The Impact of Children's Literature and Family Environment on Early Childhood Education

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Abstract. It is generally believed that early childhood education primarily takes place in early education institutions, where parents receive training to support their child's education. Additionally, children's literature is diverse, with a rich history and various genres. However, there is a lack of research regarding the influence of the family environment and children's literature on early childhood education, particularly in terms of quantifying this impact. To address this gap in knowledge, this study investigates the effects of the family environment and children's literature on early childhood education. Specifically, the early childhood education group is divided into two categories: a parental guardianship group and an others guardianship group, depending on the relationship between the person receiving training from the parent school and the child. The study compares the developmental quotient, height, and weight of children in each group. Additionally, three types of children's literature commonly used in kindergartens (nursery rhymes, children's films, and picture book stories) are selected to analyze their educational value for children. The results indicate that early education is crucial for children's physical and mental development, and parents should receive training in different groups based on their role as guardians. Furthermore, children's literature can enhance children's perception of beauty and contribute to their emotional, linguistic, intellectual, and social development.

1. Introduction

Children's literature holds a rich and extensive history encompassing various genres such as nursery rhymes, children's poetry, fairy tales, children's stories, children's novels, children's essays, children's folk arts, children's drama, children's film and television, and children's science and art [1]. These works mostly consist of short and easily comprehensible language that captivates children with its charm. In this study, we focus on three commonly utilized types of children's literature in kindergartens: nursery rhymes, children's films, and picture book stories. By analyzing the educational value of these works, we aim to evaluate the impact of children's literature on early childhood education. It is worth noting that early childhood education is widely implemented across diverse institutions, including early childhood education institutions, public hospitals, and private hospitals. This growing emphasis on early childhood education along with the improved living standards of people further demonstrates its significance in society. Presently, early childhood education primarily takes place within early education institutions, where parents undergo specific training to effectively support their children's education. Undeniably, the family environment plays a vital role in a child's upbringing and serves as a foundation for early education [2].

Children's songs, commonly referred to as nursery rhymes, are short songs specifically created to cater to the physical and mental development of children. They encompass traditional folk nursery rhymes as well as songs composed by adults specifically for children, considering their unique needs and characteristics. Children's songs are characterized by vibrant rhythms, melodious rhymes, and diverse forms [3]. The content of these songs is typically simple, easily understandable, and filled with child-like joy, contributing significantly to children's overall development. Early film and television productions aimed at children are designed to meet their various needs in areas such as daily life, education, and entertainment. These productions possess visually appealing and engaging qualities, often emphasizing compelling narratives and visual features. Children's film and television works offer a wealth of information crucial for children's growth and are considered valuable social resources, fostering their social development. Picture books, driven by children's innate affinity for illustrations and narratives, primarily utilize captivating images as their main component, with text serving as a supplementary summary of the story. Consequently, picture book stories feature exquisite visuals, profound meanings, concise yet captivating language, and distinctly childlike characteristics. They hold significant educational value for children [4].
With the rapid pace of social development in our country, the issue of migrant workers has gained prominence in the urbanization process. Migrant workers constitute a vital driving force for the political, economic, and social advancement of our nation [5]. In the new era, farmers serve as the primary catalysts for societal progress, realizing their own value amidst urban stagnation. The majority of migrant workers, approximately 80%, originate from remote mountainous regions. Oftentimes, the expenses associated with their children's education pose significant challenges for many families, apart from the costs of clothing, food, housing, transportation, and medical care [6]. From a macro perspective, the phenomenon of left-behind children is an inevitable outcome of China's social and economic transformation, closely intertwined with the longstanding process of urbanization. In the context of economic globalization, developing countries encounter social issues stemming from increased mobility and labor force migration, which also contributes to the predicament of left-behind children [7]. This study examines the influence of the family environment on the efficacy of early childhood education for guardians who have undergone early education training. Furthermore, this article analyzes the educational significance of three popular types of children's content employed in kindergartens, namely nursery rhymes, children's films, and picture book stories. The objective is to systematically investigate the collective impact of the family environment and children's literature on early childhood education.

2. Methodology

The experimental group comprised 140 children who received early education and intervention from the age of one at our early education and intervention clinic. They were categorized into two groups based on whether the guardians who received early education training were the parents of the children. The parent guardians group consisted of 90 individuals, while the other guardians group consisted of 50 individuals. The content and methods of early education were identical in both groups. Meanwhile, the control group consisted of 70 individuals selected from the pediatric health clinic of our hospital. These individuals received routine care and were matched based on gender, feeding method, and birth time. All groups of children were full-term normal newborns delivered in our hospital's obstetrics department, and there were no high-risk factors during the perinatal period.

The control group was not established as it was managed under the child health system's supervision, which included regular monitoring and evaluation of physical development, nutritional guidance, and disease prevention conducted every three months.

The experimental group was established to receive the same child system management as the control group, while also implementing early education and for children. Two days after birth, the newborns underwent 20 behavioral nerve tests to assess their behavioral abilities. The test results were used to guide guardians in visual and auditory stimulation training. After one month, an early education system file was created for each child, and they received individualized guidance from an early education physician. The guardians were provided with training methods for large and fine motor skills, as well as guidance on developing cognitive, language expression, communication, and self-care abilities. Personalized plans were developed based on the individual characteristics of the children, and family training was required to ensure implementation. Age-appropriate educational toys, books, magazines, and pictorial materials were introduced, and guardians were educated on common disease prevention. Guardians who participated in early education and intervention attended parent schools every Saturday to receive knowledge training on children's developmental patterns and how to foster their potential. Additionally, they participated in various fun and colorful activities at the parent-child kindergarten every quarter to enhance the children's observation, creativity, memory, thinking, and social skills.

At the age of one year, the intelligence of the three groups of children was assessed by outpatient physicians using the neuropsychological scale for children aged 0 to 6 years, which was developed by the Capital Institute of Pediatrics and the Institute of Psychology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The evaluation criteria consisted of five levels: scores of ≥130 were classified as excellent, 115-129 as intelligent, 85-114 as normal, 70-84 as low, and ≤69 as very low. Statistical analysis of variance was performed using SPSS 13.0 software.

3. Experiment test

3.1. The impact of family environment

0-3 years old is a critical period for the physical, intellectual, habitual, and moral development of individuals, playing a crucial role in their future physical and mental health. During these years, the environment in which infants and young children are immersed actually molds their brains. Meaningful, continuous, and engaging early experiences contribute to shaping intricate brain connections that have a lasting impact on lifelong learning and competitive abilities. As a result, parents are increasingly recognizing the value of early education. According to Table 1, the developmental quotient in each functional area of the early education group is significantly higher than that of the control group, regardless of the guardian. This suggests that the implementation of early education and intervention can effectively enhance the comprehensive development of infant intelligence.

| Table 1. Comparison of developmental quotient among three groups of children. |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| energy region          | parental guardianship  | guardianship of others | control group          | F            | P-value   |
| great sports           | 104.22                 | 102.4                  | 91.00                  | 4.256        | 0.03      |
Family serves as the primary educational institution for individuals, with parents taking on the role of the first educators. Mothers, in particular, play a crucial role in nurturing and influencing the development of infants and young children. Table 1 reveals that children under the watchful care of their biological parents demonstrate notably elevated language proficiency, fine motor skills, and adaptability in comparison to other guardianship groups and children who did not receive early education.

Early education not only impacts the psychological development of young children but also significantly influences their physical development, as indicated by the findings in Figure 1. Weight and length serve as primary indicators of physical development, with children in the 2-year-old and 3-year-old age groups who received early education displaying significantly higher measurements compared to those in the control group. It was observed that the longer the duration of scientific parenting health education, the more pronounced the effect. However, children in non-parental guardianship groups exhibited slightly higher weight than those under parental guardianship. This can be attributed to the fact that other guardians, mainly grandparents, oversee the care of children. Due to the intergenerational relationship, elderly individuals tend to have a deep affection for their grandchildren, sometimes leading to indulgence based on their grandchildren’s disposition. While many elderly individuals pay meticulous attention to their grandchildren’s overall well-being, such as their diet, clothing, and health, they often neglect the importance of physical activity and lack the physical stamina to actively engage in exercise alongside their grandchildren (re-fer to Table 2).

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Although early education significantly impacts the physical and mental well-being of infants and young children, it is crucial not to overlook the influence of the family environment and family education on the effectiveness of early education during a child’s early developmental stages. Parenting knowledge and skills are not solely derived from parent schools but can also be acquired through various media channels, such as books, radio, television lectures, as well as by engaging in discussions with other parents and seeking guidance from experienced elders and kindergarten teachers. In the case of rural preschool children in Henan Province, it is imperative to tailor the training content for parents and schools to match the diverse family growth environments and guardianship arrangements, in order to achieve optimal results in early childhood education.

3.2. The influence of children’s literature

Nursery rhymes play a pivotal role in promoting language development among young children. By listening to nursery rhymes, children’s interest in language learning is ignited, and their ability to listen and comprehend is cultivated. Reciting these rhymes aids young children in their pronunciation skills, fosters language development, and effectively addresses pronunciation errors through repeated practice. Additionally, learning nursery rhymes enriches children’s vocabulary and expands their language knowledge. These songs encompass a wide
range of commonly used words in daily life, including interpersonal communication and social contexts, significantly enhancing children's vocabulary proficiency.

Children's film and television have the potential to promote the development of good moral character in children. The formation of moral qualities in children is a gradual and nuanced process, and children's film and television productions often embody numerous exemplary traditional virtues prevalent in Chinese culture. External factors play a significant role in shaping a child's physical and mental development, especially when it comes to their preferences and interests. By engaging with children's film and television content, children can immerse themselves in these narratives, fostering emotional connections with the characters and experiencing the embodiment of Chinese traditional virtues, such as love, tolerance, unity, cooperation, honesty, trustworthiness, diligence, and bravery. For instance, in the children's film "Hulu Wa," the Hulu Seven Brothers serve as positive role models, showcasing traits of justice, bravery, love, and filial piety. Children are inspired, viewing Hulu Wa as an example and aspiring to be "little heroes" like the characters depicted. Consequently, influenced by children's film and television, children perceive themselves as "little heroes" in their daily lives, thus exemplifying the commendable moral character embodied by these character images.

Picture book stories have the potential to instill a sense of beauty in children and nurture their aesthetic abilities. Incorporating simple narratives into teaching can enhance Joey's artistic appreciation. Consider the enchanting fairy tale of Harry Potter, where children are transported into a magnificent magical realm filled with talking posters, moving stairs, flying brooms, and animated hats. This captivating world bursts with vitality and sparks the imagination of children, captivating them to the point where they find it challenging to detach themselves from it. As a result, their inner world is significantly enriched, expanding their spiritual horizons.

4. Conclusions

This study examines the influence of the family environment on the efficacy of early childhood education. The early education participants are categorized into two groups based on the supervisory role: the parent supervision group and the other per-son supervision group. A comparison is made among the developmental quotient, height, and weight of children in each group. The children in the parent supervision group exhibit a developmental quotient of 106.56 ± 6.23, whereas the children in the other person supervision group score 95.23 ± 5.47, significantly higher than those in the control group (87.24 ± 7.25). Additionally, this study analyzes the educational value of different forms of children's literature commonly used in kindergartens: nursery rhymes, children's films, and picture book stories. The findings indicate that early education plays a crucial role in the physical and mental development of children, and parents should receive tailored training based on their respective guardian-ship roles. Children's literature, designed specifically for young children, serves as a vital tool for their daily life and learning, offering substantial value. It satiates their thirst for knowledge and broadens their horizons, while also promoting the development of positive behavioral habits.

References


