

# ***Comparative Analysis of the Teaching Organization Form Between Chinese and German Kindergartens***

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**Abstract:** Germany is the birthplace of preschool education, and after long-term development, it has formed a relatively complete advanced preschool education system. Kindergarten education is part of preschool education. Therefore, this study hopes to play a certain role in the current kindergarten reform in China by comparing the differences between the teaching organization forms of kindergartens in China and Germany, drawing on the advantages of the current kindergarten education in Germany and combining it with the local situation in China. The reasons for the difference between Chinese and German kindergartens will be analyzed from the organizational form of kindergartens. The biggest difference between German and Chinese kindergartens is that German kindergartens adopt mixed-age classes, while Chinese kindergartens adopt same-age classes. The reasons for these differences are the two countries' policies and economic and cultural attitudes. Then it compares the theoretical basis of different teaching organization forms in the two countries, analyzes the value of these two different teaching organization forms, and combines the advantages of German kindergarten education to put forward reasonable and feasible suggestions for Chinese kindergarten education.

**Keywords:** teaching organization form, kindergarten, China, German.

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, early childhood education in China has become a hot topic, and it is of great significance to the cultivation of talents and the progress of society. Early childhood education in Germany has gradually formed an education system with its own characteristics in the course of long-term development.

Due to the differences in political, economic and cultural traditions between China and Germany, the two countries have formed their own unique early children education systems. Comparing the preschool education systems of China and Germany is of great significance for the author to understand the differences between the preschool education systems of China and Germany, to learn from the advanced preschool education experience of Germany, to promote the reform of preschool education in China, and to guide the development of the theory and practice of preschool education in China.

This research analyzes three reasons for the differences between China and Germany in the form of teaching organization: policy, economy and culture. Then the author analyzes and compares the

difference of the theoretical basis and value of the two educational systems. The author hopes to provide a useful reference for the current preschool education in China.

Finally, it is hoped that this research can help improve the quality of kindergarten education in China, so that children can get more comprehensive development and better adapt to the environment.

## **2. German**

### **2.1. Teaching Organization Forms**

The teaching organization forms of German kindergarten is mixed-age class: the class size is small and each class does not exceed 20 people. The daily teaching activities mainly adopt individual teaching and group activities, and do not organize collective activities of the whole class.

In Germany, with the increase in the number of only children, the education of only children is prone to problems such as poor social adaptation, so the organization form of mixed-age education in German kindergartens is very common. German kindergartens are divided into Kita (0-3 year old group) and Kindergarten (3-6 year old group). Parents can choose the enrollment time according to the specific situation of children, and they can be accompanied by parents. Kindergartens can be grouped according to children's age, ability and interest, and group activities can also be carried out according to the content of educational activities. Children have greater flexibility in learning and playing activities, and communication between children at different ages can also promote the development of children's cognition, emotion and sociality.

The German government attaches great importance to early childhood education, providing early childhood education services through various types of educational institutions such as state, private or church, and most of the operating funds are provided by the state. In addition, Germany has also adopted legislation such as the "Basic Principles for the democratization of Education in Germany" and the "Educational Structure Plan" to ensure that all children have the same educational opportunities, and early childhood education between the ages of 3 and 6 has been included in the basic part of the education system, especially early childhood education between the ages of 5 and 6 has been included in the compulsory education, thus greatly improving the enrollment rate and education quality of young children. Germany is a federal country with a lot of autonomy for the federal states. The federal cantons are free to develop themselves on the basis of educational programmes issued by the National Ministry of Education [1].

Germany is a developed capitalist country, and its strong economic strength provides a good economic foundation for Germany to vigorously develop preschool education.

The slogan advocated by Germans is: to cultivate a complete person. Second, the government emphasizes that children are closely related to the ecological environment and hopes that children will explore nature. Therefore, the preschool curriculum and parental education both reflect the idea of valuing nature, and respecting the natural and free development of children. Third, when the preschool was established in Germany, the government had already realized the importance of play and included it in the curriculum.

### **2.2. Theory**

The ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner is one of the theories that occupy an important position in the theory of child development. In the early stage of individual development, family and school in the micro-system will be the most direct ecological systems affecting children's behavior. Bronfenbrenner's theory recognizes that child development is shaped by ongoing interactions with the environment [1]. Under the theory of Bronfenbrenner, the interaction between teachers and children and the interaction between children's peers not only connects them, but also influences each other.

Lev Vygotsky believes that teaching must take into account the learning and psychological characteristics of young children, and young children's learning is not isolated, but an interconnected process. Therefore, teaching not only serves children's present, but also connects children's tomorrow, which is why Vygotsky proposed the concept of "recent limit zone". The "zone of proximal development" refers to the actual level of development that the child can achieve independently and the potential level of development that the child can achieve under adult guidance and peer interaction, and the gap between the two is the child's closest development zone. This concept has direct guiding significance for our implementation of mixed-age education: in the process of teaching and children's play, teachers should not only pay attention to the level that children have reached, but also pay attention to the level that children can reach on "tiptoe" under the guidance of teachers and parents, and in the communication of children of the same age and different ages. In the mutual communication and communication of young children, young children can find the difference between themselves and themselves through "direct communication" with older or outstanding children of the same age, and directly imitate or learn the skills or abilities of others by drawing on games and language communication and other forms, which provides young children with a direct and visible "recent development zone" discovered by themselves. Relying on their own "discovery" to promote their own development, is also the advantage of mixed-age education.

On the basis of absorbing behaviorism, humanism and cognitive psychology, Bandura proposed social learning theory, also known as social cognitive behaviorism. First, social learning theory suggests that by observing the behavior of others and their reinforcing consequences, a person acquires certain new behaviors, or an existing behavioral response characteristic is corrected. Bandura proved the influence of example on the development of young children through experiments. Therefore, in Bandura's theory, individuals only need to learn new reactions by observing others' behaviors. In observation, the demonstrator can be the person and situation in the real background, or it can be other electronic media platforms such as television and computers. Therefore, it is necessary and necessary for young children to provide a prepared environment. Secondly, it has a unique advantage for children in mixed-age background. Through interaction with older children, it can provide a direct observation object for younger children and provide direct cases in the recent development area. For older children, the role of example also gives their own self-supervision, self-restraint space and opportunities.

### 2.3. Value

In Learning science in small multi-age groups: the role of age composition, Maria Kallery and Thomais Loupidou discussed the importance of early education. How children's comprehensive cognitive achievement in science is affected by older children in a small multi-age working class. Through the results analysis, there was a linear relationship between the overall performance of younger children in a class and the number of older children in the class who participated in the group. Thus, the age composition of these groups influences the overall cognitive achievement of younger children and prioritizes determining when this factor is at its maximum. These findings can be used to determine the age composition of a class group in order to facilitate young children's learning in science [2]. Nina S. Mounts, in *Social-Cognitive Play Patterns in Same-Age and Mixed-Age Preschool Classrooms*: children may gain the unique advantage of adaptive socialization through mixed times. By observing children's behaviors at different ages, the analysis results show that under the same playback mode, children in mixed-age education fields imitate more behaviors than children in single-age education background. There was no program or age difference in the number of different drama themes used by children, but the results showed significant age and gender differences in the play interaction mode. These data show that preschool children achieve classroom teaching goals under mixed educational backgrounds [3].

One teacher talked about: “When we mix 6 and 7-year-olds together, we can do different activities. For example, we go to the gym with mixed groups.

In these activities, there are great advantages to working across ages. Activity rating and grouping after the game, are not bad at all. We divided the children into "harmonious" groups and compared them with their peer groups. We do not have to consider what class they belong to, but what abilities they have, and what their strengths and weaknesses are [4].”

Laura M. Justice et al. did a study, this study examines the relations between classroom age variability on children's vocabulary development for 2,743 children between the ages of two years, nine months, and six years, 11 months enrolled in early childhood education settings in Denmark. Findings indicate a significant nonlinear relationship between the range of child age within a classroom and children's vocabulary development, such that classrooms with a maximum age range of 24 months were associated with the greatest gains in vocabulary growth. Results give direction to policy efforts focused on expansion of early childhood education programming [5].

In “Examination of pre-school teachers' opinions on mixed-age groups in education”, Okan Sarigoz et al. concluded that teaching in a mixed-age classroom gave teachers different perspectives on experiences and events, and that teachers had the most difficulty in preparing a joint education plan suitable for all age levels. Furthermore, in the research, it was concluded that receiving education with a mixed-age group supports the development of the students, gives responsibility to the older students, reinforces their knowledge, and gives exemplary behaviors to the younger students [6].

### 3. China

#### 3.1. Teaching Organization Forms

China's kindergarten education started in the early 20th century and, after more than 100 years of development, has formed a relatively perfect education system. Chinese kindergartens arrange classes according to age, generally 3-4 years old for small classes, 4-5 years old for middle classes, 5-6 years old for large classes. The number of each class is controlled within a certain range, but due to the large population, the class size in some areas is large, which affects the quality of education. Kindergarten education in China emphasizes the imparting of knowledge. Collective activities are commonly used by teachers, and the contents of activities are mainly decided by teachers.

China implements the management system of early childhood education under the leadership of The State Council, with the responsibility of local governments, management at different levels, and division of responsibilities among relevant departments. In China, the Ministry of Education will issue policies, and each region can make micro-adjustments to the curriculum according to its own situation. However, because some local leaders do not pay enough attention to early childhood education, the enrollment rate of young children in rural areas is low. In recent years, although the state has increased its investment and policy support for preschool education, there are still some problems, such as too few public kindergartens, high cost of private kindergartens, and low salaries of teachers, which affect the curriculum and teaching organization form of kindergartens in China.

China is a big developing country with a large population, although the economy has made rapid development since the reform and opening up, but the economic development between the east and west, between urban and rural areas is unbalanced, which also directly leads to the imbalance in the development of preschool education in China.

Although Chinese preschool education has begun to pay attention to the comprehensive development of children, due to the deep-rooted traditional educational concepts of Chinese parents, who have high expectations for their children's academic performance, parents tend to regard whether their children can learn knowledge in the kindergarten as the standard for evaluating the level of the kindergarten. Even now, there are cases where parents demand that the kindergartens teach primary

school knowledge in advance. Second, Chinese parents have a negative view of play, they think that playing will reduce the time for children to learn, and do not think that children can learn knowledge while playing. Therefore, under pressure from parents, kindergartens will give more emphasis to knowledge transmission, while ignoring the cultivation of children's individuality and interests [7].

### 3.2. Theory

Piaget's theory of cognitive development holds that children's cognitive development is carried out in stages, and each stage has its own specific cognitive characteristics and ability level. Age-oriented classes can ensure that the educational content and methods match the cognitive development stage of young children and promote their cognitive development.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory holds that children learn and develop in interactions with others. The interaction between children of the same age can provide an environment for them to learn from each other and support each other. In a peer class, children can more easily find partners with similar interests, abilities and levels of development to communicate and cooperate, thereby promoting their learning and development.

A class teaching system is a form of collective teaching, which organizes a certain number of students into fixed classes according to their age and knowledge level, and teaches the whole class in a planned way. This kind of teaching organization is conducive to the formation of strict teaching system to ensure the normal operation and quality of teaching activities. In the kindergarten stage, classes arranged according to age meet the requirements of the class teaching system, which can ensure that children in the same class are relatively close in knowledge level and learning ability, so as to facilitate teachers' teaching and management

### 3.3. Value

Age-oriented kindergarten can ensure that the educational content matches the children's cognitive level. Children of different ages differ in cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. By arranging classes according to age, teachers can develop appropriate teaching plans and activity programs according to the characteristics of children of different ages, which helps children to achieve the best development in an environment suitable for them.

Kindergarten is the first small society that children come into contact with, and age-based classes help children learn how to get along, communicate and cooperate with their peers in this small society. This experience is of great significance for the future development of children's social adaptability and interpersonal skills. In a class of the same age, children can more easily find partners with similar interests and hobbies to interact and learn, so as to cultivate social qualities such as team spirit, competitive sense and responsibility.

Arranging classes according to age helps kindergartens to better manage and utilize educational resources. The learning needs and ability levels of children of the same age are relatively close, which makes kindergartens more convenient and efficient in arranging teaching resources and making teaching plans. At the same time, arranging classes according to age can also help kindergartens better meet the expectations of parents and society, and improve the quality and efficiency of education.

Making classes according to age also conforms to the principle of teaching students according to their aptitude. By observing and analyzing the behavior and learning results of children of the same age, teachers can understand their individual differences and developmental needs, and provide them with more accurate and effective educational services. This personalized way of education helps to stimulate children's interest and enthusiasm in learning and promote their all-round development.

#### 4. Inspiration

At present, most of the children in kindergartens in China are the only child, and the characteristics of nuclear families lead to their lack of contact experience with children of different ages. However, the clear-cut classes arranged by age groups in kindergartens make the lack of age-different contacts in families do not get necessary compensation in kindergartens. Therefore, in order to improve the communication ability and social adaptability of children, the Chinese education department should consciously strengthen the communication between children and peers of different ages. They can try mixed-age classes in pilot kindergartens, and do one or two experimental classes at the beginning, of course, mixed-age education has higher requirements for teachers, which is also a problem China faces. On the basis of the existing age-based classes, kindergartens should organize more mixed-age teaching activities to help children gain more experience in interacting with peers of different ages.

With the country's strong support for rural preschool education, the enrollment rate of rural school-age children continues to rise. In rural preschool education, mixed-age education has also become a common form of kindergarten management. Taking Gansu Province as an example, with the vigorous promotion and popularization of preschool education in Gansu province, kindergartens have been basically realized in every village in the province, and the fairness of children's enrollment has been basically guaranteed, but a large number of small-scale mixed-age village kindergartens have also been formed. This form is not a spontaneous choice of rural kindergartens, but a choice that kindergartens are forced to make based on the principle of educational benefit under the conditions of the number of children, the number of teachers and the level of teachers. However, there are still gaps in the research on the teaching of mixed-age education in rural areas, such as the mixed-age preschool curriculum based on local culture and the teaching auxiliary books for teachers, etc., which deserve the author's continued attention, and they also need to increase the development of mixed-age curriculum in rural areas to provide a continuous theoretical and practical basis for the teaching of kindergarten teachers [8].

#### 5. Conclusion

According to the above research, it concluded that there are some differences in organization between Chinese and German kindergartens.

In terms of organization, China adopts a same-age class system, while Germany adopts a mixed-age class system. Children's interactions with each other will influence each other. In a mixed-age class, children of different ages can interact with each other, so it can improve children's communication skills and social adaptability, helping children gain experience from other children of different ages.

The reasons for these two differences can be summarized as follows: First, policy reasons. Because German kindergartens have greater autonomy, they have more opportunities to try what form is more suitable for children, so they can have these innovative but appropriate methods to improve the quality of raising children; Chinese kindergartens have less autonomy, and if the authorities want to make major reforms, they need to determine and ensure that the reform measures are correct, otherwise it will affect the children in kindergartens across the country. Germany places more emphasis on kindergartens, as most of the funding for kindergartens is provided by the state; although China's emphasis on kindergartens has been increasing in recent years, it has not yet reached a very high level of emphasis. Second, economic reasons. Germany is a developed country, with more funds to ensure the operation of kindergartens across the country, which is why Germany can provide most of the funding for kindergartens; while China is still a developing country, with regional economic development imbalances, so the authorities not only have to consider the economically developed areas, but also the economically backward areas when formulating policies, so in order to achieve

balance, there are many difficult places in reform. Third, cultural reasons. Germany values the comprehensive development of children and the natural development of children, and believes that playing is also a way of learning. The cultural concepts of thousands of years have profoundly influenced the concepts of parents in China. Parents believe that children need to acquire more knowledge, and that is what learning is, while they regard other forms of cultivation as a waste of time, such as playing, parents do not think that they can acquire knowledge by playing. Due to the pressure from parents, kindergartens have no choice but to set up courses as knowledge teaching, and only the same-age classes can facilitate teachers to conduct knowledge teaching.

This research provides some reference for the future development of Chinese kindergartens. In the current situation where the birth rate of newborns in China continues to decline, kindergartens have no choice but to find a more suitable form that suits the current situation in China. They need to find a more suitable form of child development. This study is beneficial to raising the awareness of Chinese kindergartens and parents about the importance of child education in kindergartens during the crucial period of children's growth. It provides higher quality education to help children adapt to the environment and find more suitable learning and living methods.

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