



Preschool teachers' perception of curriculum reform in Taiwan's early childhood education

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ABSTRACT

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The Taiwanese kindergartens and nurseries are integrated in the New Curriculum reform to improve the quality of early childhood education. This study employed the narrative inquiry method to study the perception of preschool teachers in Taiwanese kindergartens and nurseries, to evaluate their experiences and emotions towards the implementation of the New Curriculum. A purposive sampling method was used to identify 30 participants, who were all females and worked as pre-school teachers. The data was collected through narrative interviews. Although Taiwan's early childhood education curriculum reform was flawed, most of the participants expressed a high degree of acceptance of the curriculum. They opined that the quality of early childhood education has gradually improved; the quality of early childhood education and the provision of syllabi should also be discussed in Taiwan's early childhood education discourse. The study recommends promoting preschool teachers' understanding of the new mandatory curriculum policies, increasing the number of study sessions for the New Curriculum, increasing the diversity of the New Curriculum, among others.

Contribution/Originality: The study examines uniquely the perception of preschool teachers in Taiwanese kindergartens and nurseries to evaluate their experiences and emotions towards the implementation of the New Curriculum. It is a first study of its kind to delve into the Curriculum reforms and provide recommendations towards its implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Taiwan, kindergartens and nurseries became integrated through the Early Childhood Education and Care Act in 2011 to improve the quality of early childhood education. The Early Childhood Education and Care Curriculum Framework (hereafter referred to as the New Curriculum) was implemented in August 2017. However, preschool teachers have conducted studies and workshops on the curriculum since 2012 (Chang, 2016; Shih, 2020a, 2020b; Wei, 2014; Wu, 2023). The goal of schools—in other words 'what was to be learned'—was taken for granted, so the curriculum was interpreted as the instruction and efficient organization of teaching resources (Young, 2013). However, curriculum development is essential in education, and preschool teachers are the indispensable element of curriculum development in early childhood education. However, the relationship between curriculum and preschool teachers is generally independent of curriculum discourse.

The related discourse on the role of teachers in curriculum development has been investigated in research on curriculum reform. Studies have indicated that teachers are key agents in curriculum reform and planning. Hence, teachers' perceptions of curriculum reform must be evaluated (Chen, 2004; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Hall & Hord, 1987, 2011; Hewitt, 2006; Siegel & Biesta, 2022). For more than ten years, researchers have analyzed this new early childhood education curriculum and provided preschool teachers with guidance for practically applying the New Curriculum framework. Researchers also serve as professional development counselors for preschools under the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. Preschool teachers' perceptions of the curriculum reform and their experiences with implementing early childhood education have attracted the attention of researchers, who want to adopt a narrative inquiry approach to understand these perceptions.

A narrative is a description of human experiences and actions and is a form of both inquiry and cognition. Narrative inquiry allows researchers to evaluate the experiences of others, which can lead to meaningful interactions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 1993). Ritchie and Wilson (2000) indicated that knowledge is developed through reflection and practice. Therefore, narrative inquiry can be used by researchers to explore preschool teachers' perceptions of the early childhood education curriculum reform in Taiwan's early childhood educational system. The narrative inquiry method was applied in the present study to allow preschool teachers to share their stories and researchers to analyze preschool teachers' feelings, experiences, and thoughts regarding the preschool curriculum in current Taiwan. The research objectives were as follows: (1) analyze the preschool teachers' perceptions of curriculum reform, (2) explore the curriculum reform on early childhood education in Taiwan, (3) explore the perceptions of preschool teachers of New Curriculum reform in Taiwanese early childhood education, and (4) provide a reference for preschools and the government to implement New Curriculum.

2. PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM REFORM

Globalization has increased the pressure on educational systems at all levels to reform. Countries undergoing early childhood educational reforms refer to international research findings and trends to develop new pedagogical systems (Kekesi, Donkor, Aburampah, & Torkonyo, 2019). The implementation of education affects a country's development and success, and a key component of an effective educational system is the cultivation of high-quality teachers. Therefore, preschool teachers' perceptions of curriculum reform must be investigated. When defining or explaining curricula, scholars often use metaphors or images. The metaphors of implementing curriculum as cooking, traveling, dancing, and creating art are commonly used. Among such curriculum metaphors, eight are the most common in educational research. These eight curriculum metaphors of Schubert include curriculum as content or subject matter, as experience, as a career, as an agenda for social reconstruction, as a program of planned activities, as intended learning outcomes, as cultural reproduction, and as discrete tasks and concepts (Rijal, 2021; Shih, Chen, & Ye, 2020; Shih & Wang, 2022; Wang & Shih, 2022, 2023).

In a rapidly changing world, change is necessary for evolution, and in education, curricula must be reformed before education can evolve. Preschool teachers are essential for curriculum reform, and preparing children for a successful life and addressing the development of the "whole child". However, the perceptions that teachers have of curriculum reforms must be understood to ensure that such reforms are properly implemented (Buchanan, 2015; Nasiopoulou, Williams, & Lantz-Andersson, 2022). Teachers as curriculum implementers still have the room to adapt and adopt curriculum to suit the conditions they face in schools. Preschool teachers' awareness of their role is also significant in planning and implementing school-based curriculum innovation (Maphosa & Mutopa, 2012).

Curriculum reform requires not only knowledge but also emotion. "How do you feel about education reform and the process of the education reform? When facing yourself, children, parents and society, how do their own emotions affect both their lives and education reform?" Teachers generally harbor negative and unconstructive feelings toward curriculum reform, which can negatively affect their involvement in and commitment to implementing such reform (Park & Sung, 2013).

3. CURRICULUM REFORM OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN TAIWAN

The Kindergarten Curriculum Standards have been revised and published five times since the provisional edition of these standards was published in Taiwan in 1929. The first edition was in 1932, the second edition in 1936, the third edition in 1953, and the fourth edition in 1975. The most recent edition was published in 1987. Before World War II, no kindergarten curriculum standards were in place. After Japanese colonialism ended in 1945, the second edition of the Kindergarten Curriculum Standards became the basis for implementing kindergarten curriculum (Chang, 2016; Lee-Fong, 2017).

Historically, early childhood education was often neglected in Taiwan, and reforms were infrequent. In response to rapid societal change, global educational trends, and the desire to maintain the quality of childhood education, the public urged the government to reform early childhood education systems and to take decisive measures (Chang, 2016; Lee-Fong, 2017). Since 1993, the Ministry of Education has successively put forward a series of reports and action plans on early childhood education development and reform. The plan to integrate preschools and nursery schools was part of this series and began a new chapter for early childhood education in Taiwan. In response to the integration plan and to improve the quality of early childhood education, the kindergarten counseling plan was introduced in 2006. This plan facilitated collaboration between experts and scholars and preschool teachers to solve problems in schools (Chang, 2016; Lee-Fong, 2017).

The Early Childhood Education and Care Act was passed in 2011, the Ministry of Education announced the Implementation Guidelines for Preschool Education and Security Services (August 2012), the Preschool Evaluation Method (May 2012), and the Ministry of Education's Preschool Curriculum and Teaching Quality Evaluation Form (June 2012). These regulations have also become the standard for preschool personnel when implementing new curricula. Since 2009, the Ministry of Education has tested new curricula in seed preschools in various counties and cities and has conducted New Curriculum studies for in-service education, the preparation of parent handbooks, and the development of new curricula. After the New Curriculum of 2012 was announced, the Ministry of Education linked the implementation of the New Curriculum in preschools with tutoring programs, professional knowledge training, and other measures (Lee-Fong, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2011, 2012, 2017).

The Preschool Counseling Plan was enacted in December 2012 and has been revised twice, in 2013 and in 2014. Preschool counseling is divided into three categories: basic counseling, professional development counseling, and support service counseling. Professional development counseling is further divided into adaptive education and care counseling, curriculum tutoring, character development tutoring, and professional certification tutoring, which is regarded as the highest level of professional development. Professional certification tutoring is recommended by county and city governments and can provide education and personal development based on the New Curriculum. Consequently, the New Curriculum has been integrated into professional development for preschool personnel (Lee-Fong, 2017).

The Kindergarten Curriculum Standards were enacted in 1987, and few revisions have been made since. In 1998, the government commissioned scholars to investigate potential avenues for revision, leading to six research projects that lasted for 7 years to complete. The development of new preschool curricula began in 2006, and after 7 years of research, preparation, experimentation, revision, and promotion, a provisional syllabus was announced in October 2012. It became the official syllabus in August 2017 (Liu & Chang, 2015; Shih, 2020b; Wei, 2014). Preschools provide educational health and safety courses to incorporate health, life skills, safety, morals, and gender equality into curricula. It was recommended that health and safety courses must also be implemented concurrently rather than separately. Teaching materials should be selected on the basis of children's experiences and local environments to promote self-development (Ministry of Education, 2012, 2017).

The New Curriculum was designed to assist preschool teachers with understanding and implementing reforms. The Ministry of Education planned and conducted a series of training activities that replaced those conducted under the old curriculum. Comprehensive curriculum planning enabled preschool teachers to develop practical teaching

skills after they had understood the theory underlying the curriculum. Additionally, to increase the number of study hours, teachers were advised to plan 6–18 study hours depending on the study content. Chang (2016) reported that “experienced teachers serve as study teachers;” they can benefit from employing the collaborative teaching methods of university professors and experienced preschool teachers (Chang, 2016).

To ensure that on-site preschool teachers understand new curricula, the Ministry of Education commissioned a yearly study entitled “Experience Sharing for Curriculum.” The study provided preschool teachers with a reference for effectively implementing the curricula. Preschool education was in a state of division for a considerable period of time; although the enrollment age groups for kindergartens and nursery schools overlapped, their curriculum standards were different.

The Kindergarten Curriculum Standard received few revisions; it was revised once in 1987, at which time six areas of education (health, play, music, work, language, and general knowledge) were added to the curriculum. At this time, nursery school education was also subdivided into five areas: play, music, work, stories and ballads, and common sense. After the integration of kindergartens and nurseries, the New Curriculum was condensed into six areas of education: language, cognition, society, emotion, physical movement and health, and aesthetics (Liu & Chang, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2017; Shih, Wu, & Chung, 2022).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Narrative Inquiry as research design

Narrative inquiry emphasizes the subjective interpretation of people’s ideas, emotions, and experiences. When engaged in narrative inquiry, the researcher narrates the experiences of research participants. The purpose of narrative inquiry is to understand and provide meaning to experiences. In narrative inquiry, the data from lived experiences and stories are recounted and analyzed (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998; Riessman, 1993).

In narrative inquiry, the experiences of the researchers and participants are deconstructed and reconstructed under conditions of mutual care and personal resonance that are established through the narratives provided during their interactions.

Therefore, narrative inquiry is a cognitive method based on the mutual respect and psychological closeness between the participants and researchers. The present study adopted narrative inquiry method as research design to evaluate the experiences and emotions of preschool teachers during the implementation of the preschool curriculum. The researchers asked the preschool teachers to recount their interaction (personal and social), continuous (past, present, and future) and situational (place) related to the implementation of the curriculum (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

These narratives summarized the experiences of the preschool teachers, who described the people, events, and features of their experiences and the emotions they felt. The researchers recorded the events, actions, reflections, prospects, and evaluations of the choices and practices of the participants (Riessman, 1993) and transcribed the recorded interviews as field texts, which were empirically analyzed to identify key meanings.

4.2. Study Participants

To understand the perception of the preschool teachers after the curriculum reform and implementation, the present study adopted a purposive sampling method to select 30 participants, who were all females and worked as pre-school teachers. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the interviewees.

Table 1. Demographic information of interviewees.

Job title/Serial no	Gender	Curriculum orientation	Interview time	Early childhood education experience
Preschool teacher/1	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2020.10.29	6 years
Preschool teacher/2	Female	Montessori based curriculum	2hours 2020.10.30	4 years
Preschool teacher/3	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2020.10.30	2 years
Preschool teacher/4	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2020.12.26	6 years
Preschool teacher/5	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.03	5 years
Preschool teacher/6	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.05	3 years
Preschool teacher/7	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.03	5 years
Preschool teacher/8	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2020.12.26	10 years
Preschool teacher/9	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2020.10.13	2 years
Preschool teacher/10	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.05	3 years
Preschool teacher/11	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.27	5 years
Preschool teacher/12	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.20	5 years
Preschool teacher/13	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.16	8 years
Preschool teacher/14	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.19	9 years
Preschool teacher/15	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.19	10years
Preschool teacher/16	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.05	9 years
Preschool teacher/17	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.21	7 years
Preschool teacher/18	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.11	4 years
Preschool teacher/19	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.21	9 years
Preschool teacher/20	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.01.05	5 years
Preschool teacher/21	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.04	10 years
Preschool teacher/22	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2020.10.31	7years
Preschool teacher/23	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.04	2 years
Preschool teacher/24	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.01	7.5years
Preschool teacher/25	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.08	5 years
Preschool teacher/26	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.01	7 years
Preschool teacher/27	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.08	10 years
Preschool teacher/28	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.02.18	4 years
Preschool teacher/29	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.03.18	3 years
Preschool teacher/30	Female	Theme based curriculum	2hours 2021.03.18	2 years

4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

This study collected data through narrative interviews. Each participant was interviewed for 2 hours. The first 10–20 min of the interview was a warm-up period. The interview then entered a 90-minute narrative format. At the end of the interview, 10–20 minutes were devoted to questions and answers. The informants were invited to initiate discussions and inquiries related to the research or the early childhood education curriculum. Some of the questions and suggestions were “What are the experiences and feelings you have when hearing about, learning, and implementing the preschool education curriculum.” This research adopted the content analysis method (Lieblich et al., 1998) to identify the perceptions, feelings, and needs of the preschool teachers after the curriculum reform in the verbatim interview transcripts and reflections of the participants.

Each interview code corresponds to a specific interviewee and the date on which they were interviewed. For example, ‘Preschool teacher interview 1, A20211029’ corresponds to the interview with the preschool teacher, which was conducted on October 29, 2021.

4.4. Research Ethics

All 30 preschool teachers provided informed consent to be photographed and provide audio recordings that would be transcribed for academic research and publication (Shih, 2022).

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Preschool Teachers’ Positive Perception of the Implementation of the New Curriculum

The perception of the 30 research informants toward the implementation of the early childhood education curriculum were positive. Preschool teacher 1 said: “I think the curriculum is becoming more and more child-centered. I think it is helpful for children.” (Preschool teacher interview 1, A20211029). Likewise, Preschool teacher 4 said: “Since you [as a teacher] are a preschool educator, you must constantly study the curriculum, reflect on your role in curriculum development, practice high-quality curriculum implementation and teaching, and enable children to learn and grow happily.” (Preschool Teacher interview 4, A20201226). Consequently, Preschool teacher 5 added: “The more you understand the spirit of the course, the more you feel that the curriculum is helpful for young children.” (Preschool teacher interview 5, 20210203). According to Preschool teacher 8: “By implementing the New Curriculum, I can provide children with a different style of teaching.” (Preschool teacher interview 8, 20201226). The Preschool teacher 9 added: “The New Curriculum is actually helpful to young children. I am happy to implement the New Curriculum.” (Preschool teacher interview 9, 20201013). Finally, Preschool teacher 12 commented: “I agree with the concepts of the New Curriculum. I think it has really changed and improved children’s learning.” (Preschool teacher interview 12, 20210120).

From the above description, we can understand that preschool teachers’ positive perceptions of the implementation of the New Curriculum.

5.2. Preschool Teachers’ Belief that Curriculum Policies Must Be Mandatory

Preschool teacher 6 outlined the general belief: “We support the spirit and connotations of the New Curriculum. Many of the research participants said that because the curriculum is incorporated into policy, preschool teachers are obliged to participate in the research and implementation of the curriculum and include the curriculum in the evaluation. Because...if you don’t force them to implement it, they won’t want to do it.” (Preschool teacher interview 6, 20210105). Likewise, Preschool teacher 18 added: “Teaching the New Curriculum is really determined by an evaluation mechanism...it is a policy that is important for preschool teachers to understand and that you cannot escape...” (Preschool teacher interview 18, 20210111). Preschool teacher 13 added: “Curriculum policy should be mandatory so that preschools can thoroughly implement the curriculum.” (Preschool teacher

interview 13, 20210116). From the above description, we can understand that preschool teachers' belief that curriculum policies must be mandatory.

5.3. Increase the Number of Study Sessions for the New Curriculum

Many participants also reported that since the implementation of the 2012 provisional curriculum framework, planning for workshops for the New Curriculum have been somewhat insufficient, and such workshops may be slowly phased out. Preschool teacher 16 agreed to this opinion and said: "The New Curriculum should be regularly studied...not just for new teachers or so that our in-service teachers can reflect on it again or review their own teaching...It's much better than before! And if I don't participate in this one, I can participate in another one. However, it is hard to find one now." (Preschool teacher interview 16, 20210205) Preschool teacher 15 added: "The New Curriculum seems to be in the experimental stage, so I think more seminars should be held so that teachers can understand the spirit of the New Curriculum." (Preschool teacher interview 15, 20210119).

5.4. Insufficient Diversity in the Connotations of the New Curriculum

Preschool teacher 14 said: "The cultural [education in] the New Curriculum is mostly based on standard Han Chinese culture and values, and [curriculum on the] diversity of ethnic groups seems to be insufficient. This is also a concern for the ethnic groups. I think it is necessary...because the children in the class often belong to different ethnic groups..." (Preschool teacher interview 14, 20210119) Likewise, Preschool teacher 25 said: "Preschool teachers should understand that there are children from different ethnic groups in the classroom." (Preschool teacher interview 25, 20210208) From the above description, we can understand that insufficient diversity in the connotations of the New Curriculum.

5.5. New Curriculum Causes People to Feel That the Curriculum Itself Is a Theme and Project, and the Montessori Model is Ignored

The participants who completed curriculum orientations on non-themed curriculum reported feeling that the curriculum itself was the theme and focus of the program. Although the themes and programs of the New Curriculum were mentioned at the beginning of the orientation, no examples of the themes and projects of the curriculum were provided. According to Preschool teacher 26: "The New Curriculum itself is the theme... That's my idea." (Preschool teacher interview 26, 20210201) Preschool teacher 19 said: "Relevant examples... for putting the New Curriculum into practice should be provided. For example, I think putting the New Curriculum into practice is very different from putting the Waldorf curriculum model into practice. Therefore, I think there should be a different way of teaching how to do so." (Preschool teacher interview 19, 20210201) Preschool teacher 2 said: "Our preschool uses the Montessori curriculum...and changing to the New Curriculum put a lot of pressure on us." (Preschool teacher interview 2, 20201030) Preschool teacher 3 said: "I think Montessori has a Montessori set and a set of standards, so how is it connected to the New Curriculum?" (Preschool teacher interview 3, 20201030) Preschool teacher 6 said: "I think the curriculum should be done in a different way so the effect is different. It is different if you use a theme to compare it with the Waldorf curriculum model. The most important thing is that the process is different..." (Preschool teacher interview 6, 20210105).

5.6. Pressure on Preschool Teachers to Implement the New Curriculum

Preschool teacher 22 expressed: "I feel like I'm overwhelmed by the materials every day, and I feel that I can't take care of my children. It's because you [as a teacher] have to hand in this and that material." (Preschool teacher interview 22, 20201031) Preschool teacher 12 added: "At that time, we were super [overwhelmed], and everyone felt that they could not understand the New Curriculum. At that time, it was a tentative curriculum, and we had to

[prepare] a lot of homework.” (Preschool teacher interview 12, 20210120) From the above description, we can understand that pressure on preschool teachers to implement the New Curriculum.

5.7. Improvement in Preschool Teachers’ Understanding of the New Curriculum during Preservice Teacher Education

Preschool teacher 11 shared: “Strengthen preservice teachers’ understanding of the New Curriculum at the preservice teacher training stage, and enhance teachers’ motivation to implement the New Curriculum.” (Preschool teacher interview 11, 20210127) Subsequently, Preschool teacher 20 said: “The focus of preservice education should be strengthened in the development of a curriculum... If teachers don’t want to change or feel that the curriculum doesn’t need to be child-centered, then they clearly don’t understand the spirit of the New Curriculum.” (Preschool teacher interview 20, 20210105) From the above description, we can understand that improvement in preschool teachers’ understanding of the New Curriculum during preservice teacher education is needed.

6. REFLECTIONS

The extant findings reveal that an academic dialogue was lacking between those who devised the New Curriculum and the preschool teachers. The present study evaluated the curriculum reform to understand the perceptions of preschool teachers regarding the implementation of the New Curriculum. The study revealed that preschool teachers had (1) positive perception of the implementation of the New Curriculum, (2) the belief that curriculum policies must be mandatory, (3) the belief that the number of study sessions for the New Curriculum must be increased, (4) perception that the New Curriculum lacks diversity, (5) the perception that the curriculum itself was the theme and project, and the Montessori model is ignored, (6) the perception that preschool teachers are pressured to develop new curricula, and (7) the perception that preschool teachers’ understanding of the New Curriculum should be strengthened during preservice teacher education.

The New Curriculum was presented as a tentative outline in 2012. To assist preschool teachers with implementing the curriculum, scholars from various colleges and universities were recruited. After training and passing the review, such scholars became lecturers and consultants for the New Curriculum. From 2012 to 2017, the official curriculum was implemented. During this period, studies on the curriculum were numerous. However, preschool teachers often struggled to understand and implement the curriculum. Additionally, this wave of early childhood education curriculum reform emphasized learning, recording, and reflecting. Consequently, many teachers were overwhelmed by the number of assignments and confused about how they could properly implement the curriculum.

Although Taiwan’s early childhood education curriculum reform was flawed, most of the participants expressed a high degree of acceptance of the curriculum. The quality of early childhood education has gradually improved; the quality of early childhood education and the provision of syllabi should also be discussed in Taiwan’s early childhood education discourse. The ability of preschool teachers to address problems and difficulties with their peers has also improved (Park & Sung, 2013). Peer teachers can consult each other, which may improve the quality of the implementation of Taiwan’s early childhood education curriculum.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Conclusion

The world is undergoing rapid changes. The preschool education curriculum in Taiwan must change with the times to inject new energy into teaching, ensure continuity across curricula, and facilitate the development of curricula in schools (Hung, 2019). Preparing children for a successful life and addressing all aspects of childhood development—that is, considering the well-being, learning, and development of a child in several interconnected areas (e.g., socioemotional, personal, and cognitive development)—is a fundamental objective of preschool (Nasiopoulou et al., 2022). However, the success of preschool education is based on the quality of curricula.

Teachers are an ideal source for obtaining an understanding of how curricula have been implemented and received. The spirit of Taiwan's early childhood education curriculum reform is consistent with that of most international curricula and teaching directions that emphasize core literacy (Tai, 2014).

A curriculum is important in an educational system. In Taiwan, the current preschool education curriculum builds upon the 1987 preschool education curriculum standards, and the theories and guidelines of the New Curriculum differ with the social context. Many preschool teachers have grown accustomed to traditional teaching practices. Such teachers may struggle to understand, accept, and implement the New Curriculum. Teachers' attitudes toward curriculum reform are essential determiners of its success (Berkovich, 2011; Thura & Khaing, 2020).

Although reform is an arduous process, educators, researchers, and policymakers in Taiwan must strive for high-quality preschool education. Therefore, we evaluated the perceptions of preschool teachers when implementing the New Curriculum. The preschool teachers felt (1) positively about the implementation of the New Curriculum, (2) that the curriculum must be mandatory, (3) that the number of study sessions for the New Curriculum must be increased, (4) that the New Curriculum does not sufficiently incorporate the culture of other ethnic groups, (5) that the New Curriculum itself is the theme and focus of the program, (6) that teachers experience pressure when implementing the New Curriculum, and (7) that instruction on implementing the New Curriculum should be strengthened during preservice teacher education.

7.2. Recommendations

This study investigated Taiwan's early childhood education curriculum reform to provide suggestions for improving the New Curriculum. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Promote preschool teachers' belief that the New Curriculum must be mandatory across schools.
2. Increase the number of study sessions for learning the New Curriculum.
3. Increase the cultural diversity within the New Curriculum.
4. Revise New Curriculum causes people to feel that the curriculum itself is a theme and project.
5. Alleviate the pressure felt by preschool teachers when implementing the New Curriculum.
6. Improve preschool teachers' understanding of the New Curriculum during preservice teacher education.

Finally, preschool teachers should observe the effective methods to create training materials and sessions that enable teachers to translate theory and research into teaching practice for the New Curriculum. By doing so, preschool teachers can understand how they can share their teaching methods with other teachers to better understand how to nurture children's abilities and initiatives (Izumi-Taylor, Ito, Lin, & Akita, 2017; Thura & Khaing, 2020; Chung-Chin Wu, 2022).

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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