

# Analysis of Reading Behavior and Influencing Factors of Preschool Children in Rural China

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the reading behavior of preschool children in rural China and its influence by their family and socio-cultural environment. The study builds a theoretical framework based on theories of reading behavior research, and empirically analyzes the influencing factors using appropriate research design and data collection methods. The findings reveal that family background, such as parents' education level and family economic situation, has a significant influence on children's reading behavior; meanwhile, the social and cultural environment and kindergarten reading education also play an important role in promoting preschool children's interest in reading and the formation of reading habits. The conclusion provides empirical support for how to improve the reading behavior of rural preschool children, and is of reference value for the formulation and implementation of related policies.

## KEYWORDS

Preschool Children; Reading Behavior; Developmental Status; Influencing Factors.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Under the background of vigorously advocating reading for all and generally attaching importance to the development of early childhood education, the reading behavior of preschool children in rural areas of China has received extensive attention. Accompanied by the rapid economic development of rural areas, the society pays more and more attention to preschool education, but the reading situation of rural preschoolers still faces many challenges. An in-depth exploration of rural preschoolers' reading behavior and its influencing factors is of great theoretical and practical significance for promoting the healthy growth and comprehensive development of rural preschoolers. The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the reading behavior of rural preschoolers and explore the factors that influence their reading behavior, with a view to providing a scientific basis and effective strategies for improving the reading environment and enhancing the reading ability of rural preschoolers.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF RURAL PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN CHINA

### 2.1. Importance of Reading Among Rural Preschoolers

According to "China's Child Population in 2020: Facts and Figures," jointly published by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in April 2023, there are 94.43 million children between the ages of 0-5 in China, and a significant proportion of these children are located in the rural areas, where the level of economic development is relatively backward. With the large number of preschoolers in rural China,

it is important to nurture and educate this group. First of all, it is related to the future development of individual children, which can lay a solid foundation of knowledge and ability for them, help them develop good morals and set up correct values, and help them grow up to be members of the society with both morals and abilities; in addition, attaching importance to the cultivation and education of preschool-age children in rural areas will also have a far-reaching impact on the long-term development of the region, as children are the builders of the future society, and a good education will improve their quality and contribute to the revitalization of rural areas. Children are the builders of the future society, and a good education can improve their quality and provide talent support for the revitalization of rural areas; from the perspective of society as a whole, attaching importance to the education of preschool children in rural areas is conducive to narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas, promoting fairness in education, and facilitating the harmonious and stable development of society.

In the growth process of rural preschool children, the positive effect of reading should not be ignored. Reading can open the door to knowledge for rural preschoolers, help them to get in touch with the rich and colorful world, and broaden their horizons. Through reading, it can improve preschool children's language expression and comprehension ability, and lay a solid language foundation for future learning and communication. At the same time, reading good books can nourish the soul, enhance the sense of truth, goodness and beauty, and help to cultivate noble sentiments and moral qualities. Good reading habits can also stimulate active thinking, improve logical thinking ability, and greatly promote intellectual development. In short, emphasizing the reading of rural preschool children has far-reaching and positive significance for their personal growth, regional development and even the progress of the whole society.

## **2.2. Analysis of Rural Preschool Children's Educational Environment**

The educational environment of rural preschool children includes family education, kindergarten education and social environment. In terms of family education, rural families generally pay little attention to education, lack of educational resources, and low cultural level of parents, all of which will directly affect the reading behavior of preschool children. In addition, there is a lack of standardized pre-school education institutions in rural areas, and the existing kindergartens have insufficient educational resources, relatively weak teachers and poor environmental conditions, all of which negatively affect children's reading habits. Thirdly, cultural traditions, values, economic development level and other factors existing in the rural social environment also have a profound impact on the reading behavior of rural preschool children. Overall, the relatively backward educational environment of rural children has imposed a certain degree of constraints on preschoolers' reading behavior.

## **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Theory of Reading Behavior Research**

According to Piaget's cognitive development theory, preschool children's reading behavior is influenced by their cognitive development level. With the growth of age, children's cognitive level will gradually increase, thus affecting their reading ability and reading behavior. In addition, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory also points out that children's reading behavior is influenced by their family and socio-cultural environment. Therefore, the study of children's reading behavior needs to comprehensively consider cognitive development and socio-cultural factors, including the influence of different levels such as family, school, and community, and pay attention to their interactive relationship.

In addition, attention should be paid to the dynamic process of the development of children's reading behavior, and developmental psychology research methods, such as longitudinal tracking observation

and case study analysis, should be used to explore in depth the developmental patterns and influencing factors of children's reading behavior. At the same time, it is also necessary to combine the methods of big data analysis and experimental research to quantitatively analyze the degree of influence of different factors on children's reading behavior and propose targeted interventions to promote the healthy development of children's reading behavior.

### **3.2. Research Design and Data Collection**

This study aimed to explore the reading behavior of preschool children and their influencing factors in rural China. In the research design, a mixed method combining quantitative and qualitative approaches was used. Lingyuan City in Liaoning Province, which is relatively underdeveloped, was taken as the survey area, and questionnaires and interview outlines applicable to parents of preschool children and kindergarten teachers were carefully designed. The survey covered the reading behavior of preschool children, home reading environment, parents' education level, kindergarten reading education and reading resources. At the same time, an observation record sheet was designed to record preschoolers' behavioral performance in reading activities, as well as parents' and teachers' instructional styles and attitudes in the reading process.

In order to increase the richness and diversity of the data, a variety of methods, including questionnaires, on-site interviews, home visit surveys, etc., were used in the data collection process so as to gain a comprehensive understanding of preschool children's reading behaviors as well as influencing factors in terms of the family environment, kindergarten education and the social and cultural atmosphere.

## **4. CURRENT READING BEHAVIOR OF RURAL PRESCHOOLERS IN CHINA**

Observations and surveys of rural preschoolers in the Lingyuan area show that their overall reading frequency is relatively low and they start reading late. The vast majority of children start reading only after entering kindergarten, and their reading activities are occasional, with only a very small number of children able to maintain a more regular reading habit.

In terms of reading content, rural preschoolers show a clear preference. They are especially inclined to fairy tales, children's songs or children's cartoon related books with rich pictures, while their interest in science knowledge, traditional culture and other types of books is relatively weak.

In terms of reading environment, rural preschoolers also face many difficulties. Rural families often lack a dedicated reading space, do not have abundant reading resources, and have a limited number of books that are not updated in a timely manner. At the same time, parents' attention to reading varies, and most parents fail to actively guide and participate in their children's reading. In rural areas, there is a lack of formal early childhood education institutions, with private kindergartens dominating. Although some kindergartens have certain reading facilities and emphasize the arrangement of reading activities for children, in some more remote and backward rural areas, the reading conditions in kindergartens are still unsatisfactory. For example, the variety and number of books are insufficient, and the organization and guidance of reading activities are not systematic enough. In terms of the overall social and cultural atmosphere, residents in rural areas have a low awareness of reading, and the lack of public reading venues and related activities makes it difficult to effectively promote and support preschoolers' reading behavior.

In summary, the reading behavior of preschoolers in rural China has many difficulties, and we need to further analyze the influencing factors behind it, so that we can take targeted measures to improve and enhance their reading situation.

## **5. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCING FACTORS**

### **5.1. Influence of Family Background on Reading Behavior**

Family background has an important influence on the reading behavior of rural preschoolers. First of all, the economic status of the family is one of the key factors influencing children's reading behavior. Families with better economic conditions are more likely to provide children with abundant reading resources, such as books, newspapers and magazines, thus promoting children's reading interest and ability. Second, parents' literacy level and reading habits also have an impact on children's reading behavior. Parents' reading interests and attitudes in the family will have a modeling effect on their children, and accompanying their children to read together will also subconsciously influence the formation of their children's reading habits and skills. In addition, the educational input of the family and the family educational environment will also directly affect the reading behavior of preschool children, such as whether there is a reading space in the family, whether the parents regularly accompany the children to read, and other factors have a positive or negative impact on children's reading behavior. Therefore, family background factors have an important influence on the reading behavior of rural preschoolers, and the improvement of the family educational environment and the creation of a reading atmosphere in the family are crucial to promoting the development of children's reading behavior.

### **5.2. The Role of Social Culture and Reading Atmosphere**

The influence of social culture on the reading behavior of rural preschool children should not be underestimated, and the overall cultural atmosphere in rural areas will, to a certain extent, shape children's cognition and attitude towards reading. If the local community has a tradition of emphasizing knowledge and cultural inheritance, then children are more likely to be influenced by this atmosphere and develop a positive emotional disposition toward reading. At the same time, local cultural activities and customs may also provide children with reading-related experiences and opportunities.

The overall environment of the rural community plays a key role in the reading atmosphere. If there are public reading places in the community, such as libraries or reading corners, and reading promotion activities are frequently organized, it will greatly stimulate children's interest in reading. Children are also influenced by the importance they attach to reading and the degree of participation of the people around them. When children see that adults and partners around them love reading, they will be more willing to take part in it as well. In addition, the promotion of reading by public opinion and propaganda will also guide children to realize the importance of reading and to experience the joy of reading. This positive reading atmosphere can create good reading conditions and environment for rural preschoolers, which will help them to develop reading interest and reading behavior.

In short, social culture and reading atmosphere is an important shaping force for the reading behavior of rural preschool children, and it is necessary to pay attention to and actively create a social and cultural environment and atmosphere conducive to children's reading.

### **5.3. The Guiding Role of Kindergartens**

Kindergartens have a significant and far-reaching influence on the reading behavior of rural preschoolers. On the one hand, if kindergartens have relatively professional teachers who can use scientific and effective methods to guide children to read, it will greatly stimulate children's interest in reading and desire to explore. Through the teachers' vivid and interesting explanations and interactions, children can better understand the content of reading and enhance their motivation to read. On the other hand, kindergartens need to have a considerable amount of reading resources, including various kinds of picture books and story books suitable for children's ages, which will

provide children with a wide range of reading space and choices. Moreover, kindergartens should organize diversified reading activities, such as story-sharing sessions and reading corners, to create a strong reading atmosphere for children, so that they can feel the fun and charm of reading in a collective environment. In addition, the kindergarten's educational philosophy and teaching arrangement will also have an impact on children's reading behavior. Kindergartens that emphasize the cultivation of reading will integrate reading into their daily teaching and give children enough time and opportunities to read, which will help children develop good reading habits. In the kindergarten, children will also influence each other, those who love reading can lead other children to participate in reading, forming a good reading culture. In conclusion, kindergarten, as an important place for preschool children to grow up, has an unignorable role in promoting and guiding their reading behavior.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study explored the reading behavior of rural preschoolers and their influencing factors. Through field research and data analysis, it was found that factors such as family environment, social and cultural atmosphere and kindergarten reading education have an important influence on rural preschoolers' reading behavior. Among them, the family environment and parents' reading behavior have a significant influence on children's reading interest and habit formation. At the same time, the study found that rural preschoolers have certain problems and obstacles in reading, such as lack of reading resources, poor reading environment, and parents' low awareness of reading.

In view of the reading behavior and influencing factors of rural preschool children, it is suggested to strengthen family education, improve reading resources and environment, enhance parents' reading awareness, and promote the cultivation and development of rural preschool children's reading habits; the social level should increase the investment and construction of reading resources in rural areas, improve public reading facilities, organize colorful reading promotion activities, and create a strong reading atmosphere, so as to make reading an an important part of rural life. Early childhood education institutions should further optimize the education model, enrich the content of reading courses, equip professional reading instructors, actively carry out various reading-related activities to stimulate children's enthusiasm for reading, and strengthen communication and cooperation with parents to jointly create good reading conditions for children. Through the concerted efforts of families, society and early childhood education institutions, a quality environment conducive to the formation of reading habits and the improvement of reading ability is created for rural preschoolers in an all-round way, so as to promote the continuous improvement of the reading level of rural preschoolers and lay a solid foundation for their future development.

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