

Analysis on the Differences of Pre-School Education Development in Western China from the Perspective of Balanced Urban and Rural Areas Development

—Taking Chongqing City as an Example

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Abstract

Chongqing city is selected as a sample area. According to the relevant statistical data in 2009-2013, it analyzed the differences of pre-school education balanced development in urban and rural areas western China in three aspects of which were the studying opportunity, resource allocation and development of pre-school children. It is found that there are still existing problems such as the unfair studying opportunity, the unequal resource allocation and the inequity development of pre-school children, and it can be attributed to unbalanced economic development in urban and rural areas, unbalanced distribution of education resources and the lack of supervision system of preschool education quality in rural areas. In order to promote balanced development of pre-school education, and narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, it is suggested that we must strengthen government's role to integrate the development between urban and rural areas, to increase financial input for preschool education and give priority to remote poor rural areas in western China, to balance the distribution of high-quality teachers, and to accelerate the mechanism and system construction of pre-school education.

Keywords

Preschool Education, Differences between Urban and Rural Areas, Balance the Development of Pre-School Education in Urban and Rural Areas

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1. Introduction

Integrating development of urban and rural areas is an important part of the scientific development concept for our country, and is a major task to build a well-off society. As we all know, “the issues of agriculture, rural areas, farmers related to the overall construction of a well-off society, we must take it as our work key point. Education is the cornerstone of national rejuvenation, and education equity is an important foundation for society equity” [1]. Pre-school education, as the foundation of basic education, plays a cornerstone role for children’s development. Meanwhile, only priority to develop pre-school education, we can achieve the goal of urban-rural areas overall development because pre-school education also plays a basic and strategic position in the process of urban-rural areas overall development. Chinese government has enacted the *State Medium and Long Term Program on Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*, and (hereinafter referred to as *Program*) clearly puts forward “priority to develop pre-school education in rural areas”. At the same year, another regulation: *Several Proposals on Development of Current Preschool Education from the State Council* was issued. And the center government requires local government by county to make and implement “a three-year action plan of preschool education (2011-2013)”. This research paper mainly analyzes the differences of pre-school education development in urban and rural western China in three aspects of which are the studying opportunity, resource allocation and development of pre-school children, and puts forward some targeted countermeasures and suggestions.

Existing researches on the balanced development of pre-school in urban and rural areas China, mainly have involved analysis on the differences of pre-school education development in the range of all country, however, there are lack of studies in western China. For instance, Hong xiuming, Zhang Ailin and many other persons have done some difference researches in the range of whole country (Hong xiuming, 2012 Zhang Ailing, 2015). [2]. Meanwhile, China, as a big traditional agriculture country, has a long history, and we have achieved a large number of successes because of 30 years reform. However, there are still urban-rural areas differences in many aspects in some western areas China. And Chongqing, as a typical represent of big city and big countryside, is chose as a research sample for this paper, and it can be totally reflect what we want to get in this field. Therefore, this short paper, choosing Chongqing city as a sample areas, comprehensively analyzes the development of pre-school education in urban and rural areas western China.

2. The Differences of Pre-School Education Development in Urban and Rural Areas Western China

The goal of balancing the development of urban and rural areas is to achieve balanced development of education in urban and rural areas. And balanced education means that, under the guidance of education equity thought, education institutions and educatee can own equal treatment to confirm the practical implementation of education policy and legislation. In a word, the essence of education balanced development is to aspire for education equality and to come true education equity [3]. As we know, equity is the premise of social development and progress, and pre-school education, as the starting point of education, what we say is equity. With the development of society and the increasing of economy, the level of living in urban and rural areas has raised. It seems that the gap between urban and rural areas should be narrowed, on the contrary, the gap is being enlarged. As for as pre-school education to say, the problems of urban-rural areas imbalanced development includes following aspects.

2.1. Unequal Education Opportunity: Imbalance between Urban and Rural Areas Children’s Right to Achieve Education and Opportunity for Admission Kindergarten

Unequal education opportunity is a prominent manifestation of the unbalanced development of pre-school education in urban and rural areas. No equality of educational opportunity is not equal to the so-called resource allocation and development.

2.1.1. The Growing Gap of the Number of Kindergarten in Urban and Rural Areas

Currently, children in rural areas Chongqing accounts for approximately two-third of the total number of children in Chongqing, coupled with rural population living scattered, thus the scale of kindergarten should be small, so the number of kindergarten in rural areas should not be less than two-third of the total number of kindergartens in Chongqing city. With the development of economy and society in rural areas of Chongqing city, and the thought and idea of people changed, and the needs of children that goes to kindergarten rapidly rises. Kinder-

garten attached to central primary school cannot meet people's needs, so people themselves establish all kinds of low-level kindergarten by Hope-project or some other ways. From the following **Table 1** shows that, however, 2008-2013 numbers of kindergarten in rural areas Chongqing city has not got half of whole number of kindergarten in Chongqing city. Meanwhile, the gap of kindergarten numbers between urban and rural areas is not only narrowed but trend to enlarge. As we can see, the ratio of gap only is 14% in 2008, but the ratio of gap amazingly expands to 55% in 2013. Compared with the requirements of admission kindergarten for mostly children in rural areas, the number of kindergarten is still very scarce, and a lot of children still face with the situation that no kindergarten to study (see **Figure 1**).

2.1.2. The Growing Gap Ratio of Urban-Rural Areas Kindergarten Enrolling Children Numbers

From 2008 to 2013, urban enrolling children numbers accounting for the overall proportion shows that it's trend to slowly increase, but the proportion of children in rural kindergarten shows a trend of gradual decline. The proportion of children in the kindergarten of rural areas Chongqing city downs to 17.6% in 2013, and the enrollment gap between urban and rural areas increases year by year. The gap is rising from 28.2% in 2008 to 64.8% in 2013, which shows a trend of expanding. These also reflect that the differences of pre-school children admission opportunity and admission rate in urban and rural areas Chongqing city will be gradually enlarged (see **Figure 2**).

2.2. Unequal Resources Allocation: Huge Gap between Urban and Rural Areas in Pre-School Education Public Resources Allocation

Equitable distribution of education public resources is material premise guarantee for coming true process fairness of education development and educatee getting equal education service [4]. Public pre-school education resources includes human resources and material resources. Human resources mainly refers to the allocation of teacher resources, and this index mainly reflected ways includes teacher-child ratio, the structure of educational

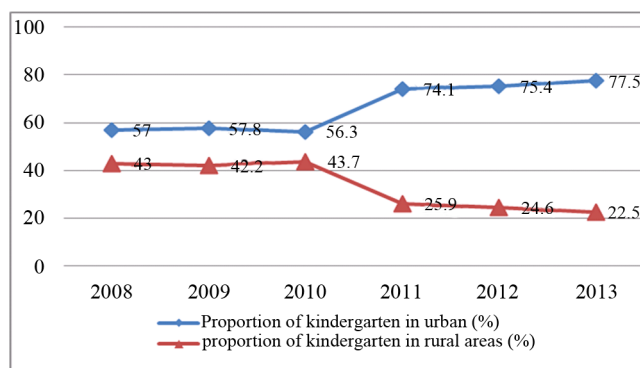


Figure 1. Number ratio of urban-rural areas kindergarten in Chongqing city in 2008-2013¹.

Table 1. Allocation of kindergarten teachers in urban and rural areas Chongqing city.

Year	Full-time teacher total		Full-time teacher and teacher-child ratio		Full-teacher average No. each class	
	Urban	Rural areas	Urban	Rural areas	Urban	Rural areas
2008	12,570	2937	1/29	1/70	0.85	0.45
2009	13,785	2794	1/30.5	1/76	1.17	0.43
2010	16,230	3736	1/29	1/63.5	1.23	0.50
2011	20,887	1896	1/32	1/92	0.96	0.31
2012	24,525	2210	1/29	1/78	1.08	0.30
2013	27,780	2419	1/26.5	1/64.9	1.23	0.45

¹All of the data cited in this paper are derived from the 2008-2013 *China Education Statistics Yearbook*.

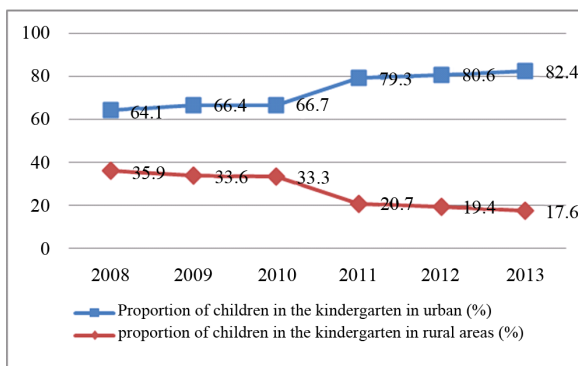


Figure 2. Number ratio of urban-rural areas enrolling children in Chongqing city in 2008-2013.

attainment and rank of full-time teachers. Material resources mainly includes kindergarten floor space, recreational room and picture books [2].

2.2.1. The Number Gap of Full-Time Kindergarten Teachers and Teacher-Child Ratio in Urban and Rural Areas

Teacher-child ratio is an important indicator to measure preschool education quality. In recent years, salary is very poor for kindergarten teachers in rural areas, **less authorized number**, and it is difficult to attract high-quality teachers to teach in peace of mind. Meanwhile, low-level teachers, serious teachers loss etc. problems are causes of having shortage of full time teachers. From **Table 1** shows, the number of full-time kindergarten teachers in rural areas Chongqing city is very scarce, and pre-school teachers equipped in rural areas is insufficient, and per class average number of full-time teachers cannot reach 1 person. It is far below the national average level and the level of urban.

2.2.2. The Growing Difference of Urban-Rural Areas Pre-School Teachers Educational Attainment

The huge difference between urban kindergarten teachers and rural areas kindergarten teachers not only reflects at quantity but also quality. Compared with unequal allocation of kindergarten teachers quantity in urban and rural areas, the distribution of high education attainment teacher in urban and rural areas is more unequal. All the time, the education level of kindergarten teachers in rural areas is low in total, which shows that the education attainment differences of kindergarten teachers in urban and rural areas are very remarkable. From **Figure 3** indicates that, the educational attainment of urban kindergarten full-time teachers in 2008-2013 mainly is associate bachelor and above associate bachelor. Although the proportion of kindergarten teachers in rural areas who the educational attainment is associate bachelor and above associate bachelor has increase, it is still far low the level of urban.

2.2.3. Obvious Difference of Kindergarten Conditions in Urban and Rural Areas

Kindergarten conditions are not only the content of “hardware”, but also the basic conditions to ensure the teaching quality of pre-school education. For a long time, conditions for most of kindergarten in rural areas Chongqing city are poor such as dilapidated housing, lack of facilities, poor equipment, unable to provide basic living facilities and teaching equipment for children. It can be seen from **Table 2**, from 2008 to 2013, there is a trend that the gap of per-student recreation and outdoor activity space and picture books in urban and rural areas Chongqing city is gradually narrowing, but it is still very obvious. Many conditions for kindergartens and learning and gap between the rural areas of Chongqing city kindergarten children’s learning conditions and living conditions and urban children is still very behind.

2.3. Imbalanced Development: Obvious Differences of Pre-School Education Quality in Urban and Rural Areas

2.3.1. The Gap of Proportion of Kindergarten Graduation Children in Urban and Rural Areas

The results of relevant research at home and abroad have shown that there is a mark difference for those one

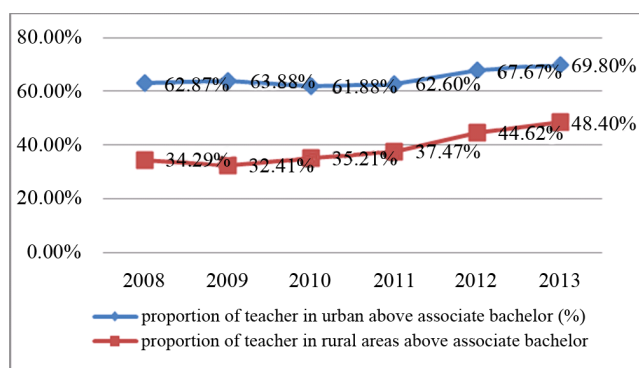


Figure 3. Number of kindergarten teachers above associate bachelor accounts for total in 2008-2013.

Table 2. Per student comparison of conditions for kindergarten in urban and rural areas in 2008-2013.

Year	Per student floor space (m ²)			Per student recreational space (m ²)			Per student out-door activity (m ²)			Per student picture books (volum)		
	Urban	Rural areas	Gap	Urban	Rural areas	Gap	Urban	Rural areas	Gap	Urban	Rural areas	Gap
2008	4.37	2.08	2.29	1.65	0.78	0.87	2.46	1.75	0.71	3.07	2.61	0.46
2009	4.23	1.98	2.25	2.53	0.70	1.83	3.95	1.68	2.27	6.62	2.48	4.14
2010	4.25	2.19	2.06	1.58	0.73	0.85	2.26	1.67	0.59	3.09	1.34	1.75
2011	3.65	1.67	1.98	1.58	0.77	0.81	2.78	1.95	0.83	3.40	1.38	2.02
2012	3.94	2.06	1.88	1.70	0.89	0.81	3.06	2.26	0.80	4.51	2.01	2.50
2013	4.43	2.54	1.89	1.95	1.10	0.85	3.41	2.91	0.50	5.43	2.76	2.67

grade students in primary school who have kindergarten experience or not, and the beginning effect of pre-school education does exist and can keep on to the elementary school even longer [5]. According to relevant statistics, the ratio of freshman students in urban elementary school who has pre-school education experience accounts for above 95%, and 85% for students in rural areas, the gap still remains above 10%.

2.3.2. The Obvious Differences for the Quality of Children's Entrance School Preparation in Urban and Rural Areas

The obvious differences of the status in society and economy and achieving pre-school education quality of children in urban and rural areas lead to their significant difference in the quality of entrance school preparation. A large number of studies have shown, no matter what preparation aspects at language, maths or others, children who lives in a higher social and economic family will be better than those who living in a low-level social and economic family. Different pre-school education experiences for children living in rural areas will produce vast influence on their entrance school preparation or marks in one year [6]. Children in rural areas obviously lags behind children in urban, and it includes learning style, cognitive development, language development and emotional and social development and so on [7].

3. Main Causes Analysis on the Differences of Pre-School Education Development in Urban and Rural Areas Western China

3.1. Development of Unbalanced Economy in Urban and Rural Areas

The economic base determines the superstructure, and the root cause of unbalanced development of education is social and economic factors. Similarly, the fundamental reason of unbalanced pre-school education development in urban and rural areas western China is that there is urban-rural areas dual economy structure today in China, and some reasons based on it is that it pays more attention to develop central government or urban, not local or rural areas. what's more, the vast gap of income in western rural areas and the restriction of natural conditions

makes that the conditions of pre-school education in rural areas is very backward, the level of teachers is not high, and the level of education is low. At the same time, the level of economy development for majorities of rural areas in western is so low that many families cannot afford for tuition in ordinary kindergarten, which leads to a result that a large number of school-age children in rural areas have no opportunity to go to kindergarten. Finally, the gap of economy development between urban and rural areas will be more and more enlarged, which will not be conducive to the construction of integration development of urban and rural areas. And the unequal development of pre-school education in urban and rural areas will be enlarge, and the social contradictions will be deepened.

3.2. Unequal Distribution of Educational Resources

It is an important reason for unbalanced development of pre-school education in urban and rural areas western China to unequally distribute resources. Firstly, in terms of the allocation of educational resources, the financial total investment of pre-school education in China is insufficient. More than ten years, there has been only about 1.3% in public education finance that is used for pre-school education. However, the limited resources of pre-school education was preferentially given high-quality kindergarten in urban. Secondly, in the aspects of pre-school education, we take the principle of local responsibility system in China. Usually, the local government will preferentially give kindergarten in urban limited pre-school public funding, and it mainly depends on some funding obtained from children for kindergartens in rural areas, and its funding is quite limited. Thus, kindergarten condition is not so good because of the shortage of funds in rural areas, outdated equipment, less scientific communication activities. Thirdly, lacking of high-quality kindergarten teachers and a large number of losses. For a long time, there are many teachers in rural areas who have to flock to city for the pressure of life due to less authorized number, lower wages and social in rural areas. The rural preschool teacher preparation less, low wages, at the bottom of the social status, and teacher who stays at rural kindergarten is some temporary substitute teachers without qualification.

3.3. Lacking of Quality Supervision for Pre-School Education in Rural Areas

Lacking of quality supervision mechanism is a main reason that results in low quality for kindergarten in rural areas. Many families hope their children success, especially in rural areas because of the influence of urban and rural areas dual structure. There is a good example that “primary” tendency for a lot of kindergartens in rural areas is becoming more and more obvious. How many words do your children remember and write, which becomes an evaluation indicator for high-low quality kindergartens. As we all know, it does not conform to the law of physical and mental development of children, which will eventually hinder the children’s healthy growth, deviate from the initial goal of setting up kindergartner.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

The research results show that the differences of pre-school education development in urban and rural areas western China are still obvious, and these differences include unfair study opportunity, the unequal resource allocation and the inequity development of pre-school children. The main reasons of leading to the difference include the unbalanced economic development in urban and rural areas, the uneven distribution of educational resources and the lack of supervision of preschool education quality in rural areas. It is an important strategic deployment requirement and manifestation of social fairness and justice for our country to balance the development of pre-school education in urban and rural areas. To achieve this grand goal, we put forward the following suggestions. First, it must strengthen the functions of government integrating urban and rural development. The key factor of pre-school balanced development is the balanced allocation of education resources, and it mainly relies on the government. Second, we should balance allocation of excellent pre-school teachers. Teachers’ team construction is the key to improve the quality of pre-school education [8]. In order to promote balanced development of pre-school education, we should strengthen the building of the excellent preschool teachers, improve the treatment of teachers in rural areas, and balance teachers’ allocation. Third, it accelerates the system and mechanism construction of preschool education. Pre-school education legislation blank has produced important influence on balanced development of preschool education in urban and rural China, and we should accelerate the construction of pre-school education system, supervision, assessment and investment rating system and security system to ensure the healthy development of our country’s pre-school education, to realize the balanced

development of preschool education in urban and rural areas.

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