation Community and curriculum development in ethnic minority region kindergartens are mutually reinforcing, with laws serving as the fundamental guarantee for their mutual achievement and the fundamental pathway to realizing their goals.

Increase financial expenditure and establish a long-term financing mechanism for preschool education featuring "government financial investment as the primary source, with shared responsibility among governments at all levels." [15] Under central leadership, special funds should be provided, with clear responsibilities assigned to governments at all levels to ensure that preschool education has its own financial system to support it.

In 2018, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued several opinions on deepening reform and standardizing the development of preschool education, with financial investments mainly focusing on establishing inclusive kindergartens, providing inclusive services, and subsidizing impoverished children in preschool education. At the national level, research is being conducted on policies such as supporting the development of preschool education through the Central Special Lottery Public Welfare Fund [16], without breaking it down into specific program funds. At the local level, the development of preschool education varies based on local conditions and is closely related to the local political and economic development. Therefore, curriculum development in ethnic minority region kindergartens also relies primarily on local conditions, with no mature related investment mechanism currently in place as a guarantee. Curriculum development cannot be achieved without financial support. The cultivation of the consciousness of the Chinese Nation Community among preschool children mainly relies on game-based activities, which involve expenses including activity funds, startup funds for large-scale themes, and environmental creation for holidays. Therefore, increasing the proportion of financial investment is a necessary condition for integrating the consciousness of the Chinese Nation Community into kindergarten curriculum development.

Strengthening teacher training and raising the industry entry standards for preschool education teachers. Teachers are the backbone and core force in curriculum development. To fully enlighten children's awareness of the Chinese community at the preschool stage, it is essential to address the issue of teaching staff. Currently, the criteria for assessing the qualifications of kindergarten teachers in China are relatively simplistic, with possession of a kindergarten teacher's certificate being the minimum threshold. There are also very

few promotion opportunities available for kindergarten teachers in ethnic regions, making it difficult to meet training standards. The prerequisite for correctly promoting the spirit of the Chinese national community is that kindergarten teachers must possess excellent, positive, and dedicated abilities, enabling them to not only fully leverage the advantages of ethnic regions but also advance in the direction of realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. High-quality development is the fundamental tone for the teacher workforce in rural kindergartens in ethnic regions.^[17] However, the existing teaching staff in ethnic regions is still relatively weak, with most teachers willing to participate in frontline teaching and childcare work in kindergartens in these areas having undergraduate or lower qualifications, and there are even cases of unqualified temporary staff participating in educational activities. Clearly, raising the industry entry standards for preschool education teachers and promoting diverse and high-quality development of the preschool education industry in ethnic regions play a crucial role in consolidating the Chinese community.

These three pathways are essential for the country to achieve ultimate success in promoting the awareness of the Chinese community at the preschool education level. With the law as the guiding principle, finance as the guarantee, and teachers as the focal point, the goal of closely intertwining kindergarten curriculum development in ethnic regions with the community is within reach.

3.2. Building Platforms and Collaborative Cooperation

Establish a collaborative education mechanism and build an information platform to promote cooperation among homes, kindergartens, and communities, and expand curriculum resources in ethnic regions. The "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)" clearly states in its general provisions that kindergartens should cooperate closely with families and communities.^[18] The education provided by kindergartens is formal education, while family and community education are informal education; the former supplements the latter and is not a substitute, and the two are interdependent and indispensable. Kindergartens should establish a complete home-kindergarten co-education system based on the principles of fairness, equality, and respect, using information technology to form a collaborative educational force. Develop community resources; ethnic regions have unique social curriculum resources, such as the nomadic culture of northern Xinjiang, the song and dance culture of Yunnan and Guizhou, and the ice and snow culture of Northeast China. With advancements in science and technology, these distant and unfamiliar ethnic cultures can be brought closer through internet-based resource databases, integrating multiculturalism into diverse kindergarten curricula. Therefore, driven by mechanisms, supported by platforms, and relying on kindergartens, we should fully leverage the advantages of whole-society education and stimulate a sense of identity and ethnic belonging towards the Chinese community in preschool curriculum development in ethnic regions. As the central hub, kindergartens should build bridges between kindergartens, families, and society to promote the development of community-based curricula in ethnic regions.

Whole-process education, updating the curriculum development concept for the transition from kindergarten to primary school in ethnic regions. The "Regulations on

Kindergarten Work" clearly stipulate the transition from kindergarten to primary school in kindergarten education: Kindergartens and primary schools should maintain close contact, cooperate with each other, and pay attention to the mutual connection between the two stages of education.^[19] Kindergarten curricula mainly aim to stimulate children's interest and awareness, while primary school curricula introduce specific teaching content and objectives. From the perspective of lifelong learning and development, the future of a country is inseparable from education at every stage, and scientific education should be valued from childhood to old age. Existing kindergarten curricula in ethnic regions are mostly based on Piaget's theory of cognitive development, with teachers adept at presenting diversified knowledge points through games, activities, and daily life. However, primary schools emphasize knowledge-based subject education, leading to a disconnect between the two, necessitating a coordinated and consistent teaching system. Firstly, fostering the awareness of the Chinese community is a crucial part of values, moral, and outlook on life education and should be integrated throughout the entire process of early childhood and primary education, inspiring children's collectivist spirit and sense of social responsibility. Therefore, kindergarten and primary school teachers can collaborate across institutions to develop continuous curricula centered on children. Finally, update the educational concept of curriculum development and integrate the awareness of the Chinese community into the entire process of early childhood and primary education, from shallow to deep and from surface to essence.

Comprehensive education, integrating with the five domains of the curriculum. Kindergarten education is comprehensive, with the five domains interpenetrating and complementing each other.^[20] Based on three-dimensional objectives, patriotism education in kindergartens not only involves cognitive instruction but also emotional nurturing and practical behavior. The "Guide" also emphasizes paying attention to the holistic development of children's learning.^[21] Kindergartens do not have clear subject-based teaching; the so-called activities in the five domains are also comprehensively integrated into daily routines. Therefore, under the goal of high-quality education development, we should adhere to scientific guidance and incorporate the consolidation of the Chinese community into all aspects of kindergarten curriculum development. Current curriculum practices related to the community in ethnic regions are mostly concentrated in the language domain, emphasizing the implementation strategy of parallel use of the national common language and local languages, with specific measures such as establishing multiple inclusive bilingual kindergartens. However, curriculum development in other domains needs improvement. Therefore, starting from a child-centered perspective and based on the laws of children's physical and mental development, the remaining four domains can be organically integrated with language: in the social domain, cultivate children's well-rounded personality as socialist builders and successors; in the health domain, foster children's vitality and positive outlook as creators in the new era; in the science domain, nurture children's inquisitive spirit to maintain the enduring vitality of Marxism in the future; and in the art domain, cultivate children's ability to appreciate unique beauty, express mysterious beauty, and create universal beauty when promoting their own ethnic culture.

Kindergarten curricula should be dynamic, contextual, and diverse, and ethnic kindergarten curricula can also incorporate ethnic characteristics. The forging of the Chinese community cannot be achieved by the capabilities of a single aspect or driven by the development of a single region; it can only be achieved through the joint efforts of the entire Chinese nation. As an important platform for community awareness education, kindergartens in ethnic regions should shoulder the responsibility of connecting various resources, effectively integrating and utilizing them, and ultimately achieving the expectation of whole-process and comprehensive education through curriculum development.

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