



The Importance of the Montessori Method in Early Childhood Education in Ethnic Minority Regions: A Case Study of the Z Development Zone, Western China

Pentingnya Metode Montessori dalam Pendidikan Anak Usia Dasar di Daerah Etnis Minoritas: Studi Kasus Zona Perkembangan Z, Tiongkok Barat

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Abstract

This study examines the significance of the Montessori method in early childhood education within ethnic minority regions, focusing on a case study in the Z Development Zone in Western China. Through qualitative research methods, including interviews with 19 kindergarten teachers, the study assesses the current state of the teaching workforce and the potential for the Montessori method to enhance education in these regions. The findings reveal that Montessori practices are not currently used in the studied kindergartens due to challenges such as an imbalanced teaching staff, low professional standards, and inadequate training opportunities. Supported by Social Representation (SR) theory, the analysis highlights the Montessori method's focus on child autonomy and individual development, which aligns with the educational needs of ethnic minority areas. The research suggests that introducing Montessori principles could significantly improve the quality of education. To address existing issues, the study recommends strategies such as targeted teacher training, improving training quality, and raising the social status of kindergarten teachers. These measures aim to strengthen the educational infrastructure in ethnic minority regions and promote sustainable development in early childhood education.

Keywords: Ethnic Minority Areas; Montessori Method; Basic Education; Kindergarten Teachers; Strategies

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti signifikansi metode Montessori dalam pendidikan anak usia dasar di wilayah etnis minoritas, dengan fokus pada studi kasus di Zona Pengembangan Z di Tiongkok Barat. Melalui metode penelitian kualitatif, termasuk wawancara dengan 19 guru taman kanak-kanak, studi ini menilai keadaan terkini tenaga pengajar dan potensi metode Montessori untuk meningkatkan pendidikan di wilayah tersebut. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa praktik Montessori saat ini tidak digunakan di taman kanak-kanak yang diteliti karena tantangan seperti staf pengajar yang tidak seimbang, standar profesional yang rendah, dan kesempatan pelatihan yang tidak memadai. Didukung oleh teori Representasi Sosial (SR), analisis ini menyoroti fokus metode Montessori pada otonomi anak dan pengembangan individu, yang sejalan dengan kebutuhan pendidikan di wilayah etnis minoritas. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa memperkenalkan prinsip-prinsip Montessori dapat meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan secara signifikan. Untuk mengatasi masalah yang ada, studi ini merekomendasikan strategi seperti pelatihan guru yang terarah, meningkatkan kualitas pelatihan, dan meningkatkan status sosial guru taman kanak-kanak. Langkah-langkah ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat infrastruktur pendidikan di wilayah etnis minoritas dan mendorong pembangunan berkelanjutan dalam pendidikan anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: Daerah Etnis Minoritas; Metode Montessori; Pendidikan Dasar; Guru TK; Strategi

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INTRODUCTION

The Montessori Method is an educational approach founded by Italian educator Maria Montessori in the early 20th century. This method emphasizes a child-centered educational philosophy, focusing on children's autonomy in learning and holistic development. The development of the Montessori Method in China has gone through phases of introduction, promotion, and localization, gradually playing an essential role in early childhood education in the country. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, China introduced the Montessori Method. As the understanding of the Montessori approach deepened, some private schools and kindergartens started experimenting with this educational method. Particularly in economically developed urban areas such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, Montessori kindergartens and schools were gradually established, becoming symbols of high-quality education. These schools provided a new option for early childhood education in China, attracting an increasing number of parents and educators. In recent years, the development of the Montessori Method in China has gradually integrated with the Chinese cultural and educational environment. Some public kindergartens and elementary schools have also adopted Montessori principles and methods. This trend is especially evident in regions with more advanced educational reforms, where some public kindergartens have begun to implement the Montessori Method or incorporate Montessori elements into their regular teaching practices. The Montessori Method differs from other educational approaches. Montessori materials, children's work, teacher feedback, and the coexistence of discipline and freedom in a well-prepared environment collectively form a dynamic and orderly balance within Montessori education. Huang (2023) points out that the Montessori Method has a significant impact on modern preschool education. It is essential and valuable to fully understand its educational philosophy and core principles in order to scientifically guide the practice of early childhood education in China.

Strengthening the development and improvement of the preschool education system must not overlook the educational issues in minority regions. Ning's (2023) study suggests that developing education in ethnic minority regions will help enhance national cohesion and promote ethnic unity. Ren (2023) summarized common issues in the professional development of early childhood educators in ethnic minority regions. For instance, the overall level of professionalism is not high, and many kindergarten teachers

lack a professional background, making it difficult for them to educate children according to scientifically based teaching and caregiving principles. They cannot often carry out timely reforms in early childhood education in response to the evolving societal context. From the perspective of the unique characteristics of minority cultural backgrounds, each ethnic group exhibits distinct features. However, prioritizing and developing education remains a crucial strategy for the nation's and its regions' long-term development. Through its focus on life skills, sensory development, mathematics, language, and scientific and cultural education, the Montessori Method provides theoretical and practical support for early childhood education across different ethnic groups. Therefore, the preparation of Montessori materials can be adjusted according to the specific characteristics of each ethnic group, helping children better engage with education and achieve more effective learning outcomes.

China's Western Z Development Zone is a national-level economic development zone primarily established as a large-scale coal, coal-fired power, and coal chemical industry demonstration area relying on coal fields. It is also an essential part of China's 14th significant coal base, located on the southeastern edge of the Junggar Basin. The new city within the development zone serves as the administrative, cultural, technological, and comprehensive service center. By 2030, the city is planned to reach a population size of 250,000, with a land area of 30 square kilometers. In developing the district, efforts have been made to increase investment in education. Kindergartens and primary schools have been established, and relevant talents have been introduced. The focus has also been on enhancing the quality of education and building a strong teaching workforce. By driving local development through educational advancement, the goal is to cultivate talent and retain it. Previous research has rarely focused on this development zone as a research destination, explicitly studying the Montessori teaching method. Through in-depth interviews, this study addresses the application of the Montessori Method in minority regions and the role of teacher workforce development, filling a gap in research on Montessori education in ethnic areas. Through in-depth interviews, this study raises issues concerning early childhood education, the application of the Montessori Method in ethnic regions, and the development of the teaching workforce, filling a gap in research on early childhood education in the Z Development Zone. In terms of the study's originality, introducing advanced early childhood teaching methods into kindergartens

in ethnic regions can provide theoretical support for applying the Montessori Method in these areas and serve as a reference for the formulation and implementation of educational policies. This study offers specific practical feedback by conducting field research and case analyses. The educational environment and needs in ethnic regions may differ from those in mainstream areas. Researching how to adapt the Montessori Method to the specific educational needs and conditions of ethnic regions can help enrich and expand the scope of its application. Consequently, the conclusions drawn from this study can serve as a reference for kindergartens in the Z Development Zone and provide valuable insights for future researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method is a comprehensive educational system designed by Dr. Maria Montessori through long-term observation and practice, adhering to the principles of child development and integrating scientific educational concepts. This system forms an inclusive support service model (Cossentino, 2010). During the course of research, Liu et al. (2023) indicated that Italian early childhood educator Maria Montessori believed that education has dual purposes: the biological purpose, which is to promote the natural development of the individual, and the social purpose, which is to facilitate the individual's adaptation to their environment. In addition, Montessori education is beneficial for cultivating children's independence and concentration, and it has gained recognition from many parents in China. Montessori kindergartens are now widespread across many provinces in China. However, the kindergarten environment, which is a crucial element of Montessori early childhood education, is not yet closely aligned with Montessori philosophy in many of these institutions (Chen, 2023). Lai (2024) agrees with Chen's (2023) perspective on Montessori education and further elaborates on it. Lai (2024) summarizes that mastering the Montessori Method involves three key aspects: acquiring knowledge and experience in the areas of skills and conceptual literacy; understanding the historical context, theoretical foundations, views on children, perspectives on teachers, and educational philosophy of Montessori education; and mastering the educational approaches and methods across various fields within Montessori education. Furthermore, educators need to be able to create localized teaching materials suitable for children's development, design, organize, and implement

educational activities based on individual differences among children, and scientifically evaluate teaching methods and children's progress. Researchers have found that the Montessori Method has yielded positive outcomes internationally. Li and Liang (2024) point out that many countries around the world are actively exploring the implementation paths for inclusive preschool education. Among them, Western countries like the United States have taken the lead by integrating children with special needs, aged 3 to 6, into Montessori educational environments. These countries provide various forms of support to meet the developmental needs of children with special needs. This study presents the relevant aspects of the Montessori Method in a tabular format.

Table 1. The specific content of the Montessori Method

Educational Area	Teaching Materials	Teaching Content	Learning Objectives
Sensory Education	Pink Tower, Brown Stair, Geometry Cabinet, Color Boards, Smelling Bottles	Size, Shape, Color, Texture, Smell	Enhance sensory perception, classification, and comparison
Mathematics Education	Golden Beads, Counting Rods, Number Boards, Arithmetic Charts	Number Concepts, Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Counting, Sorting	Develop mathematical thinking, number recognition, and basic operations
Language Education	Sandpaper Letters, Moveable Alphabet, Language Cards, Storybooks	Letter Recognition, Phonetics, Vocabulary, Reading	Cultivate language skills, writing, and reading techniques
Cultural Education	Globes, Map Puzzles, Animal and Plant Cards, Historical Timelines	Geography, Culture, Knowledge of Plants and Animals, History	Broaden cultural perspectives, understand the world and nature
Practical Life Education	Button Frame, Water Pouring Exercises, Shoe Polishing, Table Setting	Daily Living Skills, Self-care Abilities	Foster independence, hand-eye coordination, and concentration

These contents support children's holistic development by fostering independence, concentration, and self-directed learning. This summary table can be further expanded and refined according to specific needs. Huang (2023) explains that each area is equipped with specialized teaching materials, and before children begin to use them, teachers employ a three-step teaching method: Introduction: The teacher introduces the name of the teaching material and has the children repeat it verbally. Practice: The children practice using the material to understand the relationship between

the material and its name. Assessment: The children demonstrate their use of the material, and the teacher assesses their performance to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching.

Ethnic Regions

According to Baidu Baike, “ethnic minority regions” are areas predominantly inhabited by ethnic minorities. In China, ethnic minorities are primarily distributed in the western and northern frontier regions. Xinjiang, for instance, is home to 56 ethnic groups, including Han, Uighur, Kazakh, Hui, Mongolian, Kyrgyz, Xibe, Tajik, Uzbek, Manchu, Daur, Tatar, and Russian. It is one of China’s five autonomous regions for ethnic minorities, covering an area of 1.665 million square kilometers, making it the largest provincial-level administrative region in China, accounting for about one-sixth of the country's total land area. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, the permanent population of the autonomous region was 25.89 million in 2021. Cai and Hu (2024) found that the comprehensive level of sustainable development in preschool education in Western China, particularly in ethnic minority regions, is lower than the national average, with significant regional disparities. Additionally, due to the constraints of a long-standing urban-rural dual economic structure, there remains a gap in preschool education opportunities and funding between urban and rural areas in China. Fang and Li (2024) note that there is limited research on the county-level preschool education in Western ethnic regions. The development of preschool education in these areas is an essential part of achieving high-quality and balanced development in China's early childhood education. Similarly, Cai (2024) concluded that integrating structural and institutional requirements with the spontaneous needs for teacher professional growth is a challenge in teacher workforce development. Professional enhancement is a crucial aspect, and employing scientific and advanced teaching methods plays a vital role. Han et al. (2024) explained that despite significant economic and social advancements in ethnic regions, issues such as remote geographical structures leading to poor information flow, limited regional exchanges, and fewer opportunities for teachers to travel hinder the ability of preschool teachers to learn advanced early education concepts and methods.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study explores the importance of the Montessori Method in preschools within ethnic minority regions, based on the literature review and identified research gaps. The specific

research objectives are: To assess the current state of Montessori education in preschools within the Z National Economic Development Zone in Western China. To explore strategies for the development and enhancement of the preschool teaching workforce within this national-level economic development zone.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method, focusing on kindergarten teachers in a national-level economic development zone in western China. The data analysis process involved contacting teachers online and conducting interviews through question-and-answer sessions. With the recommendation and assistance of the teachers, a snowball sampling method was used to complete semi-structured interviews with 19 kindergarten staff members over the course of a month via WeChat. Additionally, three parents of students from the kindergarten were interviewed. The interview results were analyzed using triangulation to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The interview outline regarding the understanding of the Montessori Method is adapted from Zhuo (2013), featuring 12 questions focusing on the Z Development Zone preschool staff's knowledge of the Montessori Method. The interviews cover aspects such as theoretical understanding, operational modes, and training experiences. In the coding process of the interview results, this study employed open coding, where "T" represents the interviewed kindergarten staff, and the 19 participants were numbered T1 to T19. The information from the interview records was further categorized using axial coding, grouping similar content from the interviews to derive the study's findings. Supported by the S-R (Stimulus-Response) Theory, this study explored how individuals' behaviors are shaped by stimuli. Fan (2021) found that the Stimulus-Response Theory, originally rooted in psychology, has seen significant development in the field of consumer behavior. This theory suggests that complex human behaviors can be broken down into two components: stimulus and response. Stimuli can be internal, originating within the body, or external, arising from the environment, and responses always follow the presentation of stimuli. In this study, it is hypothesized that once participants understand and master the Montessori teaching method, they will apply it in their daily teaching activities. This results in different behavioral outcomes in students across various domains, such as language, mathematics, and music. Unlike alternative theories, under the guidance of the S-R Theory, this research focuses on finding more scientific and efficient teaching

methods to stimulate children's growth, rather than fully replacing current teaching models and practices. Ultimately, the study aims to identify the current state of Montessori teaching method usage in kindergartens in the Z development zone, understand the attitudes of the teaching staff toward these new teaching methods, and offer recommendations accordingly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study organizes and summarizes the interview data from the participants, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Interview Information

Question	Ethnic minority students	Interview content
Have you heard of the Montessori Method?	T1-T19	All participants have heard of the Montessori Method.
Have you studied the Montessori Method in school?	T1, T2, T15, T19	Four participants have studied the Montessori Method in school.
Have you participated in Montessori education training within the school?	T1-T19	None of the participants have attended Montessori education training within the school.
Have you attended observation classes at other Montessori kindergartens?	T1, T2, T15	Three participants have visited other Montessori kindergartens for learning.
Have you collected information on Montessori education?	T2, T5, T7, T8, T10, T15, T19	Seven participants have collected information related to Montessori education.
Do you have a need for the Montessori educational philosophy?	T1, T2, T4, T5, T7, T8, T10, T14, T15, T16, T19	Most participants agree with the Montessori Method and believe it can enhance children's overall development.
Do you have a need for the Montessori educational model?	T1, T2, T4, T5, T7, T8, T10, T13, T14, T15, T16, T19	A few participants believe that the current teaching methods meet the curriculum needs.
Do you have a need for the Montessori materials and methods in the five key areas?	T1-T19	Participants indicated that the kindergarten currently lacks Montessori materials, so related operations are not possible.
Do you have a need for observing and guiding children's physical and mental development?	T1, T2, T5, T7, T8, T10, T13, T14, T15, T16, T19	Most participants noted that early childhood education is complex and requires observation and

		guidance skills, as well as active family involvement.
Do you have a need for observing and guiding children's physical and mental development?	T1, T2, T5, T7, T8, T10, T13, T14, T15, T16, T19	Most participants noted that early childhood education is complex and requires observation and guidance skills, as well as active family involvement.
Do you think the current teaching methods need to be changed?	T5, T7, T8, T10, T15	Five participants believe the current teaching methods should be changed. Most think the implementation of new methods requires time and adjustment.
Are you willing to participate in learning the Montessori Method?	T1-T19	All participants expressed willingness to engage in new learning to enhance their professional skills and teaching abilities.

This study explores the significance of the Montessori Method in ethnic minority regions using the Z Development Zone preschool as a case study. Data was collected through interviews and analyzed based on Zhuo (2013) using open coding and axial coding methods. Initially, all textual data were reviewed sentence by sentence to identify and code categories. Subsequently, similar labels were merged and categorized through axial coding, and iterative comparisons were made. Finally, relationships between categories were examined, and the questionnaire content and interview data were classified, coded, and anonymized.

Current Status of Montessori Education at Z Development Zone Preschools

The study found that preschools in the Z Development Zone currently do not utilize the Montessori Method. The schools lack appropriate Montessori materials and certified teachers. As shown in Table 2, all 19 interviewees have heard of the Montessori Method. Among them, 21% (4 people) had studied the Montessori Method during their schooling. None of the respondents had participated in Montessori education training within their current workplace. However, 16% (3 people) had observed Montessori teaching methods at other kindergartens during external training. 58% of the respondents expressed agreement with the Montessori Method, believing it to be child-

centered and capable of enhancing children's overall development. This finding is consistent with the research by Cai and Hu (2024), Fang and Li (2024), and Han (2024), which suggests that basic education levels in ethnic and remote areas still need improvement. Furthermore, the study reveals that Z Development Zone preschool staff generally recognize the principles and methods of the Montessori Method. All respondents expressed a willingness to engage in new learning opportunities to improve their professional skills and teaching abilities, aiming to become qualified and continually advancing preschool teachers. Song (2024) notes that the Montessori Method has been widely applied and promoted in China, helping children better develop their abilities and personalities. The Chinese government has increased support for and encouragement of the Montessori Method, viewing it as a means to advance educational reform and development in China. Currently, the Z development zone has not implemented the Montessori teaching method or its corresponding materials. Early childhood education is conducted using traditional, didactic teaching methods, which have produced some educational outcomes but lack innovation and breakthroughs. Compared to other regions, the education in Z is clearly lagging behind. Chen (2023) noted in his study that Montessori kindergartens are now widespread across many provinces in China. To change this situation, kindergartens need to train teachers in the Montessori method, acquire Montessori teaching materials, and integrate this educational approach into daily teaching practices.

The Role of the Montessori Method in Early Childhood Education in Ethnic Minority Regions

The Montessori educational philosophy, introduced to China in the early 20th century, has undergone extensive exploration and adaptation, leading to its widespread presence nationwide. Montessori education can be found in both private Montessori kindergartens and some public preschools (Huang, 2023). The development of Montessori education in China has involved a process of localization, resulting in a version of the method that incorporates elements of Chinese culture in its sensory, mathematical, linguistic, cultural, practical, musical, and artistic education components. Montessori's approach to early childhood education significantly impacts contemporary teaching practices. Montessori emphasized that the environment is "the place that nurtures children" and listed it as the primary element of education. In her book, *The*

Secret of Childhood, she noted: "Only in a suitable environment can a child's mind freely develop and reveal its inner secrets" (Liu, 2018). Research indicates that the development and application of Montessori education are closely linked to the construction of the teaching workforce. Liu (2019) underscores the importance of teachers encouraging children to explore independently, allowing them to freely investigate and boldly experiment within environments and conditions created by adults, thereby fully developing their innate potential. Further research by Zi & Liang (2023) highlights that the professional quality and educational philosophy of educators are crucial factors in building an effective kindergarten environment. Mastering and integrating Montessori environmental principles is essential for creating an environment that supports, includes, understands, and nurtures children's development.

Given the diverse ethnic backgrounds of the preschool students in the Z Development Zone, emphasizing universal language and mathematics education is crucial. Educational materials such as movable letters, language cards, storybooks, counting rods, number boards, and arithmetic operation charts can make language and mathematics education more vivid and engaging for young children. Gong and Shen (2022) explain that Montessori's mixed-age education is a key organizational form of the Montessori Method. This approach enhances children's cognitive abilities and social development, helping them to develop positive and healthy personalities, and holds significant educational value. On the other hand, Zhang (2022) emphasizes that Montessori's view of children's education asserts that adults should not impose their understanding and behaviors on children. It is essential to genuinely respect children's thinking and their status as active participants in their learning process. Ai (2023) found that Montessori believes children's development should be built upon the sensitive periods, with adults and educators guiding and educating children during these critical developmental phases. Furthermore, Li (2023) highlights that Montessori stresses the sustainability of children's life development, noting that early influences have lasting impacts into adulthood. Montessori education promotes a perspective that supports children's development by providing a "prepared" environment, focusing on the sensitive periods of physical and mental development, and respecting and encouraging children's work. Therefore, this study concludes that the Montessori educational philosophy and

model can effectively serve children's early education in ethnic minority regions, laying a solid foundation for their future learning and development.

Strategies for the Development and Construction of the Early Childhood Education Workforce in Ethnic Minority Regions

Enhancing early childhood education and improving the overall quality of education in ethnic minority regions requires a comprehensive effort from top to bottom. Strengthening the early childhood teacher workforce plays a crucial role in this process. Based on the realities of ethnic minority regions, the following recommendations and strategies are proposed:

Support from Local Government: Local governments should develop specific policies and measures to ensure that early childhood educators in ethnic minority regions receive ongoing support in areas such as training, salaries, and career development. This could include funding for professional development and resources to support educators.

Strengthening Teacher Training: Regular training and continuing education opportunities should be provided for early childhood teachers in ethnic minority regions. This can be achieved through online courses, in-person workshops, and seminars. Such initiatives will help educators continually update their knowledge and skills, staying current with best practices in early childhood education.

Improving Teacher Compensation: Enhancing teachers' salaries, providing housing subsidies, and establishing performance-based rewards are essential to attract and retain talented educators in ethnic minority regions. Additionally, improving teachers' working conditions and living standards will help alleviate concerns and increase job satisfaction.

Enhancing Working and Living Conditions: Especially in regions like the Z Development Zone, where geographical and infrastructural conditions may be challenging, improving the working environment and living conditions for teachers is critical. This includes addressing issues related to housing, transportation, and access to essential services to ensure teachers are well-supported.

Encouraging Innovation in Teaching Methods: Teachers should be encouraged to innovate and adapt their teaching methods based on the local cultural context and the specific characteristics of the children. Exploring new teaching approaches, such as game-based learning and experiential education, can enhance the engagement and effectiveness of teaching, making it more relevant and interesting for the students. By implementing these strategies, ethnic minority regions

can build a more robust and effective early childhood education workforce, ultimately improving education in these areas.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This study, through case analysis and focusing on the application of Montessori teaching methods, explores the current state of early childhood education in ethnic minority regions. A thorough analysis of Montessori teaching methods, including their content and characteristics, reveals that these methods align well with the individualized educational needs of the diverse cultural backgrounds in these regions. Key findings include: **Respect for Individual Differences:** Montessori teaching methods emphasize respecting individual differences and developmental rhythms, which is in harmony with the personalized education needs in ethnic minority regions. This approach supports children in navigating their unique cultural contexts and learning styles. **Encouragement of Autonomous Learning:** In areas with limited educational resources, where teacher quantity and quality may be constrained, Montessori methods encourage children to engage in self-directed learning, fostering their independence and exploratory spirit. Montessori education goes beyond academic skills to include social, emotional, and physical development. **Integration of Local Culture:** Montessori methods emphasize learning in a free environment, which can be adapted to incorporate local cultural resources such as languages, traditions, and arts. This integration helps children better understand and preserve their ethnic culture, while also enhancing their cultural confidence and identity. **Promotion of Social Skills and Harmony:** Montessori education focuses on developing social skills and collective awareness. This approach positively impacts social harmony in ethnic minority regions by teaching children how to collaborate and respect differences, thus fostering mutual understanding and integration among different ethnic groups.

Supported by SR theory, the study highlights the importance of teaching methods in ethnic minority kindergarten settings and their impact on children's development. The findings are consistent with the research of Liu et al. (2023), Chen (2023), Lai (2024), and Li & Liang (2024), which supports the integration of Montessori education in ethnic regions. This study also aligns with the perspectives of Zi & Liang (2023), Ai (2023), and Li (2023), emphasizing child-centered approaches and the cultivation of continuous and autonomous learning habits. The study concludes with recommendations for

government policy support, teacher training, innovation in teaching methods, and improving teacher compensation. These suggestions provide a theoretical basis for the development of early childhood education and teacher workforce in ethnic minority regions.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the educators in kindergartens within the Z Development Zone in ethnic minority regions, exploring the application of the Montessori teaching method in early childhood education in these areas. It supplements existing research on early childhood education in ethnic minority regions. The study investigates the relatively underdeveloped state of early childhood education in these regions and the need for improvement in teaching methods. The research findings are derived from analyzing interview data. Firstly, the study finds that the Montessori teaching method is not used in the kindergartens of the Z Development Zone. Secondly, the Montessori method, which centers on students and integrates theory with practice, has a significant impact on early childhood education in ethnic minority regions, particularly through its three-phase teaching process in language, mathematics, and music. Lastly, based on the realities of ethnic minority regions, the study proposes recommendations for policy support, teacher training, innovative teaching approaches, and improving the welfare of early childhood educators. These suggestions aim to strengthen the teaching workforce, enhance the quality of early childhood education in ethnic minority regions, and ensure that more children in these areas grow up in healthy, scientifically-informed, and well-prepared environments. Additionally, this study provides a reference for future researchers to expand the research scope, increase the sample size, and better support the educational development of young children in ethnic minority regions.

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