

A Comparative Research on the Implementation of Sex Education in Kindergartens between Fujian and Taiwan

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Abstract

The thesis takes the three kindergartens in Pingtung City of Taiwan Province and Ningde City of Fujian Province as research subjects. On the basis of the field trip thoroughly, questionnaire study and interview method are applied to compare the differences of comprehension, educational objective, content, and methods in sex education between Fujian and Taiwan kindergartens. Affected by the traditional thinking, teachers in Fujian kindergartens not only lacks sex education training but also have limited teaching ability to sex education. From the experience of Taiwanese kindergartens, teachers in Fujian kindergartens could learn that the sex education training enhancement and workshops and the improvement in goals, contents, and methods of sex education are important approaches to raise the quality of sexual education in Fujian kindergartens.

Key words: Sex education in Kindergartens, Fujian and Taiwan, Comparison

1. Introduction

Recently, incidents of sexual assaults against children in China have occurred frequently. According to the “Girls Protection” project investigation, there were 125 sexual assault cases exposed in the media in 2013, which indicates that there is 0.34 incident of child sexual abuse per day on average. In 2014, the amount of child sexual abuse cases increases up to 503; in other words, an average of 1.38 incidents takes place per day. In 2015, the number of incidents declines to 340; there had been 0.95 incidents daily. In 2016, 433 incidents occurred, and the number of exposed happenings reported publicly reached 1.21 per day. Among them, about 70 percent of the parents did not educate their children against sexual assaults; about 90 percent of the children did not receive sex assault prevention lessons; 97 percent of the parents hoped that the school would start carrying out sex assault prevention lessons [1]. It is clear that the current sexual situation of children is not optimistic. It is extremely urgent to implement child sex education.

This study takes the teachers of six kindergartens on both in Fujian and Taiwan as research subjects. In order to confirm the objectivity of the comparison, kindergartens with the similar standards in education in Fujian and Taiwan were selected to be the research targets, inclusive of two excellent public kindergartens and one outstanding private kindergarten in Pingtung City and two provincial model kindergartens and one

advanced private kindergarten in Ningde City, Fujian Province. The study used the questionnaire and interview outline in Wang Yan’s “Study on the Status Quo and Countermeasures of Preschool Sex Education” [2] as a tool. That is, questionnaire studies and interviews are combined as the methods to do the investigation. A total of 182 questionnaires is distributed, 178 were collected, resulting in 97.8 percent response rate. 152 valid questionnaires are gathered. The validity rate is 85.4 percent. The total number of the teachers in three kindergartens in Pingtung City is 71 (55 public kindergarten teachers and 26 private kindergarten teachers). There are 81 teachers in Ningde City (55 public kindergarten teachers and 26 private kindergarten teachers). The interview survey was conducted with individuals in random. Namely, teachers’ free time would be used to develop a conversation with the researcher so as to deeply understand teachers’ real sensibility and different perspectives. Finally, the questionnaire survey data were statistically analyzed, and the implementation of sex education in Fujian and Taiwan kindergartens was discussed in a quantitative and qualitative analysis.

2. The Current Situation of the Sex Education Implementation in Kindergartens in two Places

2.1 Comparisons of teachers’ knowledge of sex education

The comparison of the preschool teachers’ knowledge of sex education can be seen from Figure 1 below. Less than 10% of teachers both in Fujian and Taiwan belong to “mildly comprehensive” group. However, the proportion of Taiwanese teachers both in “completely comprehensive” and “relatively comprehensive” groups are larger than the proportion of teachers in Fujian. In other words, preschool teachers in Fujian do not have the intimate knowledge toward sex education; most of them are in the “ordinarily comprehensive” group. It is observed that the vast majority of preschool teachers both in Fujian and Taiwan have an understanding of sex education, yet most of the teachers in Fujian have less understanding to sex education. Compare to Taiwanese preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers in Fujian have room for improvement..

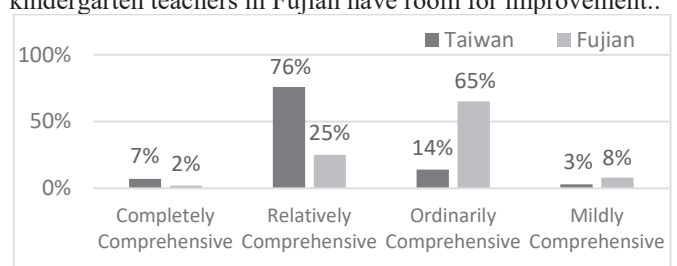


Figure 1 Kindergarten Teachers' Comprehension of Sex Education Knowledge in Fujian and Taiwan

2.2 The Comparisons of the Objectives in Sex Education

Taiwanese preschool teachers set the goal mainly for "self-protection ability enhancement" and "sexual physiological knowledge understanding", while preschool teachers in Fujian mainly focused on "correct concepts of sex formation" and "normal sex role behavior performance". Besides, in terms of the goal choice of "self-protection ability," Fujian is far lower than Taiwan as shown in Table 1 below. The objective of sex education in Fujian kindergarten is simply to make young children understand that boys and girls are different. Boys have to behave like a boy, and girls should behave like girls. They do not really notice that the core purpose in sex education implementation for children is to help children understand self-protection in order to avoid sexual assaults.

Table 1: Objectives Selection of Sex Education for Kindergarten Teachers in Fujian and Taiwan

Area	Taiwan	Fujian
Correct Concepts of Sex	74.1%	94.6%
Normal Sex Role Behavior	71.6%	91.3%
Sexual Physiological Knowledge	93%	62.7%
Body Nursing	61.3%	64.5%
Self-protection Ability	96.8%	54.7%
The Meaning of Life Understanding	68.2%	77.3%
Sex Equality and Care	72%	76%

2.3 Comparisons of Teaching Contents in Sex Education in Kindergartens

Taiwan regards "sex assault" as the primary content of sex education in kindergartens; meanwhile, Fujian focuses on the content of sex education on "sex differences" and "sexual identity" in kindergarten. Moreover, in terms of the content of "sexual assault" and "fertility knowledge", the teaching materials in Fujian is significantly less than in Taiwan as shown in Table 2 below. Compared with Taiwanese kindergartens, the selected content of sex education in Fujian kindergartens mainly focuses on simple sex differences and sexual identity, and teaching materials on "sex assault" and "fertility knowledge" is neglected and avoided.

Table 2: Comparisons of Kindergarten teachers' Content Selection to Children Sex Education in Fujian and Taiwan

Area	Taiwan	Fujian
Sex Differences	83.3%	94.8%
Sexual Identity	82%	93%
Genitals and Body Knowing	85%	86.2%
Genitals Hygiene Maintenance	83%	84.3%
Sex Assault	92.6%	53%
Fertility Knowledge	76%	33.9%
Gender Equality	77%	73%

2.4 Comparisons of Kindergarten teachers' Teaching Methods Selection of Children Sex Education

From the teaching methods in sex education in kindergartens, both the Fujian and Taiwan teachers regarded "didactic teaching" and "conversation methods" as the most primary method. The difference is that the selection of other methods of sex education in Fujian is significantly less than that in Taiwan, and the way is too monotonous and inflexible. From Figure 2 below, it could be clearly seen that Taiwanese teachers are superior to Fujian teachers in terms of "Book Reading" and "Sex Education Media Resources." Taiwanese

teachers are doing a better job in applying multiple ways to conduct sex education. In addition to didactic teaching and conversation method, Fujian teachers prefer children to learn by osmosis in their lives.

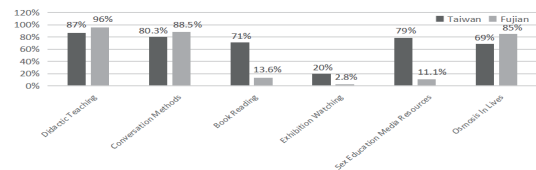


Figure 2. Kindergarten teachers' Methods Selection to Children Sex Education in Fujian and Taiwan

3. Analysis in Factors of the Differences in Sex Education Implementation Status in the Kindergartens of Two Places

The researchers conducted a questionnaire survey on the issue of "Difficulties in Sex Education Implementation" in kindergartens in Fujian and Taiwan. The statistical results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Difficulties in Sex Education Implementation in Fujian and Taiwan Kindergartens

Area	Taiwan	Fujian
Teachers Who Never Receive Sex Education Training	11.5%	74.2%
The Social Environment Which Lacks of Discussion of "Sex"	17.4%	89.3%
Weak Teaching Ability to Sex Education	9.7%	31.2%

3.1 Lack of Sex Education Training

Teachers lacking of sex education training are one of the factors that lead to the difficulties of sex education in kindergartens. From Table 3 we could see that the amount of "teachers who never receive sex education training" in Fujian is obviously more than in Taiwan, which is also confirmed in the face-to-face interviews with teachers. Most Fujian teachers indicated that they only had two-hour preservice teacher education to have the concepts about sex education in kindergartens from the course named Preschool Children Health Education. After the preservice teacher education, they never attend any training about kindergarten sex education. On the contrary, Taiwanese colleges and universities offers the course titled "Children's Sex Education." After working in the field of education, teachers would participate in specialized sex education training, or conduct teaching seminars by watching videos of excellent-quality foreign sex education courses. This leads that Taiwanese teachers have a better understanding of sex education knowledge than Fujian teachers. The lack of sex education training hinders the effective implementation of kindergarten sex education activities in Fujian.

3.2 Traditional Mode of Thinking is Deeply Rooted

Table 3 shows that in terms of "the Social Environment Which Lacks of Discussion of 'Sex,'" the social atmosphere in Fujian is more conservative than in Taiwan. For a long time, people in the Mainland China have been influenced by the traditional mode of thinking, so they think sex is obscene and forbidden. People are ashamed to talk about sex. Due to the social environment which lacks of discussion of sex, sex education is restricted. It is difficult for teachers to conduct sex education to children in a calm and confident way. On the contrary, Taiwan is relatively deeply influenced by Western perspectives, so Taiwanese's attitude to sex education is relatively open, which leads that Fujian people have fewer

obscure concepts of “self-protection ability enhancement, sexual assault, and fertility knowledge” than Taiwanese do. In terms of the methods of sex education, most Fujian people choose to teach children in an unobtrusive and imperceptible way. Some teachers even thought that children can “learn sex education by themselves” without any teaching after they grow up.

3.3 Weak Teaching Ability to Sex Education

As for “Weak Teaching Ability to Sex Education”, the amount of Fujian teachers is more than Taiwanese teachers, as shown in Table 3. In the interview, most Fujian teachers said that children often ask many questions about sex, for example, where did I come from? Why girls squat to urinate, but boys can stand to urinate? Children often display some behaviors related to sex. For example, some children would play with his or her reproductive organs. Some children would imitate kissing. Teachers would like to answer or educate children these related behaviors with appropriate words, but they have no sufficient ability. Sometimes teachers in Fujian would guide children in a deceptive and unhealthy way, which increases ignorant children’s curiosity and also brings children cognition bias to sex. This kind of teaching method as solution cannot essentially resolve problems that children have.

4. Inspiration and Recommendations

4.1 Fujian teachers should strengthen the sex education training and sex education workshops

Fujian should learn from Taiwanese developed sex education and workshops in order to promote Fujian teachers to understand sex education knowledge. First, in the preservice teacher education, each normal college should learn from Taiwanese universities to offer specialized courses related to Children’s Sex Education, or sexual physiology, sex psychology, sex education, and sexual knowledge of self-protection can be added to the existing courses like Human Anatomy, Preschool Hygiene, Preschool Children’s Health Education, and Child Psychology so as to ensure that teachers would have the ability to engage in children teaching activities of sex education.

Second, after entering the job, each kindergarten should organize teachers to participate in sex education training. For example, kindergarten authorities can recommend teachers to take part in specialist training held by famous teachers out of the kindergarten or investigate kindergartens which offer successful sex education course so as to learn others’ experience, or they could invite famous teachers to do demonstration.

Kindergartens should actively carry out sex education workshops. Through watching high-quality online video courses, such as “Where Willy Went” and “Knowing Your Body” and organizing teachers to present open classroom observation, preschool teachers can discuss the difficulties, methods, confusion, and so on in their teaching process. Teachers would help each other in the discussion so as to guarantee that the activities of sex education could run smoothly.

Finally, teachers themselves should improve their knowledge of learning sexual education. For example, teachers can read related books as Zheng Yuanjie’s “Where are You From, My Friend”, Wakayama Jingzi’s “Learn to love yourself Sex Education Picture Book” and so on, master practical skills

to explain sex knowledge in a reasonable way, dip into preschool education journals to read children sex education articles so as to provide the scientific guidance for sexual education practice activities [3]. Kindergarten teachers in Fujian may also learn from the advanced experience of children sex education in foreign countries. For instance, children are guided to receive sex education via books, stories, and so on, which leads Finland to be the country with the lowest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe. Japanese kindergartens conduct sex education through group activities, picture books, pictures, video clips, discussions, etc. The United Kingdom lists sex education as a national compulsory course, and the country stipulates children to receive sex education from the age of five [4]. Definitely, teachers are supposed to pay attention to the accumulation of practical knowledge in the firsthand exploration of sex education as well and improve their education skills in the reflection.

4.2 Breaking the Traditional Concepts of Forbidden Discussion of Sex Issues and Creating a Comprehensive Education Environment for Homes and Society

Sex is a natural physiological phenomenon accompanying human beings. It is by no means mysterious or filthy. Children’s curiosity about sex is simple and without any sexual physical needs. Educators should get rid of the constraints of traditional mode of thinking, establish correct concepts of sex education, accept the sexual curiosity of children, and treat children’s “questions about sex” easily and naturally [5]. Teachers should answer children’s questions about sex in a simple and easy-to-understand language rather than treat children with these questions with avoidance, cheating, sneering, rebuke, suppression, or teach sexual knowledge that is too deep and difficult for young children to understand.

In addition to relying on the guidance of kindergartens, early childhood sex education requires close coordination and effective cooperation between families and society. Parents live with their children for a long time, so parents will have more opportunities to implement sex education to young children, such as guiding children to know their body during bathing. Parents’ attitude towards marriage and the role of sex roles have also become the direct model for young children to imitate. Parents’ influence to children about the sex education is more profound than kindergarten education. However, most parents dare not to talk about sex, or they suffer from ignorance, which leads to the incomplete function of family education [6]. Therefore, kindergartens should promote the importance of sex education to parents through interactive methods such as parent conferences and online forums to guide parents to learn and participate in early childhood sex education activities to communicate with each other and discuss some sexual related questions or problems of young children so that parents could understand which standard of sexual knowledge is suitable for children physically and mentally in order to master the specific implementation methods to sex education. In addition, children’s ability to discrimination is very weak, so the bad “sexual information” in the social media such as television and the Internet should be purified. The legislature should improve legislation and punish employees who work to disseminate obscene sex-related information through television, internet, books, and periodicals. TV media should design “children’s programs” especially for young children according to their characteristics at their age. The TV media should create a good social

atmosphere and promote the development of healthy sexual attitudes for young children.

4.3 Completion of Objective, Content, and Methods in Children Sex Education and Teacher’s Teaching Ability to Sex Education Enhancement

Complete Sex Education objective, content, and methods are the foundation of open sex education. When teachers are able to clarify what to teach, how much to teach, and how to teach, they could find principles to follow and guide children effectively in the process of teaching sex education [7]. Regarding the objective of sexual education for young children, scholar Jinhua Huang puts forward a more comprehensive view, as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4. The Objectives of Children Sex Education [8]

Target Dimension	Specific Content
Sex Role Education	Children can correctly identify different sex. Children can understand the behavior performance of different sexes. Children can show behaviors corresponding to their own sex.
Self-protection	Children are able to recognize the shape and function of the reproductive organs. Children can develop good hygiene habits such as body cleansing. Children can prevent the reproductive organ system from diseases and problem behaviors. Children can protect private parts, identify inappropriate physical touch, know how to refuse and seek help, and avoid sexual assaults.
Love Education	Children can know the origin and meaning of life. Children will know how to love and cherish life. Children will cultivate love and care for himself/herself and others.

Every objective in Table 4 is vital and indispensable. Compared with Taiwan, Fujian Kindergarten should especially strengthen the implementation of the “self-protection” goal. In recent years, the incidence of sexual assault on children in Fujian and even in the whole country has been continually increasing. The public welfare project “Girls Protection” appeals to all sectors of society to pay attention to children’s education of prevention of sexual assault. Kindergartens really need to set “enhance self-protection ability” as a crucial goal in early childhood sex education. At the same time, Chinese preschool teachers should follow the example of Taiwanese kindergartens to attach importance to and increase the proportion of “anti-sexual assault” education content. Preschool teachers should tell young children to protect their private part and do not to let others peep or touch them casually. Preschool teachers also need to teach children if they are inappropriately touched by bad people, they need to learn to call out for help, call 110, 120 or parents. Children also need to learn to attack the bad guys’ vital part when the situation is serious [9].

In terms of sex education, Fujian Kindergartens should learn from Taiwan and broaden the variety of educational methods according to the age characteristics of young children to stimulate children’s interest and improve the educational effect. In addition to the traditional “didactic teaching”, the sex education method also includes the following five types of methods: First, the teacher-child conversation, that is, conversation method. By doing so, teachers can help children understand the “sex” questions or behaviors, giving timely answers, analysis, and correction.

The second is to educate children and unobtrusively and imperceptibly. For example, parents could teach children what is their private part when they are taking a shower in order to help them learn how to protect their private part [10]. Third, teachers could utilize picture books to educate children. For

example, teachers could use the picture book named “Where Willy Went” to introduce children the process of life forming with images and simple languages.

Fourth, teachers could guide children with games to education. For example, teachers could encourage children to play the role of mother or nurse, and boys could play the role of father or policeman in role play so as to guide children to perform behavior corresponding to their gender [11]. Fifth, teachers could teach children sex education in a visual way. For instance, teachers could show human torsos to children and get them to know the shape and the function of reproductive organs preliminarily. Teachers could play the video clip of the growth and development of the fetus and the process of animal propagation and growth so as to educate children to understand the growth process of life. Teachers could guide children to observe the love and care of animals to their next generation in order to foster children to cultivate care and love toward others [12]. Moreover, teachers could use nursery rhymes, storytelling, painting, performance, discussion, and such ways which children like to conduct sex education. These methods mentioned above are far easier for children to receive than dull and boring preaching.

5. Conclusion

All in all, Learning from the successful experience of sex education in Taiwan’s kindergartens undoubtedly is the important access to enhance the quality of sex education in Fujian kindergartens. Fujian kindergartens should enhance the knowledge learning of sex education, establish scientific concepts of sex education, create a comprehensive education environment for homes and society, improve the objective, content and methods of children’s sex education.

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