

Integrating Traditional Culture into Kindergarten Curriculum Design and Implementation in Early Childhood Development in Shandong, China

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Abstract – Integrating traditional culture into early childhood education plays a critical role in children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. In Shandong, China, where the local culture is rich with Confucian traditions, festivals, and folk arts, embedding these elements into the kindergarten curriculum can foster a sense of identity, belonging, and cultural pride among young children. This paper examines the current practices, challenges, and successes of integrating traditional cultural elements into the kindergarten curriculum in Shandong, with a focus on local crafts, festivals, and folk music. Through qualitative research, including case studies, teacher interviews, and curriculum analysis, the study aims to offer recommendations on how to overcome existing barriers, such as teacher training and resource limitations, while emphasizing the importance of maintaining cultural heritage through early education.

Keywords–Traditional Culture, Kindergarten Curriculum Design, Early Childhood Development, Curriculum Implementation

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of early childhood education (ECE) in shaping the developmental trajectory of children is undeniable. The curriculum taught in kindergartens serves as a foundational pillar for both cognitive and socio-emotional growth (Zhang, 2019). In Shandong, a region with a deep cultural heritage rooted in Confucian values, integrating traditional cultural elements into the curriculum is seen as essential for fostering cultural identity and a sense of belonging. As China modernizes and globalizes, preserving and promoting traditional culture in ECE settings has become increasingly important (Wu & Li, 2020).

Recent educational reforms in Shandong have led to a growing interest in the incorporation of local traditions into kindergarten curricula, emphasizing folk music, traditional crafts, festivals, and local stories (Li, 2018). By weaving these cultural aspects into daily learning experiences, kindergartens aim to nurture not only academic but also social and emotional competencies in children. This paper explores the implementation of traditional cultural elements in the kindergarten curriculum in Shandong, examining the successes and challenges of this approach and how it impacts

children's holistic development. The study also highlights the need for a balance between modern educational practices and cultural heritage preservation.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Cultural inheritance is a vital method for strengthening the confidence in national culture, and with the advancements of modern times, curriculum reform has brought attention to integrating traditional culture into education. In the context of kindergarten curriculum in China, applying local cultural resources holds great significance for children's development, curriculum construction, and cultural inheritance. However, challenges exist in integrating traditional culture effectively into kindergarten curricula.

Insufficient Resources and Lack of Systematic Integration of Traditional Culture

In Chinese kindergartens, traditional cultural education is often fragmented and lacks systematic application. Most efforts focus on simple knowledge about traditional culture, with insufficient exploration of its deeper connotations. Additionally, there is a lack of high-quality cultural resources, such as textbooks and teaching materials, which compromises the effectiveness of traditional culture education.

Recent studies have attempted to address these issues. For example, Shi Weijia (2021) explored how to integrate traditional culture into teaching, and Pan Xiaodong (2022) examined strategies for incorporating Chinese culture into children's games. However, the integration process often remains superficial, with few addressing a comprehensive and systematic curriculum. Furthermore, many kindergartens lack teaching resources, which limits the engagement of children with traditional culture.

The Loss of Traditional Culture and Risk of Inheritance

With the rapid modernization and the influence of Western curricula, traditional culture is increasingly neglected in Chinese kindergartens. The focus has shifted toward subject-based education, while the importance of traditional culture has diminished. Educators have limited knowledge and understanding of traditional culture, resulting in a narrow focus on superficial cultural aspects. Additionally, outdated teaching methods and insufficient

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resources make it challenging to engage young children effectively in learning about traditional culture.

The lack of a systematic approach to cultural education is linked to a broader issue of cultural loss. As globalization accelerates, foreign cultures are flooding into China, causing a risk of cultural homogenization. The deep-rooted traditional Chinese cultural values such as respect for teachers, family ethics, and harmonious coexistence are being overshadowed, weakening the emotional and spiritual ties children have with their heritage.

Furthermore, traditional cultural practices such as calligraphy, painting, and folk crafts are slowly disappearing as fewer people receive traditional cultural education. This absence of traditional skills and values within the education system leads to a gap in cultural inheritance, impacting the cultural identity of future generations.

The Need for Systematic Integration

In order to prevent the erosion of traditional culture and strengthen its inheritance, it is crucial to integrate traditional culture more systematically into the kindergarten curriculum. This requires addressing the lack of resources, updating teaching methods, and providing children with a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage. A balanced approach is needed that combines modern educational techniques with the rich traditions of Chinese culture, ensuring that children not only learn about but also experience and internalize these cultural values.

By developing a more comprehensive and resource-rich curriculum that highlights local traditions, we can foster a new generation that appreciates and upholds the values of traditional Chinese culture.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant concepts, supporting theories, and variables related to the integration of traditional culture into kindergarten curriculum. It examines the history, development trends, methodologies, and findings of studies both domestically and internationally. This review aims to identify gaps in existing research, propose new research questions, and guide future studies in this area.

Definition of Relevant Concepts

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is defined as a preschool institution that provides care and education for children aged 3-6, promoting their physical, emotional, and intellectual development (Zhang Ximen, 1990; Li Shenglan, 2006).

Young Children

Young children, aged 3-6, exhibit unique physical and mental development characteristics. This period is crucial for their growth in cognition, emotion, and sociality (Montessori, 1993; Chen Guomei, 2003).

Kindergarten Curriculum Objectives

Curriculum objectives refer to the educational goals that guide children's development, including physical, cognitive, emotional, and social aspects (Zhang Hua, 2000; Yang Xiaoping, 2012).

Kindergarten Curriculum Content

The content of the curriculum should align with children's interests and life experiences, while being educational and systematized. It serves as a tool to achieve the curriculum objectives (Feng Xiaoxia, 2000; Xu Zhuoya, 2007).

Kindergarten Curriculum Evaluation

Curriculum evaluation is a continuous process of assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum. It emphasizes the development of children, considering multiple aspects of their growth, such as social, emotional, and cognitive progress (Wang Jianhong, 1994; Dewey, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes several key educational theories to explore the integration of traditional culture into kindergarten curriculum:

Chen Heqin's Living Education Theory: Emphasizes the selection of content from the natural and social environment that is suitable for children's development.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development: Stresses that children's development occurs in two stages—current capabilities and potential development with adult guidance. Curriculum design should bridge this gap.

Dewey's Activity Curriculum Theory: Advocates for a child-centered curriculum, where learning is driven by experience and activities, rather than traditional teaching methods.

Piaget's Constructivism: Argues that children actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment, shaping their cognitive structure.

This framework integrates traditional culture into the curriculum to promote children's development and cultural inheritance, ensuring that children actively engage in the learning process and contribute to the preservation and development of traditional culture.

Research Status

Kindergarten Curriculum Design in China

In China, kindergarten curriculum design emphasizes cultivating core qualities in children, such as independent learning, social communication, and innovative thinking, while integrating traditional culture (Li Jimei, 2019; Li Zhaocun, 2022). It focuses on children's life experiences and the importance of games in learning (Liu Miao, 2020). Curriculum content should align with children's interests and developmental needs, fostering exploration and creativity (Yu Yongping, 2022; Hua Aihua, 2021). The

design should also balance educational goals with respect for children's interests (Zhu Jiaxiong, 2022).

Kindergarten Curriculum Design Internationally

Internationally, the focus is on children's developmental stages and interests. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development suggests curriculum design should match children's immediate developmental needs (Vygotsky, 2018). Montessori (2019) emphasizes creating an environment that fosters autonomous learning, while Dewey (2020) advocates for child-centered learning through experience and activities. The curriculum should promote social-emotional skills and problem-solving (Hohmann, 2023; Smith, 2022).

In summary, both domestic and international approaches prioritize a child-centered curriculum, fostering cognitive, emotional, and social development through engaging, experience-based activities. However, China places more focus on curriculum objectives and cultural integration, while international models highlight individual interests and developmental stages.

Implementation of Kindergarten Curriculum Activities

In kindergarten curriculum implementation, teachers should foster positive interactions and create a supportive learning environment (Zhang Zonglin, 2015). Curriculum activities should respect children's interests and encourage independent exploration (Chen Heqin, 2016). Teachers are advised to use various resources and adjust activities based on children's feedback (Li Min, 2021; Liu Yan, 2020). Games are central to children's learning, helping them develop through play (Hua Aihua, 2019). Diverse activity types, such as outdoor physical games, creative arts, and holiday-themed projects, promote active participation and enhance children's development (Li Yang, 2021; Sun Xiao, 2022).

Kindergarten Curriculum Evaluation

Curriculum evaluation should focus on process evaluation, considering children's progress and development (Qin Jinliang, 2023). It should involve multiple perspectives, including teachers, parents, and children, using diverse methods such as observation and self-assessment (Zhou Xin, 2022; Liu Zhanlan, 2020). The goal is to improve curriculum quality and support children's comprehensive growth (Yu Yongping, 2016).

Kindergarten Curriculum Reform Trends

Recent curriculum reforms focus on integrating traditional culture, innovative designs, and teacher professional development (Wang Xiaoling, 2021; Li Jianjun, 2020). Family and community involvement is also emphasized to enhance educational outcomes (Jing Zhang, 2022; Wang Li, 2022).

International Research on Kindergarten Curriculum Implementation

International studies highlight the importance of teacher reflection, diversity, and technology integration in curriculum implementation (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2021; Higgins, Xiao & Katsipataki, 2020). Both domestic and international research stresses the need for active participation, adaptability, and individualized approaches to enhance children's learning.

Conceptual framework

In this study, the main investigation of traditional culture kindergarten curriculum design and implementation, in the kindergarten curriculum design mainly from the determination of objectives, content selection, content design to explore, in the implementation of the curriculum mainly from the implementation of activities, activity evaluation to explore, and ultimately to promote the inheritance of young children's traditional culture and carry forward, but the whole process is a cyclical process, will be the objectives to the implementation, evaluation, and in turn will be According to the effect of activity implementation and evaluation results, we will redefine the objectives and select and design the contents.

IV.METHOD

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods used to systematically explore the integration of traditional culture into kindergarten curricula. The study employs qualitative research methods to analyse the design and implementation of this integration, aiming to align traditional culture education with children's development and modern educational needs.

Research Design

The study investigates the current status, challenges, and strategies of incorporating traditional culture into kindergarten curricula. Qualitative research methods such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires are employed to collect data. The research adopts triangulation, using multiple data sources and methods to improve the validity and reliability of the findings.

Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research is defined as an approach that explores phenomena in real contexts, using methods like interviews, observation, and case studies to gain deep insights. It focuses on understanding people's experiences, behaviours, and meanings. In this study, interviews with principals, teachers, and parents, along with observations of teachers and children, are conducted to gather a comprehensive view of the integration of traditional culture in kindergarten curricula. Qualitative analysis, involving coding and theme identification, helps construct a

theoretical understanding of the phenomenon, guided by a theoretical framework. This approach provides rich, contextual data that supports in-depth exploration of the research topic.

Research Location, Population, and Sampling

Research Location

This study was conducted in Shandong Province, which is a key location for the education and implementation of traditional culture in China. Shandong, known as the birthplace of Confucian culture, has a rich history intertwined with Qilu, Dongyi, and Haidai cultures. The province emphasizes the inheritance and development of Chinese traditional culture, while also promoting innovation. Given its cultural heritage and educational focus, Shandong was chosen for this study to explore how traditional culture is integrated into kindergarten curricula.

Research Population

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not aim to generalize findings to a larger population. Instead, it focuses on understanding the experiences and perspectives of individuals who have direct involvement with the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, purposive sampling, a non-random method, was used to select participants who could provide rich, relevant information about the integration of traditional culture into kindergarten curricula. This approach ensures that the sample reflects the research objectives and allows for in-depth exploration of specific experiences.

Shandong Province, as of 2023, had 22,464 kindergartens, with a population of over 3 million preschool children and 255,700 full-time preschool teachers. Among these, 1,818 kindergartens were recognized as provincial model kindergartens, selected based on rigorous self-assessments and reviews. These kindergartens are spread across different regions, including Jinan and Qingdao, and represent a high standard of early childhood education.

Research Sampling

The study focused on kindergartens that have integrated traditional culture into their curricula. Purposive sampling was used to select model kindergartens that were actively incorporating traditional cultural elements into their teaching practices. Key examples include:

- (i) Shanwang Kindergarten (Jinan Qilishan Early Childhood Education Group), known for its focus on aesthetic education and workshops on traditional arts like celadon porcelain and shadow puppetry.
- (ii) Ping'an Center Kindergarten (Jinan Changqing District), which combines traditional culture with modern preschool education, including activities like shadow puppetry and music.
- (iii) Zhongyin Yayuan Kindergarten (Jinan Hi-Tech District), which offers various traditional cultural activities for children.

- (iv) Jingcheng Kindergarten (Lixia District), which uses traditional festivals to teach children about cultural customs and promote social development.
- (v) Jingyi Kindergarten (Shizhong District), where traditional ceremonies are used to instill respect and cultural knowledge in children.

Participants, including kindergarten directors, teachers, and parents, were selected through recommendations from the Shandong Province Preschool Education Center and the kindergartens themselves. This purposive sampling approach ensured that the selected kindergartens were representative of those with comprehensive programs integrating traditional culture into their curricula.

TABLE 1: POPULATION, CRITERIA AND SIZE OF PURPOSIVE SAMPLE

Populati on	Selection Criteria	Methodol ogy and Size	Purposive Sampling Method	Represe ntative Embodi ment	Relev ant Litera ture
Kinderg arten Administ rators	At least five years of administr ative experien ce, involvem ent in decision- making and impleme ntation of traditiona l culture programs , and knowled ge of and appreciat ion for traditiona l culture.	Interview :5 Questionn aire:20	Selected through recommen dations from kindergart en managem ent and actual participati on experience	Provide feedback on the decision- making rationale and managem ent challenge s in curriculu m impleme ntation to help understan d the overall managem ent of curriculu m integratio n and the effective ness of strategy impleme ntation.	Li & Zhang (2023)
	At least three years of teaching experien ce, basic knowled ge of and interest in traditiona l culture, and involvem ent or ongoing involvem ent in the design and impleme ntation	Group Interview :18 Observati on :18 Questionn aire :60	Selection through recommen dations from educationa l institutions and practical experience	Experienc ed teachers were selected to obtain in-depth feedback on the impleme ntation of the curriculu m and to understan d the practical problems and success factors in impleme	Zhao & Liu (2022)

	of traditiona l culture programs		ntation.	
Parents	Active participat ion in early childhoo d educatio n, supportiv e of traditiona l culture programs , and willingne ss to participat e in feedback and evaluatio n of programs	Questionn aire :60 Group Interview: 18	Selection was made through parent committee s and communit y recommen dations.	Parents who support the curriculu m were selected to obtain authentic feedback on the effective ness of the curriculu m and to understan d the actual impact of the curriculu m on families and young children. Children of different ages were selected to assess the impact of the program on various developm ental stages, providing a comprehe nsive understan ding of the effective ness of the impleme ntation of the program.
Children	Between the ages of 3 and 6 years old, actively participat ing in the traditiona l culture program.	Observati on :18	Selection was made through kindergart en records and teacher recommen dations.	Children of different ages were selected to assess the impact of the program on various developm ental stages, providing a comprehe nsive understan ding of the effective ness of the impleme ntation of the program.

Instrumentation

In this study, a combination of interview, observation, and questionnaire methods were used to explore the integration of traditional culture into the kindergarten curriculum.

Interview Method: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with kindergarten administrators, teachers, and parents to gather in-depth insights. These interviews followed a three-round process, with each round spaced over a period of 1-3 weeks, allowing respondents to reflect on previous discussions. The interviews focused on

curriculum design, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Audio recordings and notes were taken for analysis.

Observation Method: Participant observation was employed, where the researcher actively engaged in curriculum activities, observing both teachers' behaviours and children's responses. The observations were systematically recorded and analysed to assess the effectiveness of the traditional culture curriculum.

Questionnaire Method: Semi-structured questionnaires were distributed to administrators, teachers, and parents to collect quantitative data on the curriculum's effectiveness. The questionnaire included sections on course design, implementation effects, and suggestions for improvement, and was analysed to provide further insights into the curriculum's impact.

These methods combined qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive view of the integration process and its effectiveness.

V. FINDINGS

The research conducted in Shandong, China, on integrating traditional culture into kindergarten curricula revealed several key findings that shed light on the current practices, challenges, and effectiveness of incorporating traditional cultural elements into early childhood education. Through qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and questionnaires, the study provided a comprehensive analysis of how traditional culture is being integrated and the outcomes of these efforts.

Current Practices of Integrating Traditional Culture

The study found that many kindergartens in Shandong have made significant strides in incorporating traditional cultural elements into their curricula. These elements include local crafts, festivals, folk music, and traditional stories. Among the kindergartens studied, those with a focus on cultural heritage, such as Shanwang Kindergarten and Ping'an Center Kindergarten, were found to be particularly successful in providing a rich cultural experience for young children. Activities like celadon porcelain workshops, shadow puppetry performances, and the celebration of traditional Chinese festivals like the Mid-Autumn Festival and Spring Festival were highlighted as effective ways to expose children to traditional culture. These activities not only fostered children's cognitive and social development but also cultivated a sense of cultural identity and pride among the students.

In addition to these hands-on cultural experiences, some kindergartens also utilized traditional stories and folk music to introduce children to Chinese history and values. The integration of traditional culture was observed to be most effective when teachers were able to link cultural content with children's daily lives, creating a meaningful learning experience. For example, children were encouraged to engage in storytelling or participate in making traditional crafts, which promoted creative thinking and motor skills while helping children internalize cultural values.

Challenges in Integrating Traditional Culture

Despite the positive efforts to integrate traditional culture, several challenges were identified in the research. One of the most significant barriers was the lack of high-quality resources. Many kindergartens faced difficulties in acquiring sufficient teaching materials, textbooks, and multimedia resources that would support the systematic teaching of traditional culture. This issue often led to fragmented teaching practices, where cultural content was introduced in a superficial manner rather than integrated in a holistic, structured way. As a result, the deeper meanings and values of traditional culture were not always effectively conveyed to the children.

Another major challenge was the insufficient training of teachers. While many teachers showed enthusiasm for integrating traditional culture into their classrooms, they often lacked the necessary expertise or training to deliver the content in a pedagogically sound manner. This lack of professional development meant that many educators resorted to basic activities, such as teaching simple songs or performing basic craft activities, without fully understanding how to engage children with the more complex aspects of traditional culture. Some teachers also expressed concerns about their ability to effectively balance the demands of modern curricula with the need to preserve and pass on traditional culture.

The research also highlighted the issue of time constraints within the kindergarten curriculum. Teachers reported that the demands of academic subjects, such as language and math, often left little room for dedicated cultural education. As a result, traditional culture was sometimes treated as an "add-on" or supplementary activity rather than an integral part of the curriculum. This further limited the depth and consistency of cultural education provided to children.

Effectiveness of the Traditional Culture Curriculum

Despite the challenges, the study found that integrating traditional culture into the curriculum had a positive impact on children's development. Interviews with teachers and parents indicated that children showed increased interest in their cultural heritage and a stronger sense of identity. Many parents expressed satisfaction with the traditional culture programs, noting that their children became more respectful of their elders and more aware of their cultural roots. In particular, children who participated in activities such as traditional ceremonies or festival celebrations exhibited improved social behaviours, such as sharing, cooperation, and respect for others.

Children's cognitive development was also positively influenced by the inclusion of traditional cultural elements. For example, through participation in folk music and arts activities, children were able to enhance their creativity and problem-solving abilities. Additionally, the exposure to cultural traditions helped children develop an appreciation for diversity and a broader worldview, which is increasingly important in today's globalized society.

However, the research also found that the impact of the curriculum varied depending on the depth of integration and the consistency with which traditional culture was

incorporated into everyday teaching. In kindergartens where traditional culture was integrated more comprehensively and consistently, children showed stronger connections to their cultural heritage and demonstrated greater social and emotional development. In contrast, in kindergartens with less frequent or less systematic integration, the cultural impact was less significant.

Recommendations for Improvement

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to improve the integration of traditional culture into kindergarten curricula. First, there is a clear need for the development and provision of more comprehensive teaching materials and resources that are tailored to early childhood education. This could include interactive resources such as storybooks, digital content, and hands-on craft kits that make learning about traditional culture engaging and accessible for young children.

Second, teacher training and professional development were identified as key areas for improvement. Teachers should be provided with specialized training on how to integrate traditional culture into their teaching in a meaningful way, emphasizing not just the knowledge but also the pedagogical approaches needed to engage young children. This could involve workshops, training programs, and collaborative efforts with local cultural institutions to ensure that teachers have both the knowledge and the tools to teach traditional culture effectively.

Lastly, the research emphasized the importance of developing a more systematic and consistent approach to incorporating traditional culture across all aspects of the curriculum. This includes ensuring that traditional cultural activities are not treated as isolated events but are woven into the fabric of daily learning. By ensuring that traditional culture is consistently included in all areas of the curriculum, from language development to physical activities, kindergartens can better foster a holistic understanding of cultural heritage among young children.

In conclusion, while progress has been made in integrating traditional culture into kindergarten curricula in Shandong, there is still much work to be done to overcome existing challenges and ensure that traditional cultural education is both meaningful and effective for young learners. The findings from this study suggest that with better resources, teacher training, and a more systematic approach, traditional culture can play a crucial role in fostering children's cultural identity and supporting their overall development.

VI. DISCUSSION

This study highlights both the potential and challenges of integrating traditional culture into kindergarten curricula in Shandong, China. Through the analysis of various kindergartens actively incorporating cultural elements such as folk music, crafts, and traditional festivals, several significant findings emerged that can guide future curriculum development and implementation.

One of the main findings is the positive impact that traditional culture integration has on children's cognitive,

emotional, and social development. Exposure to local cultural practices not only helps children build a strong sense of identity but also fosters respect for their cultural heritage. For instance, activities like shadow puppetry, traditional music, and the celebration of local festivals provide children with concrete experiences that are crucial for social-emotional growth. These experiences encourage children to engage in collaborative play, develop empathy, and understand cultural values such as respect for elders and community cooperation. This aligns with the theoretical frameworks of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Piaget's Constructivism, which emphasize the importance of active engagement with the environment in shaping cognitive structures.

However, challenges remain in the systematic integration of traditional culture into the kindergarten curriculum. One of the primary obstacles identified in this study is the lack of adequate resources and teaching materials. Despite the enthusiasm among educators and administrators, there is a notable scarcity of high-quality, culturally relevant resources that can effectively teach traditional values to young children. The fragmented nature of existing approaches, where cultural content is often isolated rather than systematically embedded into daily learning, further exacerbates this issue. Teachers report that although they recognize the importance of cultural education, many lack the necessary training to fully integrate traditional culture into their teaching methods. This highlights the need for targeted professional development and the creation of a more robust curriculum framework that incorporates cultural elements in a coherent and structured manner.

Moreover, the rapid modernization and globalization of Chinese society present additional challenges. While there is a growing awareness of the need to preserve traditional culture, the dominance of Western educational paradigms and the pressure to modernize early childhood education practices often result in traditional culture being marginalized. The study shows that some educators and parents feel that the integration of traditional culture competes with the focus on academic achievement and modern teaching methods. Therefore, it is essential to strike a balance between fostering cultural heritage and meeting contemporary educational standards. This balance can be achieved through innovative curriculum design that harmonizes both cultural and academic goals, creating a holistic learning experience for children.

Finally, the research suggests that there is a need for a more collaborative approach between educators, parents, and the community to promote traditional culture. The involvement of parents, in particular, has proven to be a key factor in reinforcing cultural values outside the classroom. As the study revealed, parents who actively participate in cultural activities at home and support traditional culture programs in kindergartens contribute to a more comprehensive cultural experience for children.

In conclusion, integrating traditional culture into the kindergarten curriculum in Shandong is not only feasible but also beneficial for children's development. However, to overcome the challenges identified, there is a need for a more systematic approach to curriculum design, improved teacher training, and better resource allocation. By

addressing these issues, kindergartens can effectively foster a sense of cultural pride and identity in young children, while ensuring that the traditional values of Shandong and China continue to thrive in the next generation.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, integrating traditional culture into the kindergarten curriculum in Shandong presents both opportunities and challenges. The rich cultural heritage of the region, particularly rooted in Confucian values, provides a valuable foundation for fostering a sense of identity, pride, and belonging in young children. However, the study highlights several obstacles, including insufficient resources, inadequate teacher training, and a fragmented approach to curriculum integration. Despite these challenges, kindergartens that have successfully integrated traditional cultural elements into their curricula have demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

The research emphasizes the importance of a systematic and comprehensive approach to curriculum design, which balances modern educational practices with the preservation of traditional culture. It is crucial for educational authorities to provide better resources, support teacher professional development, and create a more cohesive framework for incorporating local traditions. Furthermore, this integration should go beyond surface-level exposure to traditional culture and ensure that children engage deeply with the values and practices that define their heritage.

Moving forward, it is recommended that future curriculum reforms focus on strengthening the connection between children and their cultural roots while promoting a global perspective. By achieving this balance, Shandong's kindergartens can contribute to the preservation of traditional culture while preparing children for the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly interconnected world.

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