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A Literature Review of Teaching Efficacy in Preschool Education in China

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Abstract

The present study conducts a comprehensive literature review of the effectiveness of teaching in early childhood education within the context of China. The review centers on the historical development of preschool education in China and globally. Additionally, it includes a broad literature review of preschool educators, their optimistic beliefs, teaching efficacy, positive thinking, gratitude, and emotional commitment. This literature review investigates the evolution of preschool education curricula in China over time. The theoretical framework is grounded in the self-efficacy theory and social cognitive theory. It comprehensively examines factors such as optimistic belief, positive thinking, gratitude, emotional commitment, and teaching efficacy through a detailed review of each term. Broadly speaking, this literature review offers significant perspectives on the determinants that impact the effectiveness of pedagogy in early childhood education.

Keywords: *Preschool Education, China, Teaching Efficacy, Optimistic Belief, Positive Thinking, Gratitude, Emotional Commitment*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The literature review of preschool education is primarily focused, the history of preschool education in China and worldwide, and a literature review of preschool educators. It examines the prior research on preschool educators, optimistic belief, teaching efficacy, and the key terms of positive thinking, gratitude, and emotional commitment.

Preschool is considered the most crucial period for a child's formative development. Studies conducted in the field of preschool education over the past few decades have demonstrated the substantial advantages of providing high-quality education and enrichment opportunities. These benefits are closely associated with the development of individuals who are capable of contributing positively to society (Bracken & Theodore, 2023). According to the socioecological model from Bronfenbrenner (1989), a child's development is influenced not only by genetic factors but also by various microsystems, including the family, preschool

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educators, and peer groups. Up to now, Cagiltay et al. (2023) clarified that these relationships are affected by macrosystems as well. The macrosystem encompasses the societal and belief-level factors that impact an individual's development. The systems above comprise constituent components that encompass the process (i.e., the interaction with objects or individuals), the person (pertaining to the individual's interests and appearance), the context (encompassing the individual's home, school, community, and neighborhood), and the temporal dimension (encompassing historical changes and the duration of the process).

Bockmann and Yu (2023) affirmed that the acquisition of self-regulation abilities is paramount during the early stages of childhood. Various factors such as language proficiency, personal experiences, innate disposition, surroundings, and genetic predisposition impact this process. Positive interactions between early childhood educators and children can provide a protective influence, especially for children experiencing hardship (Lipscomb et al., 2014).

However, on an annual basis, it has been observed that around 27% of professionals in the field of early childhood care and education tend to experience turnover, implying that they either leave their positions or exit the field altogether. This phenomenon could potentially have a detrimental impact on quality in two distinct ways. The disruption of continuity occurs when teachers depart, resulting in the severance of significant relationship bonds between teachers, children, and families. Secondly, professionals who contemplate departing their current employment may experience dissatisfaction and preoccupation, which could potentially impede their ability to provide conscientious and suitable care for young children (McMullen et al., 2020).

Recent research by Santelices et al. (2022) has shown a significant and clear correlation between the development of the theory of mind (ToM) in children and the mentalizing abilities of primary caregivers and educators. ToM refers to the capacity to understand and predict the behavior of others based on their internal mental states, including their goals, thoughts, emotions, and beliefs (PREMACK & WOODRUFF, 1978; Tirapu-Ustárroz et al., 2007).

Therefore, it is crucial to address the psychological and professional elements that influence positive teaching efficacy outcomes, such as work engagement, job satisfaction, and expectations at work. By focusing on these factors, we can provide valuable support to preschool teachers, caregivers, and the children under their care, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of the preschool experience (Almqvist, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Lipscomb et al., 2014; PREMACK & WOODRUFF, 1978; Santelices et al., 2022; Tirapu-Ustárroz et al., 2007; Totenhagen et al., 2016).

1.2 Research Problem

In accordance with the *Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)* in China, kindergarten education is deemed an essential constituent of primary education, serving as the fundamental phase for school education and lifelong learning across the nation. The guidelines underscore the importance of contextualizing educational approaches in urban and rural kindergartens, intending to deliver high-quality education that equips children for their future growth and development.

The principal aim of kindergartens is to establish a supportive and dynamic setting that fosters the growth and development of young children. Providing a conducive environment that fosters the well-being of children and facilitates their holistic development is imperative for kindergarten institutions. The principal entails addressing the varied requirements of children

and enabling experiences that foster their physical and cognitive development during their formative early years (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

The guidelines stipulate that the primary objective of early childhood education holds significant importance for young children who possess boundless inquisitiveness towards the surrounding environment. Education is not solely a means of obtaining knowledge but also a crucial phase in cultivating children's ethical disposition. Early childhood education is widely regarded as a valuable asset in the development of children that can have a lasting impact throughout their lives. Preschool education activities typically commence with the initiation of preschool education. Preschool educators prioritize the foundational stage of early childhood education with regards to the long-term development of children, thereby ensuring their future healthy growth (Li, 2023).

Nevertheless, according to findings by Gu et al. (2020), preschool teaching has evolved into a highly demanding occupation; prolonged exposure to work-related stressors adversely impacts the overall well-being of preschool teachers. The ramifications of teacher stress are significant for educators and students alike, as well as for the overall quality of classroom dynamics (Ng & Meow, 2022). It is evident that preschool teachers invest immense effort and care in their profession, surpassing the expectations of an ordinary individual.

Consequently, the explicit and implicit burdens associated with their work and personal lives can lead to excessive psychological and emotional strain, potentially resulting in extreme and unfavorable outcomes, which implies that preschool teachers may be prone to experiencing psychological issues that can have detrimental effects on their teaching efficacy and overall quality of life.

1.3 Purpose

The primary aim of this literature review is to examine the previous literature on optimistic belief, positive thinking, gratitude, emotional commitment, and teaching efficacy among preschool educators. The goal is to enhance the management mode of human resources in kindergartens.

1.4 Significance

The primary objective is to enhance the human resources management approach within the kindergarten setting. Preschool education serves as a fundamental pillar of education, playing a vital role in shaping young children's physical, mental, and future adaptive capabilities. The development of students' character is influenced by their interactions with various environmental factors, including family, school, and friends (Baharun et al., 2022). It is crucial to acknowledge that, during this developmental stage, the preschool educator ought to possess adequate training, maintain a concentrated and vigilant approach towards the pedagogical process, exhibit commitment and attentiveness towards their pupils, and serve as a source of motivation. The educational material should possess precision, relevance, contemporaneity, and engagement, catering to the present and future requirements of the learners (Filgona et al., 2020).

The future of humanity is contingent upon the present state of education systems. The forthcoming and distant future of the world will be shaped by the younger generations who have received education through contemporary education systems. How children and adolescents receive education has significant and extensive consequences. The significance of education is paramount in the pursuit of improving the world by humanity. A superior

preschool education system will equip children with the skills necessary to identify and resolve basic study and life issues proficiently, enabling them to tackle the obstacles that arise in both present and future contexts (Özdoğru, 2022).

Conducting this review holds the potential to significantly impact management achievements at the school level as it seeks to improve the management mode employed within kindergartens' human resources departments.

2. The Definition of Terms

Optimistic Belief

Over the past decade, studies have shown that people have a positive bias when revising their opinions in light of new evidence. They are more inclined to change their minds when presented with favorable facts. One's outlook on life and ability to handle adversity are affected by one's level of optimistic belief. For instance, the trend of taking self-portraits, commonly known as "selfies," has significantly impacted the last twenty years. However, there is a lack of conclusive evidence regarding the correlation between selfie habits and self-assessments (Felig & Goldenberg, 2023). Bandura (1995) argues that human flourishing and success depend on people maintaining realistic expectations about their skills. Self-efficacy research conducted in the West has revealed that people frequently display overconfidence and optimism when doing academic tasks.

The phenomenon of optimistic belief updating was noted to persist from the initial presentation of new evidence, exhibiting a consistent level of strength across conditions of cognitive load, time pressure, and control. The fundamental discovery of the optimistic updating bias exhibited considerable resilience; however, the magnitude of this phenomenon remained comparable between the intuitive condition and the control condition, wherein participants were afforded additional time for contemplation (Sjåstad & Baumeister, 2023). As they stated, the hypothesis of "intuitive optimism" is not the sole proposition in existence. Furthermore, even if it were, there is a dearth of causal evidence supporting this particular effect.

Specifically, when aiming to relate the optimistic belief with the efficacy of early childhood educators, the research conducted in the United States evaluated the efficacy of a mindfulness program and discovered that early childhood educators who engaged in mindfulness exhibited greater social and emotional competence. This, in turn, had a favorable influence on the quality of their emotionally responsive interactions within the classroom (Eadie et al., 2021).

Optimistic belief is the conviction that one will ultimately succeed and the willingness to take risks to achieve ECE's goals. Therefore, self-confidence in the face of uncertainty and a willingness to stick with a task until completion are both essential components of the operational definition of optimistic belief.

Positive Thinking

The first to demonstrate that positive thinking has advantages and may be utilized as an effective technique to bring about desired changes was Scheier and Carver (1993). Positive thinking has tangible impacts and centers on maintaining an optimistic outlook. It suggested that the outcomes people anticipate from their actions significantly affect their decision-making. People who believe in their strengths are more inclined to persevere in the face of

adversity. Optimism, recognized as a determinant in psychological well-being, directly affects one's ability to find solutions to challenges (Munandar et al., 2022).

Wong and Zhang (2014) conducted a study in Hong Kong to examine the well-being, perceived school culture, and personality types of 371 kindergarten (EC) educators. The results indicated that EC educators with higher levels of extraversion tended to perceive their school culture more positively and reported greater job satisfaction and self-esteem compared to their introverted counterparts. Similar to caregivers, variations in the inclination of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) to allude to cognitive processes could potentially serve as an indicator of the extent to which children are exposed to a collective comprehension of the mind (Mulvihill et al., 2023).

Besides, Chen et al. (2023) have testified that the engagement of teachers in design thinking (DTE) positively was found to have a significant statistical impact on their perceived efficacy in pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK), as well as their perceived vitality in design. The efficacy of teachers' perceived technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) has a significant impact on the vitality of their design.

According to cognitive theory, obtaining and utilizing knowledge about the nature of human cognition results in an enhancement of positive thinking procedures (Elkfrawy & Ibrahim, 2021). In this context, positive thinking refers to keeping a sunny disposition. The positive emotions and self-assurance that come from believing one can continue to develop emotionally in a healthy way drive people to take action when they have a clear mental picture of themselves. The researchers here hypothesize that a positive view of life will lead to more prosperity and fulfillment. Maintaining a positive and confident mindset enhances ECEs' ability to overcome obstacles and realize their full potential.

Gratitude

Solihati and Agustin (2019) have introduced a notion of positive literacy, fostering a sense of workplace satisfaction and instilling a sense of pride in educators to enhance leadership efficacy in early childhood education. The correlation between teacher satisfaction and their performance and leadership capabilities has been noted in academic literature. When teachers experience a sense of contentment, their instructional abilities and administrative skills tend to improve, resulting in an optimal learning environment for students and a positive workplace atmosphere.

Thus far, gratitude has been examined as a constructive phenomenon associated with diverse prosocial consequences, such as acts of assistance and selflessness, in addition to personal and social benefits like contentment and social connections (Gulliford et al., 2019). Gratitude has been shown to predict increased levels of prosocial behavior, which has important implications for health and happiness (Jiang, 2022; McCullough et al., 2001). Gratitude has been placed under the trait, emotion, and mood categories, all in accordance with hierarchical levels of affective experience from Rosenberg (1998). Gratitude has been defined as a moral virtue, an attitude, an emotion, a behavior, a personality attribute, and a coping mechanism by researchers (Emmons et al., 2003; Tang et al., 2022).

It's probable that not all service members feel thankfulness to the same extent, even though doing so can have favorable consequences for employees and their families (Tang et al., 2022). However, several studies have shown that practicing gratitude can help people cope better with

stressful situations. The majority of the literature on gratitude focuses on it as a character characteristic (Jiang, 2022).

Gratitude is considered an emotion and a moral feeling in this analysis. Gratefulness empowers people to do good for others and rein in actions that may otherwise damage their relationships. Moreover, there is a strong connection between thankfulness and optimistic outlook. The current investigation presupposes that a high level of thankfulness corresponds to a high level of optimistic thinking. ECEs should pay close attention to these two factors because optimistic outlooks and expressions of thankfulness can have a ripple effect throughout a community, fostering a more positive atmosphere where children can learn and grow.

Emotional Commitment

The early childhood education and care (ECEC) profession is increasingly acknowledged to encounter demanding working conditions, resulting in elevated levels of work-induced stress, emotional fatigue, and staff attrition (Eadie et al., 2021; McMullen et al., 2020; Thorpe et al., 2020). Employees' outlooks significantly affect their levels of emotional commitment, which in turn affects their performance (Shore & Wayne, 1993). Widespread consensus exists that management practices, in addition to institutional goals, working circumstances, organizational goals, and techniques to accomplishing these goals, play a crucial role in encouraging employees' emotional investment in their jobs (Wiener, 1982).

As Grant et al. (2019) stated, the quality of education in early care and education settings is negatively impacted by high rates of teacher turnover. The high turnover rates are due to the fact that teachers who are dissatisfied with stress or emotional exhaustion are less capable of facilitating children's development and are more prone to leaving their teaching positions. More intrinsically motivated teachers tended to express their intentions to move rather than leave. Conversely, teachers who experienced emotional exhaustion were more likely to express their intentions to leave. Additionally, teachers who reported lower working conditions were more inclined to move or leave the field instead of staying. The findings indicate a significant association between teachers' well-being and perceived working conditions and their inclination to continue their employment or remain in the profession with sufficient effectiveness.

Studies have shown that instructors who are happy in their jobs are more dedicated to their students and their school (Jadidi, 2022). AKILLI (2022) and Kim (2002) stated that the way in which administration handles issues affects teachers' emotional commitment to their jobs and the school as a whole. Emotional commitment also includes feelings of attachment, attraction, and love for one's spouse (Taleghani & Dlejani, 2021). Thus, it is theorized that when managers successfully control employees' perceptions, it might lead to improvements in workers' emotional attachment to the company (AKILLI, 2022).

In addition to fulfilling the growing responsibilities and performance standards of their profession, early childhood educators encounter a multitude of obstacles, such as extended work schedules, inadequate compensation, insufficient prestige and acknowledgment, and restricted avenues for enhancing their expertise or advancing their careers (OECD., 2019; Thorpe et al., 2020). The challenges faced in the early childhood sector have resulted in significant outcomes such as elevated levels of emotional exhaustion and work-related stress, increased staff turnover, and suboptimal mental health and well-being of EC educators (Eadie et al., 2021). According to this study, ECEs who can meet their expectations and basic needs regularly through their work experience within an organization are more emotionally committed to that organization than their counterparts who are dissatisfied with their jobs. The

research looks at how preschool teachers' levels of emotional commitment affect their confidence in their abilities as educators and how that, in turn, affects their students' learning.

Teaching Efficacy

Literature on the topic of how teachers' sense of efficacy influences their practice is grounded in the social cognitive theory (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Research suggests that personality factors impact teaching efficacy (Magno, 2007), and Weasmer and Woods (1998) show that high levels of learning occur in settings where teachers possess high levels of teaching efficacy.

ECEs have expressed apprehension regarding their ability to effectively lead physical activities for young children in childcare settings, citing a lack of self-efficacy. This is primarily attributed to insufficient training in physical activity domains during their post-secondary education and on-the-job experiences. Also, Self-efficacy is a highly significant and resilient factor that influences behavior. A recent meta-analysis has provided support for the theory that task self-efficacy is a significant psychological predictor of teaching performance, as it was found to be the strongest predictor (Tucker et al., 2022).

Confidence in one's competence to facilitate student learning is what is meant by "teaching efficacy" (Gagnier et al., 2022). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) found that teachers' levels of teaching efficacy predict how much time and effort they put into meeting instructional goals. A school of thought holds that teachers' adoption and use of technology in the classroom are strongly influenced by factors including instructors' senses of teaching efficacy and their cognitive beliefs (Kartal et al., 2022). Microteaching and a course on technology-supported teaching approaches have been shown to increase preservice teachers' belief in their abilities to instruct students in the natural sciences, as reported by (Kartal & Dilek, 2021).

Although they all mean "able to produce a result," the words "effective," "effectual," "efficient," and "efficacious" have distinct idiomatic meanings. The concepts of effectiveness and efficiency hold significant importance in the realm of work and overall planning and control of any activity. These two dimensions are recognized as the primary components of the evaluation process (Woinaroschy, 2022). Meanwhile, effectiveness and efficacy are often used interchangeably, but this is not always the case (Ghaemmaghami et al., 2021; Zidane & Olsson, 2017). According to research by Bandura and Wessels (1994), four factors influence how people feel about their own abilities. The best way to build self-confidence is through experiences of mastery, whereas setbacks can undermine it, especially if they come before self-confidence has fully formed.

Preschool teachers' efficacy is described as their capacity to implement lesson plans, foster a constructive classroom environment, employ various proven instructional methods, direct students toward academic success, and heighten their capacity to learn and realize their professional goals. In addition, the term "teaching efficacy" refers to the process of attaining educational goals in light of environmental factors, appropriate methods applied within constrained time and resources, and careful monitoring of the discrepancy between actual and desired outcomes.

3. Theoretical Framework (Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory)

Social Cognitive Theory

The theory of self-efficacy (SET) is a component of the social cognitive theory proposed by Bandura (1986). As per this particular perspective, the fundamental factors that shape an

individual's conduct are their perceived level of self-efficacy and their expectations regarding the outcomes of their actions. The latter construct pertains to the perceived favorable and unfavorable outcomes associated with engaging in the said conduct.

Social cognition theory investigates the factors and psychosocial mechanisms by which symbolic communication affects human cognition, emotion, and behavior. Bandura (2002) clarified that the theory proposes a triadic reciprocal causation model to explain how people's social and psychological lives are shaped and maintained, with internal causes, behavioral tendencies, and external events, each playing a role and mutually influencing one another. The notion rests on the premise that individuals are capable of independent thought and action; as such, they are "agents" in their own lives. It also broadens the definition of agency to include group action. Processes of cognition, empathy, self-control, and self-reflection are regarded as pivotal in this paradigm. Four underlying functions control observational learning: paying attention, remembering information, creating new behaviors, and being motivated to do so. Powerfully motivating influences from role models can also serve as social cues to activate previously learned routines. The theory also examines the social dissemination of new behavioral norms by looking at the underlying psychological and social mechanisms that contribute to their spread and maintenance throughout communities (Bandura, 2001).

Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy theory is the foundation of this study. Self-efficacy and social-efficacy theories are interrelated constructs in the domain of psychology that center on individuals' confidence in their capacity to execute tasks and their assessment of the social surroundings' backing and motivation. Self-efficacy and social-efficacy are two discrete theoretical constructs that exhibit a certain degree of interdependence, as they have the potential to exert mutual influence and interact with one another (Bandura, 1981).

Albert Bandura created the self-efficacy hypothesis, which focuses on a person's confidence in their capacity to exert control over their own functioning and other factors that impact their lives. This conviction influences a person's life decisions, degree of motivation, level of functioning, ability to bounce back from adversity, and susceptibility to stress and depression (Bandura & Wessels, 1994).

The four key influences that shape how someone develops their self-efficacy beliefs are as follows. These include physical and emotional inferences, vicarious experiences offered by social models, social persuasion, and mastery experiences. The best method to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy is through mastery experiences, which involve accomplishment attained through one's own efforts. Vicarious experiences offered by social role models can also affect one's self-efficacy beliefs since witnessing people who are similar to oneself succeed through perseverance can increase one's self-confidence. Social persuasion, in which a person is orally convinced that they have the skills necessary to succeed in a certain task, can likewise reinforce self-efficacy views(Bandura, 1996).

As Bandura (1999) stated, a person's bodily and emotional states might provide details about their unique strengths and weaknesses, which can affect their self-efficacy views. In the cognitive, motivational, emotional, and selection processes, self-efficacy beliefs are crucial. Self-efficacy beliefs can affect a person's goal-setting, anticipating situations, and analytical thinking regarding cognitive processes. Self-efficacy beliefs can affect goal setting, result in expectations, and cause attributions in terms of motivational processes. Regarding emotional processes, self-efficacy beliefs can impact a person's stress and depressive symptoms as well as their capacity

to manage stressors. Self-efficacy beliefs can affect the kinds of activities and surroundings that a person chooses to engage in regarding selection processes (Bandura, 1998).

Also, Bandura (2000) mentioned that over the course of a person's lifetime, their self-efficacy beliefs evolve as a result of new competency demands they face at various stages of development. These demands can include dealing with physical changes associated with puberty, developing emotionally committed relationships and figuring out one's sexuality during adolescence, taking charge of one's own life during young adulthood, handling the demands of playing both a parent and a spouse during middle age, and reevaluating one's abilities as they get older during old age.

In conclusion, the Self-efficacy theory contends that a person's perception of their capacity to exert control over their functioning and over circumstances that have an impact on their lives has a significant impact on their life decisions, motivation levels, functioning quality, resilience to adversity, and susceptibility to stress and depression.

These beliefs are formed due to physical and emotional inferences, vicarious experiences offered by social models, social persuasion, and mastery experiences.

Self-efficacy beliefs are fundamental to cognitive, motivational, emotional, and selection processes. They evolve throughout a person's life as they face new competency demands at various stages of development (Bandura, 2011).

4. Empirical Review

4.1 History of Preschool Education in China

The Chinese government defines "preschool" as encompassing both kinds of pre-primary education in China: youeryuan, which covers children ages three to seven, and xueqianban, which covers children ages five to seven and is frequently affiliated with primary schools (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

In China, policymakers and educators established the rules, regulations, and benchmarks on which its fledgling preschool program might be constructed in the 1980s. This part utilizes the chronological order as a logical indicator, in conjunction with the broader context of China's socioeconomic and political progress, the pivotal moments in the evolution of education, the distinctive features of semester-based education, and the precise textual details of preschool teacher policy. Following the initiation of the reform and opening up policy, China's preschool teacher policy has undergone four distinct phases of development.

Recovery and Adjustment Period (1979-1984)

The initial reforms in 1978 were introduced when the decision-making power was being relinquished to reformists by the leaders of the Cultural Revolution. In the 1950s and 1960s, leaders, predominantly financed by central government planners, made a concerted effort to establish a school within each village (Hannum, 1999).

The successful convening of "The Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee of the Communist Party of China" in 1978 and the subsequent issuance of the "Opinions on Strengthening and Developing Normal Education" by the Chinese Ministry of Education in the same year marked the initiation of teacher education policy during the period of restoration and adjustment. This policy also facilitated the revival and advancement of the preschool

teacher policy, as noted by Chen (2009). At the same time, as Yue et al. (2018) stated, the initial policy declaration in 1981 centered on delineating the parameters that characterized a proficient preschool curriculum.

Period of the Legal System and Standardization (1985-1995)

Zhou (2018) asserted that during this particular period, China initiated the standardization of preschool teacher construction and legally recognized the social status, qualification access, and appointment system. A national decree encouraging local governments to facilitate the establishment of preschools was issued in 1985. The primary employers would be government agencies and private businesses, although preschool expenses would be the responsibility of the families. Policies in 1986 and 1987 lay out specifics on class sizes for both daycare centers and boarding schools and how preschool teachers should instruct and be evaluated throughout the ensuing years. Finally, national policymakers made it plain in 1988 that the focus of policymaking during those years should be in urban areas and more affluent rural areas because local governments and residents would be responsible for supporting and supervising preschools (Yue et al., 2018).

Furthermore, a set of regulations was implemented to establish a uniform system for the education and admission of preschool educators. The "Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China" has established professional standards for preschool teachers through law. It mandates that kindergarten teachers must possess the qualification of kindergarten teachers and must have received education from a preschool normal school or higher (Chen, 2009).

The Period of Reform and Innovation (1996-2009)

Throughout the 1990s, legislators refined policies, particularly regarding management standards. In the mid-1990s, building standards were revised, and efforts were made to clarify admissions requirements (such as age and health). As private companies formed, they became motivated to sponsor and operate preschools of superior quality. Similar to the 1980s, only regions with sufficient economic activity and fiscal stability could afford large-scale preschool systems (Yue et al., 2018).

The "Several Opinions on the Reform and Development of Normal Education" document, published in 1996 by the State Education Commission of China, laid out a clear plan to enhance and perfect the normal education system with Chinese characteristics as well as to carry out extensive reforms in the school-running system, management system, enrollment system, and employment system. This document served as the catalyst for the reform of normal education in our nation. During this time period, the government is standardizing its administration of preschool teachers (Chen, 2009).

The Period of Development and Perfection (2010-2020)

Throughout the 2000s, a series of policies sought to gear up students for elementary and junior high school, which would shortly become mandatory. These policies prompted policymakers to reconsider the issue of primary education. Many regions attempted to combine preschools with existing elementary institutions (Song, 2014).

The "Outline of the National Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" proposed 2010 that preschool instructors' qualifications should be rigidly enforced. Preschool instructors should be adequately nurtured and trained, and their general quality should be increased. Additionally, their status and treatment should be implemented following the legislation.

However, the living conditions of kindergarten instructors have become troubling in recent years, and there is generally a lack of professional well-being. The "China Education Newspaper" informed us of the living circumstances of various kindergarten instructors, particularly those who had been transferred, as well as the lack of professional well-being among private and rural kindergarten teachers (Chen, 2009).

4.2 The Curriculum of Preschool Education in China

The second decade of the twenty-first century is 2010–2020. The *National Medium-and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan's blueprint* was published in 2010 by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council in response to the historical task of education reform and development in the second decade of the new century. Consider quality enhancement to be the primary goal of developing and reforming education. In light of current events, the kindergarten curriculum has begun a new journey of scientific development in the application and investigation of ten years of curriculum reform, a decade during which the nation works to advance the great-leap-forward development of preschool education and make significant advancements in scientific protection and education. This decade has been crucial in China's history of preschool education development. It serves as a pivotal point for advancing the past and moving forward into the future (Hou & Luo, 2022).

China has always prioritized the professionalism and ethics of preschool instructors, emphasizing the significance of the position that "teachers' morality comes first." In China, the professional standard for preschool teachers is the foundation of the preschool education curriculum and the blueprint for institutions to establish training objectives. The objective of the training is to determine the curriculum's content and structural framework based on the expected outcomes of educational activities and the level of student development by certain educational goals and constraints (Jing & Zhang, 2015).

As preschool education in China shifts its focus from expanding access to raising standards, games are emerging as a fertile ground for new pedagogical approaches and curricula. Reforms in education and grading receive crucial attention and funding. Although games have some bearing on education and training, their transformation from instrument to value is not limited to the classroom. Children share a bond, but they also have limits (Borelli et al., 2023). This oversimplification of the concept of the game will bring not only intellectual muddles but also darkness—changes in how classes are taught. Games and education are intertwined in many ways, yet they also stand on their own (Paakkari et al., 2023).

Early childhood education can take the form of both games and instruction. The duties associated with various pursuits vary. What instructors do to shape the minds of their young charges is deliberate and calculated. The function of educators in the process of cultural transmission is highlighted. Since the game is not intended to serve any greater good, it places emphasis on "process" rather than "performance" or "purpose" (Gillette & McNish, 2023). Children's self-directed play highlights their authority. There are parallels and distinctions between curricula and classroom instruction, as well as between curricula and play (Bogiannidis et al., 2023).

Departments cannot be reduced in complexity by eliminating one another. However, in terms of the real-world limits of ideas like schooling, instruction, and play.

What is it, and how can one deduce the connection between the three in actual use? The key lies in how to accomplish and successfully execute the curricular goals (Fleisz-Gyurcsik, 2023).

Researchers and game makers must consider issues like the game's intended educational goal and the player's familiarity with the game's most fundamental controls (Trouche et al., 2023).

5. Findings

This literature review focuses on the history of preschool education in China and worldwide and the connotation of preschool educators, optimistic belief, teaching efficacy, positive thinking, gratitude, and emotional commitment. Meanwhile, the preschool education curriculum in China has been examined, and how it has evolved. The theoretical framework is based on self-efficacy theory and social cognitive theory.

A detailed review of each term is supported, including optimistic belief, positive thinking, gratitude, emotional commitment, and teaching efficacy. Optimistic belief is defined as the conviction that one will ultimately succeed and the willingness to take risks to achieve one's goals. Positive thinking centers on maintaining an optimistic outlook on the future and has been shown to have tangible impacts. Gratitude refers to an emotional reaction of appreciation for favors bestowed upon one another and has been shown to predict increased levels of prosocial behavior. Emotional commitment refers to employees' attachment, attraction, and love for their organization. Teaching efficacy refers to teachers' confidence in their competence to facilitate student learning.

The self-efficacy theory contends that a person's perception of their capacity to exert control over their functioning and circumstances that impact their lives significantly impacts their life decisions, motivation levels, functioning quality, resilience to adversity, and susceptibility to stress and depression. These beliefs are formed due to physical and emotional inferences, vicarious experiences offered by social models, social persuasion, and mastery experiences.

The social cognitive theory investigates the factors and psychosocial mechanisms by which symbolic communication affects human cognition, emotion, and behavior. The theory proposes a triadic reciprocal causation model to explain how people's social and psychological lives are shaped and maintained. Processes of cognition, empathy, self-control, and self-reflection are regarded as pivotal in this paradigm.

In general, valuable insights are discussed into the factors that influence teaching efficacy in preschool education. It offers an in-depth literature review of each term and how they relate to teaching efficacy in preschool education within the self-efficacy theory and social cognitive theory (Bandura & Wessels, 1994).

6. Conclusion

To sum up, an all-encompassing review of the existing literature on the effectiveness of teaching in early childhood education delves into the historical development of preschool education in China and globally. Additionally, it thoroughly reviews the literature on preschool educators, their optimistic beliefs, teaching efficacy, positive thinking, gratitude, and emotional commitment. Moreover, the developmental trajectory of the preschool education curriculum in China has been discussed, and the evolution of this curriculum over time has been explored. The present theoretical framework is grounded on the principles of self-efficacy theory and social cognitive theory.

There are significant contributions to understanding the determinants that impact teaching effectiveness in early childhood education. The text comprehensively examines all terms and

their correlation with teaching effectiveness in early childhood education, utilizing the theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy and social cognitive theory. The findings' implications are significant for advancing efficacious teaching methodologies in early childhood education.

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