

The Current Situation and Improvement Strategies of Kindergarten Principals' Leadership under the Background of Educational Reform

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Abstract: Kindergarten principals focus on the entire kindergarten as their work object and scope of activities, integrating three professional roles: leader, manager, and educator. In the context of preschool education reform, the improvement of kindergarten principals' leadership has received increasing attention. The formation of leadership among kindergarten principals is a complex and systematic issue, and there is currently relatively little research on the leadership of kindergarten principals, and a complete research system has not yet been formed. Based on this, this study combines quantitative and qualitative research, providing a new perspective for improving the leadership of kindergarten principals, enriching the preschool education theory in educational leadership theory, and providing theoretical reference for improving leadership. It also serves as a valuable reference for further research by experts and scholars.

Keywords: Educational transformation; Kindergarten; Principal; Leadership

1. Introduction

Firstly, the quality of preschool education in China is receiving increasing attention and attention. As a sensitive stage of physiological, cognitive, linguistic, and social development in a person's life, the education received during this period will also have a profound impact on children's future development. And from the perspective of educational equity, preschool education plays an important role in promoting equal educational opportunities and providing equal opportunities for children's development. It can be said that preschool education is one of the important strategies to promote the lifelong development of individuals, improve national quality, and narrow social disparities. However, currently, preschool education is still a relatively weak link in the development of basic education in China. At the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it was clearly proposed to attach importance to preschool education, which greatly promoted the development of preschool education in China and provided unprecedented broad space for the construction and development of preschool education^[1].

Secondly, in the context of educational reform, the importance of leadership by kindergarten principals is becoming increasingly evident. With the deepening development of economic globalization and the continuous transformation of society, China has established a policy of "local responsibility and hierarchical management" in order to better adapt to the reform of the economic system and promote changes in the field of education^[2]. Therefore, the autonomy of kindergarten education has also been strengthened. From this, it can be seen that the core position of kindergarten principals in China has also become prominent, and their abilities and leadership directly determine the sustainable development of kindergartens. In the process of educational reform, if the role of the principal is simply defined as a kindergarten manager, it will not be able to better adapt to this change. In this regard, the principal should be committed to gradually transforming the kindergarten from a "hierarchical structure" to a "professional structure", and actively play its guiding role. However, in reality, there are still many kindergartens that have not been able to better adapt to the requirements of educational reform for kindergartens. Therefore, how to fully leverage the leadership role of kindergarten principals and create an organizational environment conducive to change is an important issue that needs to be urgently addressed. Therefore, in the context of quality education in the new era, it is crucial to enhance the leadership, especially the key leadership, of kindergarten principals.

2. Analysis of Factors Influencing the Key Leadership Ability of Kindergarten Principals

In order to make the entire study richer and more credible, this study adopts two methods: questionnaire and interview to investigate the leadership of kindergarten principals. The survey subjects were the principals, faculty, and parents of three kindergartens. After clarifying the survey subjects, a survey questionnaire needs to be designed. In response, the author searched for relevant literature content on the leadership of kindergarten principals through keywords on academic platforms such as CNKI, Wanfang, and VIP to understand the factors and indicators involved in the leadership of kindergarten principals. At the same time, the questionnaire was given to professionals for evaluation, and then the questionnaire was revised based on their feedback. Analyze the indicators, reliability, and validity after the survey, and then optimize the scale based on SPSS software to become research supporting data.

2.1 Questionnaire implementation stage

Mainly through offline collection. By utilizing the time after school in three kindergartens, the opportunity was obtained to directly provide the questionnaire to users, and the questionnaire was collected on-site using interview methods. In the end, a total of 132 questionnaires were collected, excluding invalid and inaccurate responses, leaving 130 valid questionnaires. Firstly, there is an evaluation of the overall leadership of the three principals: In the questionnaire of this study, the Link5 point scoring method was adopted. In terms of scoring methods, the scores range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest level and 5 representing the highest level. According to a survey of the three principals, it was found that the overall leadership score of the three leaders was 4.28, indicating a higher level of leadership.

2.2 Result analysis

After completing the survey questionnaire design, it is necessary to check the rationality and reliability of the questionnaire, as different individuals have different ideas. Introducing reliability analysis at this time can effectively test whether the survey questionnaire we designed is suitable and whether we can truly obtain the information we want. Kerlinger also analyzed the role of reliability analysis in questionnaire surveys, and their research found that using reliability analysis is very stable and can ensure the reliability of questionnaire design. However, the most easily overlooked aspect in questionnaire design happens to be reliability analysis. Designers place too much emphasis on problem setting and questionnaire retrieval, neglecting the importance of reliability analysis, which leads to significant differences in survey results. The basic criteria for determining the reliability of the questionnaire by using the Cronbach's coefficient scores are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Questionnaire Reliability Evaluation Table

Cronbach's coefficient	Reliability
$\alpha < 0.6$	Untrustable
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Generally trustworthy
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Relatively reliable
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Very trustworthy

From the analysis results in the table above, it can be seen that in the evaluation of the key leadership of kindergarten principals, there is a strong correlation between the development planning ability of kindergartens, the ability to create educational culture, the ability to guide teachers' growth, and the ability to debug external environments, and the evaluation of the key leadership of kindergarten principals (the correlation numbers are 0.672, 0.726, 0.660, and 0.601, respectively). Among the key leadership abilities of kindergarten principals, the abilities of kindergarten development planning, creating educational culture, guiding teachers' growth, and adjusting external environment play a significant role in enhancing the key leadership abilities of kindergarten principals. The ability to lead childcare education and optimize internal management can also have a certain impact on the improvement of key leadership skills of kindergarten principals. The reason for this is largely due to the lack of personal experience of the principal, which leads to a lack of internal management, and the relative lack of leadership in grasping the development trend of the industry.

2.3 Problem analysis

In the survey, it was found that these three kindergarten principals lack awareness of education and care management, lack guidance on teacher growth, and also affect the performance of leadership and key leadership abilities. During interviews with the three principals mentioned above, it was found that their focus on teacher leadership is more reflected in their professional abilities, but they lack leadership requirements for education and conservation.

Organizational leadership ability refers to the optimization of internal management and the ability to debug external environments. Through questionnaire surveys and interviews, it was found that the three kindergarten principals still need to strengthen their internal management efforts. And all three kindergarten principals stated that when dealing with internal affairs, they can keep the kindergarten's work in an orderly manner and be able to cope with some unexpected situations. However, in many cases, kindergarten principals are not able to manage major and minor matters within the kindergarten in a meticulous manner. Frequent management often consumes a lot of energy, and I still have many things to do every day, such as going out to study or attending seminars, which can affect my further management and supervision of internal faculty and regulations.

3. Strategies for Improving the Key Leadership Ability of Kindergarten Principals

3.1 Constructing a comprehensive framework to enhance the leadership ability of kindergarten principals

By constructing a competency framework, kindergarten principals can have a clear understanding of the professional abilities of their staff, which is also a clear requirement for kindergarten principals' leadership in the Professional Standards. So the establishment of the indicator system needs to be determined based on the specific situation of different kindergartens. For example, Director Li of X Kindergarten has a clear plan for the future development of the kindergarten, and has strong internal management skills. However, he lacks leadership in adjusting the external environment, especially in communication with parents, as well as in the care and education work within the kindergarten. Regarding this, Li Yuanchang of X Kindergarten can formulate clear management measures for the shortcomings in the kindergarten, and refine these two aspects to every small point by designing indicators and establishing an indicator system. And continuously adjust the indicator system by observing the progress of childcare education work in daily life and communication with parents, until there is a significant improvement in childcare education work and external debugging ability.

3.2 Pay attention to and focus on improving the self-cultivation of the principal

Research on leadership has shown that human leadership is multidimensional and multifaceted, but 'critical leadership' is an important force for organizations and individuals to achieve success. Based on case studies of three kindergarten principals, it can be found that their key leadership abilities play an important role in running a good kindergarten. Therefore, to enhance the leadership ability of kindergarten principals, it is necessary to highlight the key points, focusing on enhancing the "key leadership abilities" that can determine their career and kindergarten quality. Among them, "goal awareness, independent development awareness, and stress resistance ability" play a particularly important role in the development of kindergarten principals' leadership ability. Therefore, as a leading figure in the kindergarten, the principal needs to have a clear sense of goal, maintain a forward-looking strategic vision, focus on the long-term development of the kindergarten, and continuously improve their key leadership skills.

4. Conclusion

Under the trend of educational reform, educational activities will involve many factors, especially in today's mature development of quality education, which has put forward clear requirements for schools and institutions at various stages of education. Various factors are intricately linked, making the process of educational change full of uncertainty and complexity. The core driving force of change is people. If educational change is to succeed, it is necessary to rely on personalized leaders, who act as agents of change in the kindergarten leadership responsible for all work in the entire kindergarten. Therefore, the leadership of the principal plays a crucial role in guiding the sustainable development of the entire kindergarten. In this study, specific case studies were used to re-examine the shortcomings in the current leadership and key leadership abilities of kindergarten principals, and important measures were proposed to enhance their own literacy and establish a key indicator system.

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