

Practical Dilemmas and Optimization Paths of Patriotism Education in Kindergartens—A Case Study of Ganzi Ethnic Minority Area

Mu Wang

*Kindergarten in Sewei Town, Xinlong County, Ganzi Prefecture, Sichuan, China
714290477@qq.com*

Abstract: *It is necessary to cultivate young children's emotional identification with the nation and cultural belonging from an early age, which can help lay a psychological foundation for building a shared spiritual home for all ethnic groups. Now, kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Area have focused on fostering children's patriotic feelings through diverse activities and daily integration. However, they still face several challenges, including the singularity of educational content and forms, the weakness of educational resources and teaching staff, the lack of collaborative education among families, kindergartens and communities, and the insufficient integration of cultural identity education. These problems are caused by multiple factors: the lag in the modern transformation of educational concepts, the absence of policy guarantees and resource supply mechanisms, the gap in the support system for teachers' professional development, and the tension in national identity education under a multicultural environment. Therefore, when doing patriotism education in kindergartens, we should innovate contents and carriers by developing kindergarten-based courses and activity models integrated with regional culture, strengthen support and guarantees by improving the policy mechanisms for teacher training and resource supply; build a new collaborative pattern by promoting the construction of an educational community with multi-party linkage among families, kindergartens and communities and deepen cultural integration to explore the connection between the awareness of the Chinese community and ethnic cultural education.*

Keywords: *Kindergarten; Patriotism Education; Practical Dilemma; Optimization Path*

1. Introduction

Ganzi Prefecture, which is located in the western part of Sichuan Province, China, boasts abundant natural resources and a profound cultural heritage. Its simple folk customs, tenacious spirit, and reverence for nature together form the unique cultural landscape of Ganzi. Its educational contexts bear the dual mission of inheriting ethnic culture and constructing national identity, a particularity that poses unique challenges to conventional patriotism education models in terms of content adaptability, form innovation, and emotional resonance. Patriotism education is a fundamental project for forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. By implementing appropriate patriotism education in kindergartens in the Ganzi Ethnic Minority Area, we can help young children establish emotional identification with the nation and cultural belonging from an early age, which can lay a psychological foundation for building a shared spiritual home for all ethnic groups.

At present, current academic community's researches on patriotism education in kindergartens tend to display a pattern of multi-regional exploration with certain achievements accumulated in both ordinary regions and ethnic minority regions. However, there remains a significant deficiency in research targeting special regions, such as the Ganzi ethnic minority region. Researches in ordinary regions focus on many core issues, such as the development of curriculum contents, the innovation of teaching methods and educational evaluation mechanisms, forming a diverse range of implementation approaches centered on thematic activities, situational teaching, and the integration of red culture^{[1][2]}. On the other hand, researches in ethnic minority regions show an exploration direction of "the symbiosis of national identity and ethnic culture". Scholars have attempted to construct education models with regional characteristics by exploring patriotic elements in ethnic traditional festivals and intangible cultural heritage^{[3][4]}. However, existing researches pay insufficient attention to the particularities of patriotism education in kindergartens in the Ganzi ethnic minority region and especially lack systematic discussions on key issues, such as the integration of cultural identity and the

utilization of local red resources, which leads to limited practical transformation values of research outcomes.

The key research question of this study is: How to deal with practical dilemmas such as homogeneous content, simplistic forms, and insufficient cultural integration in patriotism education in kindergartens in Tibetan-inhabited areas, and construct an educational system that embodies both national standardization and regional adaptability? In order to answer this question, the study adopts a progressive framework with the logic of “problem-oriented approach-in-depth analysis-path construction”. By taking practical dilemmas of patriotism education in kindergartens as the starting point, this thesis systematically sorts out current situations, analyzes the causes, and finally proposes targeted optimization paths.

2. Practical Dilemmas in Patriotism Education in Kindergartens

On the vast land of Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region, which is rich in ethnic cultural characteristics, kindergartens serve as important venues for children's early education, and their patriotism education undertakings bear particularity and challenges. Although patriotism education is being actively promoted and practiced in various places, there are still some problems that need to be solved urgently in the practice of patriotism education in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region.

2.1 Single Educational Contents and Forms

Patriotism education in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region currently faces a prominent dilemma of homogeneous contents and simplistic forms, which are mainly reflected in the widespread application of traditional indoctrination-based teaching models. During the implementation process of patriotism education in kindergartens in this region, the primary issue people face lies in the relatively traditional and unitary nature of educational content and methods[5]. In educational practice, kindergartens mostly carry out educational activities relying on standardized materials such as Readers for Patriotism Education in Kindergartens and fixed rituals like flag-raising and national anthem-singing on Mondays. They lack localized designs that connect with children's life experiences, resulting in homogenized content and rigid, formulaic forms in the educational process.

The underlying contradiction of this educational model lies in the dual neglect of both laws of children's cognitive development and the cultural context of Tibetan-inhabited areas. On one hand, children aged 3-6 years old mainly rely on concrete thinking as their dominant cognitive mode and need to construct cognition through life-oriented and game-based interactive experiences. However, the one-way collective lecture model can hardly arouse their emotional resonance and active participation. On the other hand, the disconnection between educational content and local red resources prevents national identity education from taking root in the cultural context and historical memories familiar to children. This leads to a cognitive separation in children's minds between “Lei Feng-style heroes” and “stories of the 18th Army entering Tibet”.

2.2 Weak Educational Resources and Teaching Staff

The remote geographical location and relatively low level of economic development in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region directly affect the construction of hardware facilities and the development of software resources in kindergartens. Many kindergartens face difficulties in educational resource allocation and they seriously lack teaching materials, teaching aids, and digital teaching resources related to patriotism education, which limits the richness of educational content and the diversity of educational methods[6]. According to 2024 Ganzi Statistical Yearbook, there are 348 kindergartens in the entire prefecture, including 26 in Litang County. In contrast, Daocheng County and Derong County—both relatively remote areas—have only 14 and 13 kindergartens respectively. This shows that enrolling in kindergartens remains difficult for children in remote counties, districts, and towns. In terms of basic facilities, the existing kindergarten buildings are still outdated and incompletely equipped, with some lacking health rooms and libraries. Although county governments have increased financial investment in education and the gross enrollment rate of preschool education has been rising year by year, there is still a significant gap in the enrollment rate of school-age children between different regions.

Influenced by economic conditions and geographical environment, there is still an incomplete mechanism for introducing and training high-level and professional preschool teachers. Existing

teachers tend to have low academic qualifications and there is an even greater shortage of teachers who possess bilingual teaching abilities, who are familiar with the culture of ethnic minority regions, and who can effectively carry out patriotism education. According to 2024 Ganzi Statistical Yearbook, the total number of faculty and staff in kindergartens in Ganzi Prefecture in 2020 was 2,028, including 1,279 full-time teachers. The number of enrolled children was 38,444, resulting in a teacher-to-child ratio of approximately 1:30.1. In 2024, the total number of faculty and staff in kindergartens in Ganzi Prefecture reached 4,631, with 2,286 full-time teachers, and the number of enrolled children was 38,139, bringing the teacher-to-child ratio to about 1:16.7. Although basic situations of kindergarten education in 2024 have improved compared with 2020, the number of full-time teachers is still limited. Moreover, most teachers lack systematic professional training, have insufficient mastery of knowledge in child psychology and pedagogy, and they lack such abilities as designing teaching activities and guiding children's behaviors.

2.3 Lack of Collaborative Education among Kindergartens, Families, and Communities

Some parents and community members of Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region may have an insufficient understanding of the importance of patriotism education in kindergartens. They believe that young children are too young and do not need to receive such education at an early stage^[3]. In addition, due to differences in educational background, living habits, and values, some parents feel confused or at a loss about how to cooperate with kindergartens in conducting patriotism education in daily life^[4]. In addition, kindergartens and parents tend to lack frequent or in-depth communications and exchanges, which results in parents failing to adequately continue and expand patriotism education in family education^[7].

At the social level, there are still inadequate support systems for patriotism education in kindergartens. Government departments, enterprises and public institutions, and non-governmental organizations should make more joint efforts to promote such education. What is worse, there are limited investments and supports from all sectors of society in providing targeted educational resources, building practical platforms, and creating a strong patriotic atmosphere.

Therefore, problems faced by kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region when carrying out patriotism education not only reflect challenges brought by regional characteristics, but also reveal deficiencies in educational concepts and practices. In order to deal with these issues, many parties should make efforts together. For example, the government should make more investment, optimize resource allocation, strengthen teacher training and deepen collaborative education among kindergartens, families, and communities. It is also necessary to continuously innovate educational models by combining local characteristics with the needs of the times so as to sow the seeds of patriotism in children's hearts and help them take root, germinate, and thrive.

2.4 Insufficient Integration of Cultural Identity Education

Patriotism education in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region faces prominent dilemmas in the integration of cultural identity. They can be analyzed from three dimensions: the lack of content carriers, the singularity of activity forms, and the imbalance of goal coordination.

When it comes to the level of educational contents, there is an obviously insufficient integration of ethnic traditional cultural elements. Data shows that most kindergartens have not transformed traditional art forms with distinct ethnic characteristics, such as Thangka (Tibetan Buddhist scroll painting) and Guozhuang Dance (a traditional group dance of Tibetan ethnic group), into effective carriers of patriotism education, leading to a disconnect between educational content and children's cultural life experience.

In terms of cognitive differences, cross-cultural comparative studies have revealed a significant cognitive gap: Tibetan children have a relatively low accuracy rate in their understanding of the concept of the Chinese nation, while Han children have a much higher accuracy rate in this regard. This discrepancy reflects the structural flaw in the current educational content regarding the connection between ethnic culture and national identity.

In terms of the design of educational forms, there is a prominent lack of practical activities, such as folk custom experience and field trips. Most of the existing education relies on traditional methods like in-class lectures, and fails to design immersive experiences based on cultural scenarios, such as ethnic festivals and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) techniques. At the level of educational goals, there is an

even deeper issue of coordination imbalance, which prevents the organic unification of ethnic cultural confidence and national identity.

3. Analysis of Causes of Practical Dilemmas in Patriotism Education in Kindergartens

Problems existing in preschool education in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region are caused by both internal factors, such as outdated educational concepts, insufficient educational investment, and limitations in the development of teaching staff, and external environmental influences, such as the role of the increasingly complex social and cultural environment in shaping children's value orientations.

3.1 Lag in the Modernization of Educational Concepts

Against the backdrop of globalization, educational concepts should be constantly updated to adapt to demands of social development. However, the core bottleneck faced by patriotism education in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region lies in the lag in the modernization of educational concepts. The traditional educational model overemphasizes one-way knowledge indoctrination while neglecting the experiential and situational teaching advocated in modern quality education^[8], which is mainly reflected in the obvious separation between traditional and modern educational concepts. The traditional educational concept simplifies patriotism education into formalized contents, such as recognizing the national flag and national anthem, and telling heroic stories. This cognition-oriented educational model ignores the cognitive characteristics and emotional development laws of young children. It is crucial to carry out patriotism education in a way that conforms to children's psychological characteristics and cognitive development rules in the process of cultivating children's deep affection for the country and the nation. In addition, children form a cognitive framework centered on religious culture and ethnic customs during their growth, and their understanding of abstract concepts requires concrete cultural symbols as intermediaries. If patriotism education is divorced from the foundation of local values such as "loving the country and respecting religion", it will be difficult to break through cultural barriers.

3.2 Lack of Policy Guarantee and Resource Supply Mechanism

The amount of educational investment can directly affect the allocation of educational resources and the improvement of educational quality. Government financial support may be relatively limited in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region due to the relatively weak level of regional economic development, which will directly restrict the update of kindergarten facilities and equipment, the organization of educational activities, and the quality of curriculum development. In addition, there may be insufficient special funds and policy support for patriotism education specifically targeted at kindergartens in Tibetan-inhabited areas. As a result, kindergartens are unable to effectively implement diversified and hierarchical patriotism education programs, which will finally affect the actual educational effect.

3.3 Breakdown in the Support System for Teachers' Professional Development

Professional competence of kindergarten teachers can directly affect the effective delivery of educational content^[9]. In Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region, due to harsh geographical conditions and difficulties in attracting talents, kindergarten teaching staff may have uneven overall qualities. When implementing patriotism education, teachers may lack the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills. On the other hand, there is still a lack of continuous education and training mechanism for kindergarten teachers. Teachers can not obtain timely and effective support and guidance in updating educational concepts, mastering modern educational tools and methods, which makes them face many challenges in the process of carrying out patriotism education.

3.4 Tensions in National Identity Education under a Multicultural Environment

With the development of information technology and the improvement of transportation conditions, children in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region no longer live in a relatively closed cultural environment as they did in the past. They are exposed to information and values from different cultural backgrounds at an early age. This collision and integration of multiple cultures, on the one hand, enriches children's world outlook; on the other hand, it may also impact traditional patriotism

education. Faced with the appeal of foreign cultures, if patriotism education fails to adjust its strategies in a timely manner and strengthen ethnic cultural confidence and identity, it may lead to ambiguity or indifference in children's understanding and recognition of their own country's history, culture, and national spirit.

The tension in the implementation of education is further intensified by cognitive biases of families. Some parents tend to overemphasize the particularity of ethnic culture and show resistance to the education of national common language and characters. This cognitive dislocation not only weakens the continuity of national identity education, but also creates a breakdown in value transmission between families and schools.

4. Optimization Paths for Patriotism Education in Kindergartens

Under the social backdrop of coexisting multiculturalism today, the exchange and collision of diverse cultures can not only provide a broader perspective, but also highlight the importance of ethnic cultural inheritance and patriotism education. For kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region, which is located on the plateau in western China, improving the level of patriotism education is not only the foundation for cultivating a new generation of young citizens with national pride and a sense of national belonging, but also an important carrier for inheriting and promoting Tibetan culture and the spirit of the Chinese nation. Therefore, it is necessary to comprehensively and in-depth explore and practice improvement measures from multiple dimensions.

4.1 Innovation of Contents and Carriers: Develop School-Based Curricula and Activity Modes Integrating Regional Culture

According to Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, children's learning and development occur in the process of concrete operations and interaction with the environment^[10]. Therefore, when designing patriotism education contents, it is necessary to follow the cognitive characteristics and development laws of the early childhood stage and adopt experiential and activity-oriented teaching models. For example, heroic deeds of ethnic historical figures can be presented in the form of story theaters. Through activities, such as role-playing, field visits, and handcrafting, children can participate personally and comprehend essences of the patriotic spirit through direct perception and hands-on practice. At the same time, according to constructivist learning theory, modern educational technology, such as developing interactive e-books and animated short films rich in patriotic elements, can be used to visualize and contextualize abstract patriotic concepts in daily life. This will greatly enhance the attractiveness of educational content and the durability of educational effects.

4.2 Strengthen Support and Guarantee: Improve Policy Mechanisms for Teacher Training and Resource Supply

In terms of teacher training, according to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, teachers, as leaders of educational activities, have professional competencies that can directly affect the achievement of educational goals^[11]. Therefore, it is necessary to help kindergarten teachers deeply understand and grasp the goal levels and requirements of patriotism education through regular training on teacher ethics and professional knowledge and skills so that they can design and implement teaching in a three-dimensional manner from the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. At the same time, by drawing on the concept of reflective teaching, teachers should be encouraged to actively participate in various teaching and research activities. Through case analysis, collective lesson preparation, observation and discussion, kindergartens can explore new paths for patriotism education which can adapt to characteristics of children in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region so that teaching quality of teaching can be continuously improved.

In terms of resource supply, the layout of kindergartens should be scientifically planned: the number of enrollment quotas in urban areas should be added; rural insurance can be covered in rural areas and "mobile kindergarten" services for remote pastoral areas can be explored. Special funds should be established to improve hardware facilities, with equipment and functional areas allocated in accordance with standards. Ethnic cultural teaching materials should be developed, and a prefecture-level resource database should be built. "Hand-in-hand" activities should be carried out to share urban and rural resources and narrow the educational gap.

In terms of policy guarantee, the staffing quota for preschool education should be dynamically adjusted; talents should be introduced through the “Special Post Plan” and targeted training programs, with separate staffing quotas and professional title preferences implemented for teachers in remote areas. Mechanisms, such as rural special subsidies and support incentives for volunteer teaching, should be established; subsidies for preschool education and care fees should be increased and special development funds should be set up. Besides, the “Bilingual Teacher Training Program” should be implemented, parent committees should be established, support should be provided for ethnic cultural activities, and the implementation of home-kindergarten co-education and cultural integration should be promoted.

4.3 Build a New Collaborative Pattern: Promote the Construction of an Education Community with Multi-Party Linkage among Kindergartens, Families, and Communities

Article 5 of the Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China adopted on October 23, 2021, clearly states that “family education, school education, and social education shall be closely integrated and coordinated”. Article 16 stipulates that “parents or other guardians of minors shall, in light of the physical and mental development characteristics of minors of different age groups, educate minors to love the Party, love the country, love the people, love the collective, and love socialism, establish the concept of safeguarding national unity, forge a strong sense of the Chinese nation community, and cultivate the feelings of family and country”^[12]. In the practice of patriotism education in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region, building a collaborative education community among kindergartens, families, and communities is a key path to enhance the effectiveness of education. By systematically integrating resources of kindergartens, families and communities, we can finally form a three-dimensional linkage mechanism featuring “kindergarten leadership-family participation-community support”.

Kindergartens take the lead to build a core hub for collaborative education. Each semester, kindergartens launch a “Patriotic Themed Parent-Child Activity Month” when immersive activities such as “Learning the Party History with Parents” and parent-child red study tours are organized. A kindergarten in a certain county has innovatively launched the “Five Elders Entering the Kindergarten to Tell History” program, regularly inviting veteran Party members, veteran soldiers, and other elderly representatives to enter the campus.

Families participate to consolidate the basic unit of education. Kindergartens set up parent schools and compile the Family Patriotism Education Guidebook to systematically teach methods and skills of patriotic education in families.

Communities provide support to expand practical education scenarios. Kindergartens jointly build practical education bases with red memorial halls, cultural stations, etc., and carry out “Community Red Classes” every month.

Innovation points of collaborative education: Through carriers, such as the “Five Elders Entering the Kindergarten to Tell History” program and the “Patriotism Education Cloud Platform”, the spatial and temporal limitations of traditional education are broken. A new pattern of home-kindergarten-community collaboration featuring joint research on content, shared resources, co-management of processes, and joint evaluation of effects is constructed.

4.4 Deepen Cultural Integration: Explore the Alignment between the Awareness of the Chinese Community and Ethnic Cultural Education

Educational contents should be enriched and children’s various potentials should be activated and developed based on the Theory of Multiple Intelligences by using local cultural resources for education. Ethnic culture contains abundant patriotic materials, such as heroic deeds of resisting foreign aggression and safeguarding national unity, touching stories of guarding the homeland and inheriting ethnic culture from generation to generation, and unique artistic expressions like Thangka, singing and dancing, and epics. All these are precious resources for patriotism education. Kindergartens should fully explore these cultural treasures and skillfully integrate them into the curriculum system. Through themed educational activities, artistic creation, and other methods, children can appreciate and experience the charm of Tibetan culture while naturally establishing deep affection for the motherland and the nation so as to embed patriotism education in their hearts.

5. Conclusion

Patriotism education in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region with rich cultural heritage and educational resources also faces multiple challenges while embracing development opportunities. On the unique land of Ganzi, kindergartens serve as the first important window for children to understand the world, and the patriotism education carried out here plays an irreplaceable role in helping young children establish national awareness and ethnic identity. At present, patriotism education in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region is still facing many problems in various aspects, and its optimization paths need to be promoted from multiple dimensions. With the continuous increase of the state's support for the western region, patriotism education in kindergartens in Ganzi Ethnic Minority Region will have broader development prospects. Therefore, we need to continuously explore and innovate educational methods, integrate patriotism education into daily teaching, strengthen teacher training and enhance the effectiveness of education.

Acknowledgements

This paper is a research outcome of the "Patriotic Education Research in Tibetan Kindergartens" project (Project No. NYJ20240623) conducted by the Rural Early Childhood Education Research Center, a key research base for humanities and social sciences in Sichuan Province.

References

- [1] Miao Haolin, *Practical paths for implementing patriotism education in kindergartens*. *Early Education*, 2024: (05), 45.
- [2] Gao Yun, *How to infiltrate patriotism education into kindergarten game activities*. *Jilin Education*, 2023, (34): 94-96.
- [3] Zhao, Shaona, *A study on the curriculum implementation of patriotism education in kindergartens in southern Xinjiang ethnic minority areas*. Hebei University, 2023.
- [4] Wu Liqun, *A study on patriotism education in kindergartens in ethnic minority areas (Master's Thesis)*. China West Normal University, 2023.
- [5] Hu Shaoping, *A study on effective strategies for carrying out patriotic education themed activities in senior kindergarten classes*. *Journal of Seeking Knowledge Guide*, 2023,(33): 122-124.
- [6] Feng Jiangying, Zhou Ying, *Construction of the content system of patriotism education in kindergartens in the new era: From the perspective of forging a strong sense of the Chinese nation community*, *Journal of Bilingual Education Studies*, 2023, 7(03): 26-37+2.
- [7] Su Yaya, *A practical study on carrying out patriotism education in kindergartens using Yan'an red resources*[J]. *Journal of Seeking Knowledge Guide*, 2022,(26): 107-109.
- [8] Zhang Yongyan, *A study on strategies of integrating patriotism education into kindergarten social teaching activities*[J]. *Intelligence*, 2022,(01):193-195.
- [9] Wang Yuhan, Wang Fei, *Practice and exploration of patriotism education activities in kindergartens: Taking the senior class themed activity "Childlike Heart Toward the Party" as an example*[J]. *Preschooler* 100, 2021, (10):18-19.
- [10] Ji Lei, "Teaching through doing": *Infiltrating patriotism education into kindergarten education* [J]. *Education Circle*, 2021,(24):77-78.
- [11] Yang Haina. *Nurturing children's hearts and educating people: How to infiltrate patriotism education into children's daily life in kindergartens*. In *Academic Achievement Collection of Guangdong Education Society 2019-2020* (Eds. Guangdong Education Society). Foshan Sanshui Hongyi Industrial Kindergarten, 2020:5.
- [12] China National People's Congress. *Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China*[EB/OL].(2021-10-23)[2025-08-30].http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/c2/c30834/202110/t20211023_314286.html.