



**AN EVALUATION OF UNIVERSAL KINDERGARTEN POLICIES
IN GUIYANG CITY, SOUTHWEST CHINA**

YUQIAN ZHAO

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY
INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE INNOVATION AND CULTURE
RAJAMANGALA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY KRUNGTHEP
ACADEMIC YEAR 2023
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GUIYANG CITY, SOUTHWEST CHINA
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of the Requirements for the Master's Degree

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ABSTRACT

This research evaluated the effectiveness and execution of universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City, located in the southwestern region of China, utilizing a mixed-methods methodology. The research collected and analyzed data from government officials, kindergarten administrators, teachers, and parents. This study used a questionnaire and an interview. The paper identifies the significant progress made in Guiyang City's universal kindergarten program through enhancing public awareness, allocating resources, and receiving policy backing. However, challenges and limitations exist in the education system: insufficient funding, unfair allocation of resources, a dearth of qualified educators, and subpar academic benchmarks. The research paper makes suggestions for enhancing policy coordination and supervision, establishing a standardized system for teacher recruitment and training, improving the quality of instruction and learning, promoting social interaction and information exchange, and reinforcing the implementation and effectiveness of universal kindergarten policies.

Keywords: universal kindergartens, balanced scorecard, policy implementation effects

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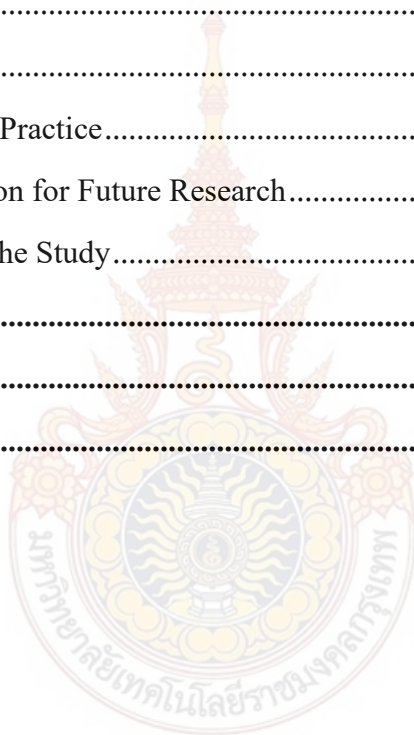
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

1.1.1 Research Background

The value a nation attaches to education determines its foundation and the course its society will take in the future (Xue & Li, 2021). The growth of education in China has been widely recognized as a significant undertaking since the nation's inception. The educational landscape has undergone several notable transformations: the development of comprehensive education policies, initiation of literacy campaigns, reinstatement of the college entrance examination system, establishment of the degree system (Yang, 2013), implementation of nine-year compulsory education, and enhancement of educational accessibility across all levels. These endeavors have consistently enhanced the cultural literacy and educational benchmarks of individuals, established the foundation for nurturing highly skilled individuals, reduced the disparity in education between urban and rural areas, advanced educational fairness, and continue to propel the progressive and favorable advancement of education in China (Xue & Li, 2021).

Pre-primary education is widely acknowledged as a crucial and indispensable element across various educational stages in China's educational framework (Xue & Li, 2020). However, resource constraints, institutional mechanisms, and disparities between urban and rural areas hinder realizing its full potential. These challenges further accentuate the necessity of fostering the development of pre-primary education.

In the mid-1990s, the overall structure and nature of kindergarten services in China were relatively stable, with government departments and collective

organizations being the primary forms of kindergarten management. Private kindergartens were relatively few, and the public nature of kindergarten education was prominent, ensuring a certain degree of surety in meeting the pre-primary demand for education. However, with China's reform and economic changes, the number of government and collective kindergartens rapidly decreased. In their place, private kindergartens that rely on parental fees and have a profit-oriented nature became the predominant form of kindergarten management, affecting the public-private balance of pre-primary education (Feng, 2010).

While private kindergartens have partially mitigated the challenges associated with kindergarten enrolment, their primary focus on generating profits hinders their ability to effectively contribute to fostering universal and equitable development in pre-primary education (Liang & Lu, 2023). As a result, the difficulties in enrolling eligible pre-primary children and the rising enrollment cost have become increasingly evident. The public's awareness was captured when the reform of the pre-primary education system and the establishment of universal kindergartens came into focus. The development of universal pre-primary education and kindergartens in China was formally initiated with the "National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" launch in 2010.

The level of economic development has consistently influenced the progress of pre-primary education in China. Additionally, the continuously evolving national family planning policies also impact the development of pre-primary education. The discontinuation of the "Advocating One Couple, One Child" family planning program in 2013 marked a shift in focus toward examining population growth patterns in China. In November of the same year, a policy known as the "Two-Child Policy" was implemented. This policy allowed families where both parents are only children to have two children (Wu, 2020). This policy aimed to mitigate the negative consequences on future economic development arising from the decline in the labor force, population aging, and gender imbalance that resulted from the previous one-child policy (Cai &

Juwei, 2019).

In the following eight-year period, policies were introduced to optimize the nation's demographic composition, mitigating the adverse effects of population aging on societal progress (Wu, 2020) and consolidating the resources and advantages derived from population and social development. These policies include the "Comprehensive Two-Child Policy," which advocated for a couple to have two children, and the subsequent "Three-Child Policy," which encourages a couple to have three children (Xue & Li, 2022). However, despite the continuous optimization and support provided by China's family planning policies (Tan et al., 2019), the birth rate has decreased rather than increased, declining from 12.08‰ in 2013 (China, 2023) to 6.77‰ in 2022 (China, 2023).

The birthrate issue is certainly strongly interconnected with the escalating educational expenses in China (Hu et al., 2018). The Chinese government has been actively considering measures in response to the increasing education costs. Given the pragmatic evolution of education across different phases in China, there is a discernible shift towards prioritizing the comprehensive and equitable advancement of pre-primary education (Li et al., 2017). The aim is to support age-appropriate children's educational needs through policies promoting universal kindergartens, thereby balancing the education costs at this stage. Simultaneously, based on policy documents, further efforts are being made to safeguard the public nature of education and strive for educational equality. The objective is to provide all individuals equal opportunities for future development, reduce social stratification and the cycle of poverty, and promote human capital growth, thereby driving social and economic development.

The inception of universal pre-primary education in China began with the "National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" and the "Opinions of the State Council on the Current Development of Pre-primary Education." The concept of "universal" was introduced in China's "National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)". The

plan emphasizes the importance of early education for infants and toddlers aged 0 to 3. It aims to achieve universal access to pre-primary education for one to three years, taking into account the specific circumstances of the country (Zhou & Zhou, 2019). Subsequently, the "State Council's Several Opinions on the Current Development of Pre-primary Education" provided more in-depth reform arrangements for pre-primary education, highlighting its nature of public service. The document explicitly stated the target of increasing the proportion of universal kindergartens to 80% by 2020 and establishing a quality, resource-rich, and widely covered public pre-primary education service system. By 2035, the goal is to achieve comprehensive, universal coverage of three years of pre-primary education, constructing a rational and knowledge-based, public, pre-primary education service system and management mechanisms to provide more accessible, high-quality, and abundant pre-primary education resources for children.

China's universal pre-primary education faces practical challenges due to factors including varying levels of economic development, historical, social development, and regional differences in policy implementation despite the country's robust policy support and favorable policy environment (Xue & Li, 2022). As a result, the entry services provided by universal kindergartens are still somewhat restricted, and the situation is not overly optimistic. Therefore, the policy development of universal pre-primary education in China has become an issue examined by scholars. This analysis examines three stages, determined by the specific characteristics of each developmental phase. This three-stage analysis offers a succinct and informative summary of the policy's evolution (Jiang et al., 2022).

The first stage was the embryonic period of universal kindergartens in China (2010). In 2010, the Chinese government issued two authoritative and groundbreaking policy documents: the "National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" and the "State Council's Several Opinions on the Current Development of Pre-primary Education." The texts integrated pre-

primary education into the educational blueprint and actively advocated for the advancement of public kindergartens. Simultaneously, assistance was provided for private kindergartens, with a particular emphasis on universal private kindergartens that provided affordable prices, catering to the needs of the wider population (Dong).

The concept of universal private kindergartens was introduced to the public for the first time. During this development stage, although the Chinese government significantly increased its attention to and understanding of pre-primary education, the formulation of policy for universal kindergartens was still in its infancy. The focus was primarily on pursuing the basic universalization of pre-primary education, with strategies mainly addressing kindergartens' quantity, nature, and coverage. The plans lacked sufficient clarity and specificity, mainly focusing on the expansion of pre-primary education resources as a means to address the challenges associated with the accessibility and affordability of kindergarten enrolment during that period (Xue & Li, 2022).

The second phase encompassed a time of inquiry and reform efforts to foster, establish, and advance universal kindergartens throughout China (2011-2017). During these eight years, the government's promotion of universal kindergartens revolved around the Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education (Xue & Li, 2022). In the first phase of the Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education (Xue & Li, 2022), the focus was on addressing the issue of "difficulty in enrollment." The plan proposed expanding pre-primary education resources through various means, supporting and encouraging private sector involvement in kindergarten management, and simultaneously emphasizing the development of public kindergartens. The second phase of the Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education (Xue & Li, 2021) aimed to enhance the pre-primary education system and improve the distribution of resources, building upon the accomplishments of the initial phase. The goals were to make pre-primary education public, universal, and accessible. At the same time, efforts continued to expand the coverage of universal private kindergartens, actively supporting them.

The plan aimed to provide comprehensive access to three-year pre-primary education in urban and economically advanced regions by 2016, with a gross enrolment rate of 75% across the country (Hong et al., 2022). The strategy's objective was to initially develop a service network utilizing public and universal private kindergartens as primary resources to tackle the challenge of "enrollment difficulties effectively". The proposed strategy entailed augmenting the allocation of resources towards the finance of pre-primary education and extending financial assistance to public and universal private kindergartens.

In the third phase of the Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education, the government implemented realistic and focused strategies to promote the growth of universal kindergartens. The plan emphasized increasing the supply of universal resources, aiming to achieve an 80% coverage rate of universal kindergartens by 2020, mainly focusing on key construction in regions with the major issues being "difficulty in enrollment" and "high cost of enrollment," such as poverty-stricken areas, densely populated areas, and urban-rural transition zones.

The plan also involved arrangements for constructing, renovating, and expanding universal kindergartens, improving recognition standards, and supporting the development of universal kindergartens through incentives, rent reductions, and other measures. These initiatives established the groundwork for the eventual improvement and execution of comprehensive kindergarten policy (Cai & Zhang, 2019).

The third stage was the period of growth for universal kindergartens in China (2018-2022). While implementing the Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education, pre-primary education in China made significant progress toward achieving widespread accessibility (Xue & Li, 2020). The gross enrolment rate for three years of pre-primary education rose from 62.3% in 2011 to 89.7% in 2022. This upward trend suggests the successful implementation of a comprehensive pre-primary education service system that effectively integrates considerations of quality, quantity, and coverage (Zheng & Zheng, 2020).

During this time, the structure of pre-primary education resources transformed, with universal kindergartens becoming the main type of kindergarten. In China, the prevalence of universal kindergartens reached 84.96% nationwide, signifying a significant milestone in the advancement of universal pre-primary education.

The "Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for the Development and Enhancement of Pre-primary Education" was released by the Ministry of Education and nine other government ministries to recognize these accomplishments. This plan aims to strengthen and improve universal pre-primary education resources, address existing shortcomings through multiple channels, and further enhance the public and universal nature of universal pre-primary education. The objective is to have a universal kindergarten coverage rate of 85% and ensure that public kindergartens constitute more than 50% by 2025 (Dong). The Chinese government has explored and reformulated policies for universal pre-primary education and universal kindergartens, seeking a path for growth and development.

Guizhou Province and Guiyang City are the focal areas for this investigation, which aims to analyze the development of regulations for universal pre-primary education and kindergartens. From 2011 to 2022, Guizhou Province implemented a series of policies to promote the development of pre-primary education (Zhang, 2011). These policies include the "Implementation Opinions of the Guizhou Provincial People's Government on Accelerating the Development of Pre-primary Education," the "Implementation Opinions on the Third Phase of the Action Plan for Pre-primary Education in Guizhou Province," the "Notification of the CPC Guizhou Provincial Committee and the Guizhou Provincial People's Government on Printing and Issuing the Outline for the Construction of Guizhou Province as a Strong Province Characterized by Education and Promoting Educational Modernization (2018-2027)", and the "Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for the Development and Enhancement of Pre-primary Education in Guizhou Province."

Guiyang City has issued the policy documents the "Implementation Plan for the Development of Pre-primary Education in Guiyang City (2014-2016) " and the "Action Plan for the Development of Pre-primary Education in Guiyang City" (Zhou & Zhou, 2019). "Implementation Opinions of the Municipal People's Government on Vigorously Developing Pre-primary Education" (Xue & Li, 2022). The policy papers presented are in accordance with the ideas in the national documents and provincial guiding policies, exemplifying the city's dedication to promoting pre-primary education.

These policy papers have played a crucial role in providing essential policy support for developing universal kindergartens in Guiyang City (Li et al., 2017). In 2022, the quantity of universal private kindergartens in Guiyang City saw a notable rise, reaching 1,090 establishments (Xue & Li, 2022). This development successfully addressed the challenges of "enrollment difficulties" and "high enrollment expenses" encountered by children in the pre-primary education phase.

These policies provided substantial assistance and direction for advancing universal pre-primary education in Guizhou Province, explicitly targeting rectifying deficiencies in the progress of universal pre-primary education and universal kindergartens (Rodionova et al., 2021). The objective was to create a development pattern centered on universal kindergarten resources and to include private kindergartens in the overall development plan (Wei & Jing, 2014). By 2022, Guizhou Province would have added 168,000 universal kindergartens in residential areas, effectively compensating for the deficiency of universal kindergarten facilities and resolving the "difficulty in enrollment" issue for age-appropriate children. As the provincial capital, Guiyang City has assumed a prominent position in fostering the development of universal pre-primary education and kindergartens.

As the capital city of Guizhou Province, Guiyang City exhibits a commendable degree of economic and educational advancement compared to its regional counterparts. However, it remains subject to the broader developmental context of Guizhou Province (Hu et al., 2018). Guizhou Province, situated in Southwest

China, has a comparatively slower pace of economic growth than several other cities around the nation. Moreover, the progress in social initiatives and public services within the region is also somewhat sluggish (Chen & Yang, 2019). Therefore, the economic and educational development of Guiyang City still requires further improvement and enhancement.

Simultaneously, the urbanization rate in Guiyang City is steadily increasing, resulting in a corresponding rise in the influx of migrant laborers and a notable upsurge in the need for educational services (Yang, 2009). Establishing universal pre-primary education and kindergartens in Guiyang City has significant relevance in guaranteeing equitable access to educational rights for children of suitable age. However, when formulating policies for universal kindergartens, the Chinese government's perspective and considerations are based on the country's overall macro situation. Local government departments must tailor targeted and feasible policies based on the key points of national policy guidance and the region's development level.

However, the accuracy of local government's understanding of national policies and the effectiveness of their implementation may lead to deviations in policy implementation outcomes. Therefore, evaluating the effectiveness of the existing policies for universal kindergartens in Guiyang City and assessing the quality of universal kindergarten development is significant.

The author will analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City from the perspective of the city's development issues and educational demands within a theoretical framework. The objective is to provide a framework and foundation for developing and enhancing policies pertaining to implementing universal kindergartens in Guiyang City.

1.1.2 Research Significance

1.1.2.1 Theoretical Significance

The building and development of universal kindergartens has been a focal point for the Chinese government due to the country's rapid growth of pre-primary

education (Li, 2023). The correlation between the establishment and execution of policies regarding universal kindergartens and the quality and extent of pre-primary education in China is evident, and these policies possess substantial theoretical significance in promoting the progress of pre-primary education within the nation (Xue & Li, 2019).

The predominant scholarly emphasis in examining universal kindergarten policies in China has been on features such as policy formation and the policy's value orientation. However, a minimal study has been conducted on the policy implementation process. The current circumstances have resulted in a lack of a complete understanding of the practical execution of policies pertaining to universal kindergartens. Furthermore, the scholarly investigation on policy implementation for universal kindergartens has focused on economically advanced areas inside first and second-tier cities in China.

Therefore, this thesis aims to utilize the Balanced Scorecard tool to quantify policy development indicators and conduct a performance evaluation of the implementation of universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City. This evaluation seeks to provide a more intuitive understanding of the implementation of universal kindergarten policies, uncover potential issues and challenges in policy implementation, and offer a deeper theoretical insight into the implementation of universal kindergarten policies.

The research tools and evaluation criteria employed in this study can serve as a reference for other relevant research, facilitating further expansion of research on implementing universal kindergarten policies. This will serve to enhance and broaden research views in the field of policy implementation while also fostering the sustainable growth of pre-primary education in China.

1.1.2.2 Empirical Significance

Evaluating the effective implementation of universal kindergarten policies holds significant importance in addressing the challenges faced during policy

implementation. The development of universal kindergartens relies on the framework of policy documents, the rationality of policies, and the interpretive and professional abilities to implement personnel, which directly impact policies' practical application and effectiveness. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively understand the specific impacts and issues of policy implementation through evaluating the effective implementation of universal kindergarten policies.

This research will provide valuable references for the government to formulate more effective policy measures, ensuring the better implementation and achievement of expected outcomes of universal kindergarten policies and a fair distribution of resources in universal pre-primary education. The study results will provide significant understanding and insights for establishing and optimizing universal kindergarten policies in economically impoverished areas of China. This will contribute to the general enhancement and advancement of pre-primary education.

This study gathered data through interviews and questionnaires and developed an index system for assessing the implementation of universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City. This index system was constructed using the Balanced Scorecard tool. Examining the funding operation, social value, management system, and sustainable development, this study will conduct in-depth and comprehensive research to understand the effectiveness of universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City. It will propose development strategies that enhance the practical, public service value of universal kindergartens in Guiyang City.

The findings of this research offer valuable evidence for the government to make necessary adjustments and enhancements to policies. This will contribute to the promotion of equitable distribution of universal pre-primary education resources, thereby facilitating increased access to high-quality universal pre-primary education for a larger number of children. Furthermore, the outcomes of this study will provide significant knowledge and perspectives for establishing and enhancing universal kindergarten policies in economically disadvantaged areas, therefore

fostering the general advancement and enhancement of pre-primary education on a national scale.

1.2 Research Questions

Over more than ten years, the subject of universal pre-primary education in China has undergone ongoing updates and breakthroughs in research. These developments have resulted in a more thorough coverage of many aspects of the field.

During the early stage of universal pre-primary development, the focus was on analyzing and defining the meaning and implications of universalism, clarifying the core values of universal kindergartens, and exploring and developing ideas and theories. Feng (2010) holds that the fundamental development of universal kindergartens emphasized "public welfare, clarifying the changes in the service target, to alter the current structure of kindergartens as a practical path to promote the development of universal kindergartens. The implementation of the "universal" attribute necessitates the establishment of universal kindergartens in rural and undeveloped western areas in order to address the pre-primary educational requirements of the broader population (Wang, 2011a). During this time, researchers directed their attention to the advancement of development techniques, reforms in management systems, and the discovery of the inherent value associated with universal kindergartens. These endeavors established a robust research framework that contributed to the study and progress of universal kindergartens (Stutsman, 2010).

During the exploratory phase of universal kindergartens, scholars have diversified and delved into complex perspectives on research while paying greater attention to solving practical issues and responses. Wu (2011) asserts that the development of universal kindergartens relies on government management, and promoting innovative approaches to government responsibilities is one of the essential measures to advance the development of universal kindergartens.

However, for rural areas, the universal nature of rural kindergartens is not prominent due to the misplacement of government institutional guarantees, leading to the irrationality in the development structure of rural kindergartens. Seeking financial support from the government and leading efforts to construct universal kindergartens in rural areas are needed to change this predicament (Wang & Liu, 2011). Qin and Wang (2011) conducted a value analysis of universal policies focusing on three factors: value choices, legitimacy, and effectiveness, to deepen the core connotation of universal policies. Qin (2012) also explores policy measures for universal kindergartens focusing on four factors: educational quality, system, funding, and teachers, proposing strategies to focus on legislation, government coordination, and promoting the transformation of private kindergartens, enriching the understanding of “universal kindergartens”.

During this period, scholars focused on the construction standards of universal kindergartens, the government’s role and functions, and optimizing and improving safeguard policies. After a series of practical developmental processes, the growth phase of universal kindergartens in China has alleviated inadequate universal pre-primary education resources, as there has been a significant rise in the number of universal kindergartens. As a result, there has been a shift in scholars' focus toward an examination of the quality of education and the sustainable growth of universal kindergartens.

Fleer & Van Oers (2017) assert that universal kindergartens should not aim solely to reduce educational costs; rather, the fundamental core of universal kindergarten development lies in ensuring quality education. Only with a solid guarantee of quality education can the development of universal kindergartens hold value and significance. Liu et al. (2021) found that financial subsidies received by private kindergartens are positively correlated with quality education. For non-profit universal kindergartens, the formulation and allocation of financial subsidies significantly influence kindergarten teachers and quality education. Wang et al. (2017) propose four factors as necessary, the establishment of quality management in universal

kindergartens, self-assessment of kindergarten teachers' competencies, multi-subject evaluation of quality, and the construction of information feedback mechanisms, optimizing pathways to ensure the quality of education in universal kindergartens and achieve sustainable development.

In conclusion, the research and development of universal kindergartens in China has progressed from the theoretical level, defining and exploring the core values of universalism, to addressing complex and diverse practical issues when pursuing high-quality development and the sustainability of universal kindergartens while ensuring educational equity. While many scholars have focused on formulating appropriate management policies to promote the development of universal kindergartens, there has been limited research on the policy implementation process and its outcomes.

The future development of universal kindergartens needs to focus research on the process and outcomes of policy implementation, introduce the balanced scorecard tool to establish an evaluative management system, in combination with the specific content of universal kindergarten policy, focus on the effectiveness of policy implementation, and thereby provide support and references for the optimization and improvement of the policy, to make the content of the policy more practical.

Therefore, there are two research questions in this study:

- a. With the Balanced Scorecard tool, what variables should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of policy implementation?
- b. Based on the actual development of universal kindergartens in Guiyang, what strategies should be adopted to enhance the effectiveness of the current policy implementation?

1.3 Research Objectives

Since implementing policy documents in 2010 that offer overarching

guidance for advancing universal pre-primary education in China, significant strides have been made over more than ten years. The landscape of our nation's universal pre-primary education has shifted from the prevalent obstacles of limited accessibility and high costs to the contemporary predicament of limited access to high-quality institutions (Xie & Li, 2020).

In considering this matter, national and regional authorities have proactively undertaken various policy measures to foster the high-quality advancement of universal kindergartens via diverse approaches (Xue & Li, 2019). However, due to factors such as the economic development level of Guiyang City, financial pressures on the government, and the depth of understanding of the policies by policy implementers, Guiyang City has encountered challenges in achieving high policy implementation rates, full implementation, and struggles to adapt policies to the local development context, resulting in difficulties in achieving a rapid transformation to high-quality universal kindergartens.

Universal kindergartens play a crucial role within the public service system, with their growth being directly influenced by government regulation and the advice outlined in policy documents. Therefore, evaluating the policy implementation outcomes of universal kindergartens in Guiyang City can assist in actively adjusting and optimizing policies. This study aims to identify critical variables that influence policy implementation, suggest viable strategies for optimizing policies, offer benchmarks for investigating policies that align with the economic development characteristics and regional context of Guiyang City, and facilitate the advancement of universal kindergartens to achieve equitable and high-quality education. Hence, the study aims to achieve two research objectives:

- a. Evaluate the implementation efficacy of policies and explore issues and constraints on policy implementation. By reviewing the universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City and evaluating their implementation outcomes, including impacts and benefits, we aim to identify practical problems and developmental bottlenecks during

the policy implementation process. This assessment will provide valuable insights for optimizing universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City.

b. Propose strategies for promoting the development of universal kindergartens of high quality in Guiyang. Based on the actual social and economic development context of the city. Through analyzing universal kindergarten policy documents, interviews, and questionnaire data, we propose enhanced strategies and optimal approaches to promote the development of high-quality, universal kindergartens. This will contribute to a better and fairer distribution of pre-primary education resources and social justice.

1.4 Research Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on universal kindergartens in Guiyang City, Guizhou Province. Based on the policy documents issued by the national and regional authorities regarding universal kindergartens and representative enactors of policy, kindergarten principals, teachers, and parents are research subjects.

Universal kindergartens are proposed to develop urban and rural pre-primary education. Due to research limitations, the concentration of this study will be on urban universal kindergartens in Guiyang City, with municipal government officials as the primary subjects. The research explores the development of urban universal kindergartens and the effectiveness of policy implementation in this specific area. As a result, it may not provide comprehensive research recommendations for developing rural universal kindergartens.

1.5 Research Framework

The Chinese government has aggressively encouraged the statewide

development of universal pre-primary education since 2010. The implementation of the three-stage Pre-primary Education Action Plan drove this effort. While universalism has significantly improved, pre-primary education remains relatively weak within the overall education system. Guiyang City, situated in a financially disadvantaged area in Southwest China, confronts advancing the sustainable development of universal pre-primary education and kindergartens in the next phase of the "Fourteenth Five-Year Plan" (Zhang, 2011). The effectiveness of policy implementation is a crucial factor, and evaluating the policy implementation outcomes can provide valuable insights for optimizing and adjusting future policies.

Therefore, this study analyzes relevant policy documents and literature on universal kindergartens. Using the Balanced Scorecard tool it constructs a scientifically sound evaluative framework for policy implementation effectiveness. Based on data obtained from interviews and questionnaires, the study assesses the effectiveness of universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City and proposes targeted solutions to inform policy optimization. This research is organized into five main sections.

The first section elucidates the genesis of the research topic addressed in this investigation, the objectives and relevance of the study, and the key concepts and theoretical frameworks behind the study. It clarifies the research field of this study, explicates the research ideas, and specifies the research methods used.

In the second part, the existing research materials on universal kindergartens and evaluation of policy implementation effects both domestically and internationally are organized and collated for elaboration and analysis, giving an understanding of the current research and its advancement.

The third part collates and analyzes the practical implementation of the universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang City. The Balanced Scorecard tool is used to refine the key indicators in the policy text, establish the content of the hierarchical indicators, and quantitatively assign the value to each indicator using the hierarchical analysis method to construct an evaluative system for policy indicators.

The fourth section examines the data collected through interviews and questionnaires on the impact of the universal kindergarten policy. It presents the findings and an evaluation of the policy's implementation, analyzes the factors that influence its effectiveness, and proposes recommendations for optimization.

The final section summarizes the impact of the universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang City. It also offers specific recommendations and tactics for improving future policies, considering the city's economic growth and educational needs.

1.6 Core Concept Definition

1.6.1 Universal Kindergarten

The concept of "universal provision" strongly correlates with economics. The fundamental essence of the economic study is the rational allocation and effective usage of societal resources. In economics, the notion of inclusivity has significant importance within the idea of *public good* (Zuo et al., 2019). *Public goods* exhibit two key characteristics: non-excludability and non-rivalry. Non-excludability implies that one individual's consumption of a public good does not impede or diminish its availability for others.

Similarly, non-rivalry denotes that one person's public service utilization does not diminish its utility or accessibility for others. No one can be prohibited from the service. Based on these attributes, the government should provide the public goods supply rather than the market to ensure equitable access and effective utilization. Providing universal education is also an investment issue within economics, led by the government, which invests in universal education to enhance society's overall human capital and productivity levels.

"Universal" refers to comprehensive benefits enjoyed by all. Wang (2011b) defines universal as universal coverage, accessible to all, and possessing the non-

competitive and non-exclusive characteristics found in the economic concept of *public good*. Numerous scholars have subsequently incorporated the attributes of inclusivity into the advancement of pre-primary education kindergartens.

Universal kindergartens offer pre-primary education services supported by public funds and intend to cater to a substantial population of middle- and low-income families. Liu (2019) believes universal kindergartens are non-profit public and private kindergartens, supported by government education funding, subject to government supervision and management, and providing pre-primary education resources to meet demand. Universality and affordability are fundamental characteristics of universal kindergartens, indicating that these institutions should provide high-quality educational services to children from all families. This ensures an equitable and rational allocation of educational resources, thereby advancing the objective of educational equity (Zhang, 2011).

This study defines universal kindergartens as non-profit, public, or private kindergartens established by government entities, social organizations, or individuals. These kindergartens possess an assured educational quality, have sound institutional arrangements, and offer reasonable fees. They provide pre-primary education resources to all eligible children within the establishment's scope.

1.6.2 Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is a management tool developed by scholars Kaplan and Norton (2001) from Harvard Business School. They argued that traditional financial indicators did not comprehensively reflect an organization's performance. To achieve a comprehensive evaluation of organizational performance, they advocated the inclusion of non-financial indicators. Consequently, the Balanced Scorecard has gradually been applied in enterprise management and has become one of the most popular performance management tools worldwide. The measurement encompasses four elements: financial, customers, internal processes, and learning and development, which businesses encounter in their pursuit of goals.

Specifically, the Balanced Scorecard is a management tool that combines financial and non-financial indicators to help organizations achieve long-term goals and continuously improve their performance. In the Balanced Scorecard, financial performance is just one dimension, alongside the customers, internal processes, and learning and growth dimensions. These dimensions complement each other, forming a comprehensive performance evaluation system.

By utilizing the Balanced Scorecard, organizations can assess performance more comprehensively, identify issues promptly, and take appropriate measures for improvement, ultimately achieving long-term, strategic objectives. Based on the policies of universal kindergartens in Guiyang City and aligning with the evaluation variables and core of the Balanced Scorecard, this study will analyze four primary aspects for evaluation: funding operation, social value, management system, and sustainable development.

1.6.3 Policy Implementation Evaluation

The term "policy implementation " belongs to the field of public policy, which first emerged in the mid-20th century in the United States (Liu, 2007). Therefore, this paper will present a comprehensive understanding and definition of "policy implementation" based on different perspectives from scholars in China and Western countries.

According to Western academics Pressman and Wildavsky (1984), policy implementation may be seen as a dynamic and interactive process that involves the pursuit of objectives and the execution of actions. Jones (2000) defines policy implementation as the behavioral activities involving interpreting, organizing, and applying policy content. In the context of Chinese scholars, Chen (1995) believes that policy implementation is a dynamic process of converting policy objectives into actions based on policy goals. Zhang (1992) further extends the concept, stating that policy implementation involves constructing organizational structures guided by policies and implementing various behavioral activities such as interpretation, promotion,

experimentation, and implementation to transform theoretical, policy content into practice, thereby achieving policy objectives.

By synthesizing the perspectives of Western and Chinese researchers, it is evident that there may be variations in the descriptions or definitions of the behavioral activities associated with policy implementation. The fundamental concept revolves around a sequence of acts undertaken to accomplish policy goals.

In this study, policy implementation refers to taking action based on clear policy objectives, formulating policy content, and achieving policy goals through financial support, organizational establishment, and personnel management.

In the "Modern Chinese Dictionary," the term "effect" refers to the result produced under the influence of specific forces or factors. At the same time, "evaluation" is a value judgment or conclusion made after assessing and analyzing a person or thing. Ma (1992) believes that the judgment process depends on evaluation, which provides evidence of whether and to what extent the object has value to the subject. He (2012) interprets evaluation as using various methods, collecting multiple sources of information, and analyzing and judging from multiple perspectives and angles to reach a conclusion and provide a value assessment.

In summary, in this study, "policy implementation effectiveness evaluation" refers to acting based on clear policy objectives, formulating policy content, and achieving policy goals through various means, such as financial support, organizational establishment, and personnel management. It involves assessing the results of the interaction among variables during this process, analyzing relevant data, and providing a value judgment or conclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The central research region covered in this study is Guiyang City in Southwest China, the focus of this study. The nature of *inclusion* varies according to the region, with Western countries focusing more on discussing *inclusion* for children with special needs. In contrast, the development of *inclusion* in China is more likely to be discussed regarding whether all children of school age have an equal right to education. Consequently, in the literature review section of this study, the literature on universal kindergartens in China and Western countries will be analyzed separately to understand the current state of research more accurately on the implementation of universal kindergarten policies and the future development trend.

2.1 Research on Universal Pre-primary Education in Western Nations

Within Western nations, the discourse around 'Universal Pre-primary Education' is mostly in the broader framework of pre-primary education development. A lesser focus exists on isolating and examining it as a distinct entity apart from universal pre-primary education. Hence, this scholarly article adopts a holistic approach to investigating the collective body of research on universal pre-primary education in Western nations while thoroughly examining the current literature.

In Western nations, it was recognized, in light of the pressing need for social and economic rebuilding after the conclusion of World War II, that education serves as the bedrock for national progress and that the cultivation of human capital represents a crucial undertaking in the process of nation-building (Xue & Li, 2022). Hence, Western nations took the lead in establishing and advancing comprehensive pre-primary

education earlier.

The "Head Start" (2000) program was implemented nationally in the United States in 1965, aiming to attain equitable access to pre-primary educational opportunities. The program had a noteworthy influence on the worldwide advancement of pre-primary education. The United States facilitated a conducive atmosphere for growth by offering legislative direction and financial security, integrating pre-primary education with social services, and prioritizing training pre-primary educators to uphold the standard of universal pre-primary education.

The United Kingdom implemented the "Sure Start" program (Glass, 1999) in 1997, which approached pre-primary education from the social services perspective. This initiative aimed to address pre-primary education with a social services lens. The primary aims of the initiative were to take an integrated approach to the development of care and education, as well as to enhance community collaboration to grow pre-primary education resources and improve the quality of care and education. This initiative has considerably impacted pre-primary education in Western nations (Fleer & Van Oers, 2017).

In Western nations, characterized by their capitalist societal framework, social scientists first prioritized investigating the social and economic advantages of implementing universal pre-primary education throughout its early developmental phases. The primary focus was fostering economic expansion and developing a skilled workforce in pre-primary education. According to the study conducted by Bellm and Whitebook (2003), the advancement of universal pre-primary education was hindered by the inadequate proficiency of pre-primary professionals and caregivers. This deficiency necessitated a significant investment in training, resulting in diminished child development effectiveness.

Bellm and Whitebook (2003) argued that the fundamental aspect of fostering universal pre-primary education was the establishment of a proficient and competent workforce dedicated to pre-primary education. This objective was achieved

by implementing standardized procedures for talent development, wage benchmarks, and other strategic measures aimed at successfully guaranteeing the quality of education and the tangible benefits of universal pre-primary education.

Greene (2006) asserted that universal pre-primary education is an expensive but worthwhile investment. By providing universal pre-primary education, society will benefit from better human capital, employment rates, and more substantial economic development potential, resulting in long-term socioeconomic benefits. According to Belfield (2006), adopting universal pre-primary education has substantial financial consequences for local governments. Despite its high development cost, the economic benefits and social welfare make it a valuable investment. Moreover, the precise fiscal ramifications in distinct places are contingent upon many elements, including the economic underpinnings, budgetary circumstances, and policy framework unique to each region. Western nations' primary objective in advancing universal pre-primary education is to facilitate long-term economic growth by establishing routes for individual development.

As this field grows, scholars have directed their research efforts toward examining equity and inclusivity within universal pre-primary education. Some scholars express concern over the implementation of policies aimed at mitigating educational disparities and ensuring equitable access to pre-primary education for marginalized groups of children, those from poor socio-economic homes, ethnic minorities, and immigrant children, among other demographics (Li et al., 2017).

Barnett (2010) found that in the development process of universal pre-primary education in the United States, many children from low-income families cannot access pre-primary educational resources, leading to unequal opportunities for enrollment. There are notable disparities in the instructional efficacy between public and private pre-primary educational programs, leading to constrained advancements in the comprehensive developmental outcomes of universal pre-primary education in the United States. The researcher conducted a study from a governmental standpoint and

proposed implementing targeted public funding initiatives to enhance educational advantages for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The objective is to enhance the overall outcomes of universal pre-primary education and generate greater economic advantages in the long run.

In his publication, Wright (2011) examined the disparities in advancing universal pre-primary education, which factored in gender, socioeconomic status, and racial background. Wright (2011) suggested that building social capital is a significant motivation for revamping the universal pre-primary education system. Increasing teacher salaries, providing stable employment opportunities, and enhancing educational quality elevate the status of universal pre-primary education and alleviate limitations caused by gender, class, and racial factors during its development.

According to Arvola et al. (2017), the enhancement of immigrant children's engagement in pre-primary education in Finland can be achieved by implementing initiatives, including help with language, cross-cultural education, family involvement, and policy support. The expert underscored the need to establish an all-encompassing and nurturing pre-primary education setting to facilitate immigrant children's educational and developmental progress.

The government is the primary entity responsible for facilitating the advancement of universal pre-primary education, with regulations serving as fundamental frameworks for its progress. Therefore, Western scholars have gradually increased their attention to policies related to universal pre-primary education. According to Barnett (2008), the government must consider three fundamental factors when devising policies for universal pre-primary education.

These factors include the underlying principles guiding its progress, the provision of financial assistance for services, and the logic of policy interventions. The author proposes that policymakers implement a standardized development model for universal pre-primary education. This should involve optimizing kindergarten management systems, attracting high-quality kindergarten teachers through a

reasonable salary, and enhancing the overall quality of the teaching staff.

Additionally, the author suggests continuously establishing a comprehensive teacher training system to improve teachers' professional competencies (Dong). Furthermore, it is recommended that the policy for universal pre-primary education be integrated with the nature and characteristics of public policies to provide developmental support to a more significant number of disadvantaged children. In Western countries, educational funding is mainly non-governmental investment supplemented by government financial support.

Although the government's financial contribution may not be high, considering its macroeconomic, regulatory capacity, and social development responsibilities, how to increase financial investment remains a research hotspot. The study conducted by Karch (2010) examines the research on allocating public funds for universal pre-primary education policy across several states within the United States. The researcher points out that interest groups' politics can influence the government's investment funding policies. Given this reality, analyzing and coordinating the interests of various stakeholders is crucial in promoting policy reforms and development for universal pre-primary education.

Hroncich (2022) proposes policy recommendations that differ from most scholars' perspectives based on the current political system in the United States. The author proposes a progressive reduction in government funding for universal pre-primary education, advocating a shift towards targeted subsidies provided directly to families to address their specific educational development requirements instead of supporting universal pre-primary education establishments (Zhou & Zhou, 2019). This approach aims to provide maximum freedom for families to choose their education options.

Additionally, Western countries place great importance on the law to safeguard citizen rights and freedoms, maintain social order and stability, promote economic development, provide a fair and just judicial system, and limit government power, among other needs and values. These variables, combined, provide the

fundamental basis of the rule of law in Western nations and have a major impact on their social and institutional development (Zheng & Zheng, 2020).

It is widely acknowledged among scholars that the rule of law serves as the fundamental framework for safeguarding the rights and freedoms of individuals, assuring their proper respect and protection. By formulating and implementing laws, individuals' rights are treated equally without privilege or discrimination. The principle of the rule of law guarantees that everyone within a community is granted equitable rights and opportunities, hence promoting the ideals of social equity and justice (Chen & Yang, 2019). Hence, in the pursuit of establishing a universal framework for pre-primary education, the implementation of legislative measures, exemplified by the "No Child Left Behind" policy (Bush, 2001), governs the allocation and administration of government resources in this domain. Consequently, these measures aim to ensure equitable educational opportunities for disadvantaged children (Rodionova et al., 2021).

The ongoing progress of universal pre-primary education in Western nations, coupled with increased public awareness, has led to a greater focus on researching the quality and efficacy of universal pre-primary education. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on enhancing teacher professionalism to facilitate the high-quality development of universal kindergartens. According to Torii et al. (2017), there is a belief among scholars that pre-primary education of superior quality has the potential to provide adaptable instructional methods, intellectually stimulating learning settings, and avenues for fostering holistic development in children. The significance of teachers' duties and professional development in delivering pre-primary education of superior quality is underscored. Governments should provide a conducive policy environment and standardize and supervise the quality standards of pre-primary education institutions. Supporting pre-primary quality education involves offering more precise advice on educational content, teacher credentials, curriculum development, and evaluation.

Through analysis of the current state of high-quality pre-primary education

in New Jersey, Belfield and Schwartz (2007) contend that the development of high-quality universal pre-primary education heavily depends on government financial resources, which are primarily used for increasing the teacher workforce, securing teachers' fundamental welfare benefits, and boosting the attractiveness of pre-primary teaching as a career. Moss (2016) delves deeper into the discussion on pre-primary education quality, emphasizing the importance of focusing on educational quality and children's overall development and well-being. He sees holistic development as the developmental goal of quality education, expanding the perspective from evaluating and regulating educational quality to exploring and developing children's social skills, emotional health, and creative expression in pre-primary education.

In conclusion, Western nations have made notable strides in advancing universal pre-primary education. Their study's primary emphasis has been examining the effects on social and economic advantages, the demonstration of equity and inclusion, the quality of education, and the development of policies. These studies aim to highlight children's holistic development as the primary objective of education. They emphasize the importance of institutionalizing education, protecting children's right to school, and establishing education as a top priority. To achieve this goal, Western countries actively introduce legal policies, using the law as the basis for implementation, coordinating internal and external educational relationships, and facilitating the management of universal pre-primary education.

These legal policies benefit the standardization of rights and obligations of various parties and regulate educational practices, indirectly ensuring teaching quality. These initiatives have significantly facilitated the advancement of universal pre-primary education.

Nevertheless, despite the comprehensive examination and investigation of policy development for universal pre-primary education, there has been very little scholarly inquiry into the tangible procedures and outcomes of policy implementation in Western nations. This emerging pattern may have significant implications for future

investigations about universal pre-primary education across Western nations. In-depth research into the practical processes and outcomes will provide policymakers with more specific guidance to better assess policy effectiveness and sustainability.

Several vital aspects deserve attention in studying the practical processes of universal pre-primary education policy. Firstly, it is vital to direct attention towards the execution of the policy, including its advancement, finance, and the efficacy of associated organizations (Xue & Li, 2019). This helps to understand the policy's implementation and identify potential issues and areas for improvement.

It is essential to thoroughly study the consequences and ramifications of universal pre-primary education policies on young children. This encompasses the advancement of children in several domains, such as cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development, with their capacity to adapt to educational and societal contexts. Strengthening research in these areas can better assess the actual effectiveness of policies and provide targeted policy optimization, enhancing the feasibility and reasonability of policy content.

2.2 Research on Universal Kindergartens in China

This study will utilize Citespace software to conduct a bibliometric and data visualization analysis of the existing research status in universal kindergartens and the evaluation of policy implementation in China. This research aims to analyze and predict the development characteristics, current research, and future trends of these thematic studies by generating knowledge maps based on different variables, such as authors, institutions, and keywords.

2.2.1 Analysis of Publication Volume, Trends

2.2.1.1 Policy Context Analysis, Trends

Analyzing the trends in the publication volume of research related to universal kindergartens can better understand the academic activity and trends, helping identify research hotspots and focal points. In this study, a search was conducted in the CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) database using the keyword 'universal kindergarten' without limiting the publication years. After manually excluding irrelevant journals such as conference papers, newspapers, and non-academic publications, 1,398 valid publications were obtained. The results are presented in Figure 1, annual distribution.

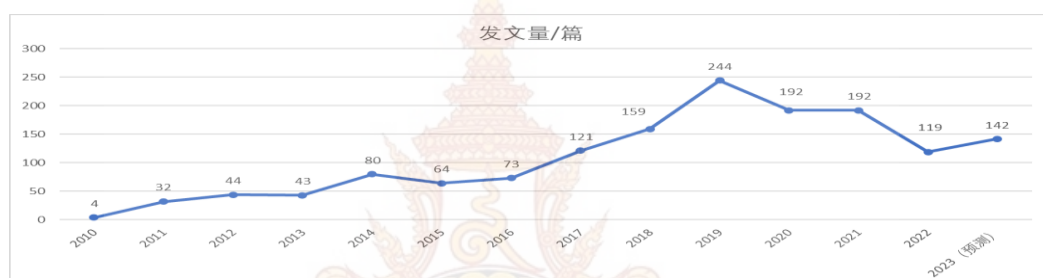


Figure 2.1 Trends in the Publication Volume of "Universal Kindergarten"

Figure 2.1, "Universal Kindergarten," first appeared in 2010, with only four relevant academic papers. This indicates that, at this time, "Universal Kindergarten" is a novel concept with low research interest. However, from 2011 to 2019, the number of publications in this field increased steadily from 32 to 244, representing a significant growth rate of 662.5%. This suggests a growing interest in "Universal Kindergarten" research during this period. In the context of the prevailing circumstances surrounding China's ongoing growth, the discernible surge in publishing figures can plausibly be attributed to the extent of official backing and the broadening of research horizons.

The significance of pre-primary education became widely understood in society due to the implementation of the "National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" and the "State Council's

Opinions on the Current Development of Pre-primary Education" along with the corresponding three-stage Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education, which provided support for the advancement of universal kindergartens. Scholars expressed growing concerns over the need to enhance China's educational coverage. They emphasized the need to develop pre-primary education and resolve the problem of "enrollment difficulty." This has led to the promotion and improved accessibility of pre-primary education, providing a solid foundation for the research on universal kindergarten policies.

The shift in research perspectives can be attributed more directly to the rise in publication output when considering research techniques. During the early phase, scholarly investigations on universal kindergartens centered on pre-primary education, with researchers generally possessing academic expertise in this sector. The researchers investigated the function of universal kindergartens in the broader context of pre-primary education. They studied these kindergartens' existing state of development and formulated further plans and ideas.

However, as universal kindergartens progressed, scholars shifted their research perspectives to encompass policy, economics, and society. They expanded the research scope of universal kindergarten development to include policy interpretation, government supervision, fiscal investment, guarantees, and the interaction among different social stakeholders related to universal kindergartens. Scholars have undertaken more in-depth assessments of the development of universal pre-primary education due to the expanded research perspectives' extensive frameworks and research methodologies. The endorsement of universal kindergarten policies and the expanded scope of research has been instrumental in facilitating a substantial amplification, by a factor of six, in the number of research articles produced during this period.

From 2020 to 2023, although the number of academic publications related to "universal kindergartens" has decreased compared to 2019, the overall quantity has remained at or above 119 papers. This decline in publication volume during

this period may indicate a slight decrease in the research intensity on "universal kindergartens." However, it still reflects a steady output, suggesting that scholars have established relatively mature research directions in this field. Building on the development in the previous two time periods and existing research achievements, they now focus on exploring the essence and core issues of "universal kindergartens" and pay more attention to specific difficulties or developmental limitations encountered in the practical implementation of "universal kindergartens." Consequently, the research perspectives have become deeper and more focused in this phase.

From 2010 to 2023, the overall trend of research publications on "universal kindergartens" has shown continuous growth, followed by a stable development, reflecting the necessity and importance of this field in academic research. The research interest among scholars in the "universal kindergartens" field has continued to grow, and their understanding has deepened, enriching the breadth and depth of content in this research domain.

Although the overall volume of publications related to "universal kindergartens" has been increasing. The publication volume development trend indicates this subject's attention and trend in academic research. A comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the specific content and conclusions of the literature is necessary to assess research quality. In future research on "universal kindergartens," scholars should begin with China's development challenges and joint problems and conduct high-quality and in-depth research. They should consider multiple variables, regional differences, policies, and implementing agencies to enhance the practicality of research outputs in this field and promote the transformation and application of research findings in practice.

The changes in the trend of publication volume also indirectly reflect the shift in focus in China's educational development. The research on "universal kindergartens" has evolved from addressing fundamental issues such as achieving broad coverage and resolving the difficulties and high costs of enrolling age-appropriate children. To balance the relationship between educational expenses and quality, reform

the educational system, innovate assessment models, explore high-quality development paths for universal pre-primary education, and address the core issue of ensuring access to high-quality kindergartens for children.

For the long-term development of "universal kindergartens," this research topic will continue to be of great interest. Based on existing research achievements and starting from the perspective of social development and educational reform demands, scholars will conduct more refined and targeted research on "universal kindergartens," continuously deepening the significance of this subject. They will propose more proactive strategies to inject stronger development momentum and support into China's universal pre-primary education by addressing practical development challenges.

2.2.1.1 Policy Context Analysis

The focal point of pre-primary education reform is establishing universal kindergartens, a crucial element within China's broader educational reform initiative. This initiative centers around the strategic allocation of pre-primary education resources, aiming to ensure that every child of school age is granted an equitable right to education. This entails providing equal enrollment opportunities and striving for educational equity within the pre-primary education sector. The education system's reform depends on the government's macro-control, using policy papers to convey advice for the country's planning and future growth trajectory.

Thus, examining policy documents holds significant importance in facilitating the organization and analysis of the contextual factors underlying the development of "universal kindergartens," the implementation of related initiatives, and the prospective trajectory. This study aims to enhance the expansion and exploration of the conceptual framework of "universal kindergartens" and offer more pragmatic guidance for refining and implementing subsequent policy provisions.

In this section, the author searched the official websites of the provinces and municipalities in the study area with the keyword "universal

kindergartens" and found 9 national, 5 provincial, and 5 municipal policy documents, totaling 19 policy documents, and collated the name, type, and time of issuance, and the relevant references to "universal kindergartens" in each of the policy documents, organized and listed according to the national and local levels.

Table 2.1 National Policies Related to 'Universal Pre-primary Education

No.	Document	Type	Year	Main Content or Essence
1	National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010-2020)	National level	2010	By 2020, basic modernization of education should be achieved, and a learning society should be formed. China aims to become a strong country in terms of human resources and achieve a higher level of inclusive education. The plan focuses on achieving basic inclusive preschool education and promoting equitable education for all. It emphasizes the public welfare and inclusiveness of education, ensuring that citizens have the opportunity to receive a good education. The plan aims to establish a basic public education service system covering urban and rural areas, gradually achieving equalization of basic public education services and reducing regional disparities.

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|---|---|----------------|------|---|
| 2 | Opinions of the State Council on the Current Development of Preschool Education | National level | 2010 | Actively develop preschool education, focus on solving the problem of "difficulties in enrollment" to meet the demand for preschool enrollment, and promote the scientific development of preschool education. |
| 3 | Key Points of the Ministry of Education for 2011 | National level | 2011 | Strengthen and improve the macro guidance of education, accelerate the development of preschool education, launch the three-year action plan for preschool education, strengthen key areas and key links, deepen the reform of the education system, and transform work functions effectively. |
| 4 | Notice on Increasing Financial Input to Support the Development of Preschool Education | National level | 2011 | Increase financial input for preschool education, cooperate actively with education and other departments, further improve the institutional mechanisms, promote comprehensive reforms, adhere to public welfare and inclusiveness, build a public preschool education service system covering urban and rural areas with reasonable layout, and provide convenient, flexible, and diverse preschool education services at multiple levels for children and parents, promoting the scientific development of preschool education. |
| 5 | Opinions on Implementing the Second Phase of the Three-Year Action Plan for Preschool Education | National level | 2014 | By 2016, the gross enrollment rate of preschool education should reach about 75% nationwide. Preschool education for three years should be fully popularized in towns, economically developed rural areas, and other rural areas, especially in concentrated and contiguous poor areas, where there should be a significant increase in the gross enrollment rate of preschool education for three years. A preschool education service network with public-run and inclusive private-run kindergartens as the main body should be initially established. A cost-sharing mechanism for rural preschool education with public financial input as the main part should be gradually established. The level of kindergarten management and education quality should be significantly improved. |

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|---|--|----------------|------|--|
| 6 | Administrative Measures for the Central Financial Support of Preschool Education Development Funds | National level | 2015 | Regulate and strengthen the management of central financial support for the development of preschool education, improve the efficiency of fund utilization, expand preschool education resources, and increase financial support for preschoolers. |
| 7 | Opinions on Implementing the Third Phase of the Three-Year Action Plan for Preschool Education | National level | 2017 | By 2020, a public preschool education service system with wide coverage, basic services, and high quality should be basically established. The gross enrollment rate of preschool education for three years should reach about 85% nationwide, and the coverage rate of inclusive kindergartens (the proportion of children in public and inclusive private kindergartens) should be around 80%. The management system and operation system of preschool education should be gradually improved, and the responsibility for the development of preschool education should be further implemented. A cost-sharing mechanism for preschool education should be generally established, and the ability to operate and guarantee should be significantly enhanced. The kindergarten teacher allocation and salary guarantee mechanism should be initially established, and the strength of the teaching staff should be further strengthened. A comprehensive evaluation and supervision system for the quality of kindergarten care and education should be basically formed, and kindergarten behavior |

8	Opinions on Deepening Reform and Standardizing the Development of Preschool Education	National level	2018	By 2020, the gross enrollment rate of preschool education for three years should reach about 85% nationwide, and the coverage rate of inclusive kindergartens (public and inclusive private kindergartens) should reach about 80%. The public preschool education service system with wide coverage, basic services, and high quality should be basically established, and the management system, operation system, and policy guarantee system of preschool education should be basically improved. The level of investment should be significantly increased, and the cost-sharing mechanism should be generally established. By 2035, preschool education for three years should be fully popularized, and a public preschool education service system covering urban and rural areas with a reasonable layout should be established, forming a sound management system, operation system, and policy guarantee system for preschool education, providing more abundant, inclusive, and high-quality preschool education for children.
9	Action Plan for Enhancing the Development of Preschool Education in the 14th Five-Year Plan Period	National level	2021	Further, improve the level of inclusive and inclusive preschool education. By 2025, the gross enrollment rate of preschool education for three years should exceed 90% nationwide, and the coverage rate of inclusive kindergartens should be over 85%, with public kindergartens accounting for more than 50% of enrolled children. The public preschool education service system should be further improved, with wide coverage, basic services, and high quality, and the inclusive preschool education guarantee mechanism should be further improved. The overall quality of kindergarten care and education should be comprehensively improved, and a scientific transition mechanism from kindergartens to primary schools should be basically established.

In the "National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010-2020)" issued in 2010, the Chinese government set the strategic development goal of achieving "higher levels of universal education by 2020, basic universal pre-primary education, and creating equitable education that

benefits all." This policy aimed to use systemic reform to break through and promote equity as a fundamental development goal for China's education system. The proposal proposed an innovative framework for advancing universal pre-primary education in the nation, aiming to bolster China's standing as a global leader in human capital.

The notion of "universal private kindergartens" was first introduced in 2010 in the "Opinions of the State Council on the Current Development of Pre-primary Education." This strategy aimed to support primary providers of pre-primary education by promoting the establishment of public and privately operated kindergartens by various social organizations. This approach sought to diversify the avenues and structures for expanding the availability of pre-primary education resources. With this, "universal kindergartens" officially entered the public's vision in China. The fundamental nature of these two programs is rooted in the reform of the pre-primary education system, specifically focusing on the direction of cognitive growth and placing significant importance on attaining educational parity (Pei & Bao, 2020). The objective is to provide equitable access to education and rights for all eligible children, focusing on fair distribution of kindergarten resources and using educational equality to promote social justice. Within this cognitive paradigm, there was a notable growth in the Chinese government's focus on pre-primary education.

The Ministry of Education, in the "2011 Key Points of the Ministry of Education" paper, clearly articulated its objective to expedite the advancement of pre-primary education, broaden the availability of pre-primary educational resources, and launch a three-year strategic initiative for pre-primary education. The strategy prioritized the robust expansion of public kindergartens while promoting the growth of privately-operated kindergartens. The policy demonstrates the government's commitment to promoting educational equity in pre-primary education by increasing resources in both public and private kindergartens. This expansion aimed to provide universal pre-primary education resources and address the challenge of enrollment difficulties and "costly enrollment," prevalent obstacles in advancing pre-primary

education in China. The provision of pre-primary education resources was a significant initiative during that period.

However, the issue of balancing the cost of pre-primary education to ensure affordability for eligible children was another influential factor that impacted the achievement of educational equity and the promotion of inclusivity. In 2011, the nation tackled this issue through the policy statement, "Notice on Augmenting Financial Investment to Foster the Advancement of Pre-primary Education". This policy prioritized the augmentation of financial resources allocated to pre-primary education, emphasizing the principles of public welfare and inclusivity. It aimed to enhance institutional mechanisms and establish a comprehensive public service system for pre-primary education catering to urban and rural areas. The policy sought to strengthen the government's involvement in providing substantial financial support for advancing universal kindergartens.

In 2014, the government published the "Opinions on Implementing the Second Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education" after three years of preparation. This plan aimed to attain a gross enrolment rate of around 75% in pre-primary education by 2016. The plan aimed to establish a service network of universal, pre-primary education, consisting of public and private, universal kindergartens with guaranteed teaching quality.

A cost-sharing approach, reliant on public financial assistance, was implemented in rural regions to expedite the advancement of pre-primary education and foster educational fairness. This strategy demonstrated that, after the execution of the first action plan, there was a partial alleviation of the prevalent problem of "enrollment difficulties" in pre-primary education in China. Nevertheless, given the constraints inherent in the education system and the disparities in development between urban and rural regions, it remains imperative to persist in advancing the growth of pre-primary education in rural areas to establish a comprehensive, pre-primary education service that caters to a diverse array of children.

The policy "Central Finance Management Measures for Supporting the Development of Pre-primary Education" (2015) provides more detailed regulations on managing funds for pre-primary educational development, aiming to improve the efficacy of fund utilization, expand resources, and increase financial assistance for children. This demonstrates that the Chinese government consistently utilizes financial strategies, incentives, subsidies, and dedicated funds to offer financial assistance for expanding universal kindergartens and enhancing related systems, considering socio-economic development and current educational cost expenditures.

After 2017, building on the foundation of previous development, the government introduced the "Opinions on Implementing the Third Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education" and the "Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Standardizing the Development of Pre-primary Education", which provide more explicit guidance and requirements regarding enrollment rates, coverage of universal kindergartens, management systems, and cost-sharing mechanisms. The government's practical measures for promoting the development of universal kindergartens became more specific, and the policy content was further refined.

In 2021, in the "Action Plan for Pre-primary Education Development and Enhancement during the 14th Five-Year Plan Period", there is a strong emphasis on further improving the universality and accessibility of pre-primary education. The plan's objective is to consistently enhance enrollment rates, broaden the scope of universal kindergartens, and further enhance and refine the mechanism for ensuring universal pre-primary education. The plan seeks to improve the quality of pre-primary education and establish a systematic link between kindergartens and elementary schools.

The challenges in the development of pre-primary education in China have shifted from the initial focus on "difficulty in enrollment" and "expensive enrollment" to the current focus on "difficulty in enrolling in good kindergartens." The proposal aims to attain comprehensive, equitable, secure, and high-quality development in pre-primary education by enhancing the inclusivity of pre-primary education.

In summary, the Chinese government's policy development in the field of universal kindergartens has gone through several stages, from the "National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" to the "Action Plan for Pre-primary Education Development and Enhancement during the 14th Five-Year Plan Period"(2021). The government continuously emphasizes educational equity and universalness. The policy focus has shifted from addressing the issues of "difficulty in enrollment" and "expensive enrollment" to improving the quality and service level of kindergartens. The government is committed to achieving the objectives of universal, safe, and high-quality universal kindergartens through expanding pre-primary educational resources, improving financial support, and establishing a service network integrating universal public and universal private kindergartens. These policy measures provide equal educational opportunities for every eligible child and propel China toward becoming a leader in human resource development.

At the national level, policy documents provide macro-level guidance for developing universal kindergartens. However, due to varying levels of development and resource allocation in different regions, it is necessary to formulate more targeted local-level policy documents. Table 2 presents a list of ten policy documents retrieved from the official websites of the Guizhou provincial government and Guiyang municipal government, covering the period from 2010 to 2022, with the theme of "universal kindergartens" as the search keyword.

Table 2.2 Provincial and Municipal Policy Documents Related to "Universal Kindergarten

No.	Document	Type	Year	Main Content or Essence
1	Implementation Opinions of the Provincial People's Government on Accelerating the Development of Preschool Education	Provincial Level	2011	Construct a preschool education network with provincial demonstration kindergartens as the leading force, county-level demonstration kindergartens as the backbone, and township kindergartens as the foundation. Adhere to public welfare and inclusiveness, establish a reasonable layout of public and private kindergartens in urban and rural areas with guaranteed quality, and achieve the goal that by 2020, more than 1000 public kindergartens will be newly built or expanded in towns and street offices, ensuring that each town and street office has at least one public kindergarten.
2	Education Reform and Development Plan of Guiyang City 2011-2020	Municipal Level	2011	By 2020, basic modernization of education will be achieved, a learning society will be formed, and the city will become a strong city in terms of human resources, ensuring that educational resources benefit the entire city. In the area of preschool education, increase the number of preschool education places to address the problem of "difficulty in entering kindergarten." By 2015, the gross enrollment rate of one-year preschool education will exceed 90%, and the gross enrollment rate of three-year preschool education will exceed 70%. By 2020, the gross enrollment rate of three-year preschool education will exceed 85%, achieving basic inclusive preschool education. A pattern will be formed where every county has demonstration kindergartens, every township has central kindergartens, and larger communities and administrative villages have kindergartens (preschool classes, preschool education points).

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|---|--|--------------------|------|--|
| 3 | Implementation
Opinions of the
Municipal People's
Government on
Vigorously Developing
Preschool Education | Municipal
Level | 2011 | <p>From 2011 to 2013, build or expand at least 90 public kindergartens, ensure that every township has a public central kindergarten, and achieve a gross enrollment rate of 85% for one-year preschool education and 60% for three-year preschool education, significantly alleviating the problem of "difficulty in entering kindergarten." By 2015, build or expand 20 public kindergartens, achieve a gross enrollment rate of over 90% for one-year preschool education and over 70% for three-year preschool education, with the number of children in public kindergartens accounting for more than 60% of the total in the city. All teachers and caregivers are certified to work in kindergartens, and a number of early education resource centers are established in large urban communities to guide and help parents with scientific early childhood education. By 2020, build or expand an additional 30 public kindergartens, and achieve a gross enrollment rate of over 85% for three-year preschool education. Basically establish a government-led, reasonable layout, public-private combined, and quality-assured public service system of preschool education, ensuring the healthy and happy growth of children.</p> |
| 4 | Implementation Plan
for Preschool Education
Development in
Guiyang City
(2014-2016) | Municipal
Level | 2014 | <p>Effectively address the problems of "difficulty in entering kindergarten, expensive kindergarten fees, and distant kindergartens." From 2014 to 2016, the building area of preschool education will increase by more than 10% annually, and the newly added building area will be used to hold public kindergartens. Each township will have at least one public kindergarten, and each community will have at least one public or inclusive kindergarten. The special fund for preschool education will increase by no less than 10% annually. By 2016, the gross enrollment rate of three-year preschool education will reach 85% or above, and the proportion of children in public or inclusive kindergartens will reach 80%, achieving basic inclusive preschool education.</p> |

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|---|---|------------------|------|--|
| 5 | Implementation Plan for Preschool Education Development in Guiyang City | Municipal Level | 2016 | Effectively solve the problem of communities without public kindergartens and further accelerate the development of preschool education in our city. For 53 communities in the city without public kindergartens, 29 new kindergartens will be built, 6 kindergartens will be expanded, 14 kindergarten places will be purchased, and 3 kindergartens will have their service scope adjusted to address the issue of communities without public kindergartens. |
| 6 | Implementation Opinions on the Third Phase of Preschool Education Action Plan in Guizhou Province | Provincial Level | 2017 | By 2020, the gross enrollment rate of three-year preschool education in the province will reach 90%, and the coverage rate of inclusive kindergartens (the proportion of children in public kindergartens and inclusive private kindergartens to the total number of children in kindergartens) will reach around 80%. The management system and operation mechanism of preschool education will be gradually improved, and the operational guarantee capacity of kindergartens will be significantly enhanced. The establishment of kindergarten teachers and their salary guarantee mechanisms will be initially completed, and the strength of the teaching staff will be further strengthened. The evaluation and supervision system for kindergarten teaching quality will be basically established, and the phenomenon of kindergartens being too similar to primary schools will be eliminated. A public service system for preschool education will be basically established, which covers a wide range, ensures basic services, provides for those in need, and offers quality preschool education. |
| 7 | Notice on Printing and Distributing the Management Measures for the Identification and Support of Inclusive Private Kindergartens in Guizhou Province | Provincial Level | 2019 | Guide and support private kindergartens to provide public welfare and inclusive preschool education to society, and establish a public welfare and inclusive preschool education public service system that covers urban and rural areas and has a reasonable layout. |

- | | | | | |
|----|---|------------------|------|--|
| 8 | Management Measures for the Use of Preschool Education Development Resource Subsidies in Guizhou Province | Provincial Level | 2021 | The "preschool education development resource subsidy" will be used specifically to support the expansion of preschool education resources, improve kindergarten conditions, and increase the supply of inclusive resources. It will be used for building, expanding, or improving public kindergartens and supporting the development of inclusive private kindergartens. |
| 9 | Guizhou Province's 14th Five-Year Plan for Preschool Education Development and Promotion | Provincial Level | 2022 | The comprehensive public service system for preschool education that covers urban and rural areas and has a reasonable layout will be further improved. The funding guarantee mechanism for preschool education will be further improved, and the integrated management mechanism of township (town) and village kindergartens will be basically established. The promotion of inclusive and inclusive education will be actively and steadily carried out, "schoolification" trends will be basically eliminated, and a scientific kindergarten-primary school transition mechanism will be initially formed. The correct direction of preschool education management, standardized behavior of kindergartens, improved inclusiveness, enhanced teaching quality, and comprehensive development of children will be achieved. By 2025, the gross enrollment rate of three-year preschool education in the province will reach 94%, and the coverage rate of inclusive kindergartens will reach 85%. The proportion of children in public kindergartens will be maintained at around 60% of the total, and about 50% of counties (cities, districts) in the province will meet the national standards for preschool education inclusiveness. |
| 10 | Guiyang City's 14th Five-Year Plan for Educational Development | Municipal Level | 2022 | By 2025, a high-quality education system that promotes comprehensive human development will be more effective, educational governance capacity will be enhanced, public education services will be fairer, and a coordinated education system will be more diverse and of higher quality. The education guarantee level will be further improved, and education support and guarantees will be more |

powerful, forming a new pattern of high-quality education development characterized by high standards, diversity, high level, and multiple categories. The city will become an education center with strong comprehensive strength, competitiveness, and influence, and will lay a solid foundation for becoming a leading education center in the province, a first-class education center in the west, and a nationally renowned education center with greater influence by 2035. For preschool education, comprehensive preschool education will be popularized, and the gross enrollment rate will be raised to over 95%. The proportion of children in inclusive kindergartens will be maintained at over 85%, and the proportion of children in demonstration kindergartens will reach 55%. The quality supervision system for kindergartens will be improved, the operation behavior of kindergartens will be standardized, the "schoolification" phenomenon will be eliminated, and the quality of kindergarten education will be significantly improved.

In 2011, provincial and municipal government departments jointly issued three policies: "Implementation Opinions of the Provincial People's Government on Accelerating the Development of Pre-primary Education", "Guiyang City Education Reform and Development Plan 2011-2020, and "Implementation Opinions of the Municipal People's Government on Vigorously Developing Pre-primary Education" (Xue & Li, 2022).

The provincial government has divided regions at the provincial, county, and township levels based on existing national documents on universal pre-primary education and kindergartens. This division is a framework for establishing universal kindergartens prioritizing public welfare and inclusivity. These universal kindergartens can be either publicly or privately operated. The objective was to construct an initial network for pre-primary education in Guizhou Province while enhancing government financial assistance by establishing dedicated funds to facilitate the development of pre-primary education in the region.

Based on the national and provincial government's policies on the development of universal kindergartens, Guiyang City formulated corresponding policies in 2011, including the "Implementation Opinions of the Municipal People's Government on Vigorously Developing Pre-primary Education" and the "Guiyang City Education Reform and Development Plan 2011-2020". These policies strongly emphasized prioritizing pre-primary education and establishing it as the foundation of universal and high-quality education. The aim was to enhance the education system and address the population's fundamental educational requirements while ensuring equal access to essential public educational services.

During this stage, though the concept of *universal kindergartens* was introduced into the policy framework of various levels of government as a new idea, the provincial and municipal governments combined their respective economic and educational development realities. Expanding upon the fundamental notion of *universal kindergartens*, the policy advanced a proposal to build prototype kindergartens to advance pre-primary education reform and teacher development throughout the province and city. During the preliminary growth stage, local authorities prioritized expanding pre-primary education resources. They promoted the development of universal kindergartens, based on public, private, and community kindergartens, to construct a more comprehensive pre-primary education service network and achieve educational equity. During three years of growth, Guiyang City tackled prevalent challenges in pre-primary education, including concerns about enrollment difficulties, high enrollment costs, and increasing accessibility problems.

2014, the city introduced the "Guiyang City Pre-primary Education Development Action Plan (2014-2016)". This plan was based on the population distribution and trends, and it rationalized the layout and design of kindergartens to ensure sufficient land for kindergarten construction, providing the physical conditions to expand pre-primary education resources. The plan also encouraged and supported private entities in establishing kindergartens and guided them to provide universal

services through government subsidies, fee reductions, and teacher training.

This reflects Guiyang City's approach to universal pre-primary education development, which considers the local development realities and recognizes that "accessibility" is also one of the influencing factors for pre-primary-age children to receive early education. The policy content proposes that in addition to ensuring the coverage rate of universal kindergartens, city planning and population mobility should also be considered to achieve more knowledge and reason-based construction goals, enabling universal kindergartens to play a more significant role.

"Guiyang City Pre-primary Education Action Plan" was introduced to address the issue of communities without public kindergartens specifically. The policy established clear objectives for forming, refurbishing, and growing public kindergartens. It also clarified the duties related to the development of universal kindergartens and aimed to improve the effectiveness of policy implementation.

In 2016, the "Implementation Plan for the Third Phase of Pre-primary Education Action in Guizhou Province", Guizhou Province focused on supporting public and universal private kindergartens as the primary duty, aiming to achieve a universal kindergarten coverage rate of around 80% by 2020.

The "Notice on the Recognition, Support, and Management of Universal Private Kindergartens in Guizhou Province", issued by the Guizhou Provincial Education Bureau and two other departments, provided detailed criteria for the recognition, financial support, and comprehensive management of universal kindergartens based on the actual development of pre-primary education. During this phase, the establishment of universal kindergartens in Guizhou Province significantly deepened. The primary objective of pre-primary education development was reiterated to be the establishment of universal kindergartens. The policies were more specific and standardized in recognizing universal kindergartens, providing financial support, and ensuring comprehensive management, guaranteeing the high-quality development of pre-primary education in Guizhou Province while achieving the goal of universal

kindergarten resource construction.

Considering the relatively underdeveloped economic condition of Guizhou Province compared to other areas in China, implementing financial policies has played a crucial role in facilitating and transforming the advancement of universal pre-primary education. In 2021, the "Management Measures for Expanding Resource Subsidy Funds for Pre-primary Education Development in Guizhou Province" were introduced, establishing special funds to support the development of pre-primary education, expand universal resources, and build new, renovated, or expanded public kindergartens and supportive private kindergartens.

The core of this policy was to prohibit concentrating subsidy funds on a few high-quality kindergartens strictly but to optimize the cost-sharing mechanism for universal kindergartens. It focused on funding support to city-level high-quality kindergartens and town-level public center kindergartens that could radiate and drive weaker surrounding universal kindergartens to better development. The primary objective was to provide accessible and exemplary pre-primary educational materials to the broader population while advancing the essential aim of enhancing the quality and advancement of universal kindergartens.

In 2022, Guizhou Province and Guiyang City respectively issued the "Guizhou Province 'Fourteenth Five-Year' Pre-primary Education Development Action Plan" and the "Guiyang City Education Development 'Fourteenth Five-Year' Plan", with high-quality education development as the action goal. It was building upon the tasks of further perfecting public and pre-primary education, improving the funding guarantee mechanism, establishing universality, and forming an understanding of the linkage mechanism between pre-primary and primary education. Guiyang City specified its pre-primary education development goals. It aimed to achieve full coverage of three years of pre-primary education, promote the small-scale and community-based development of pre-primary education, significantly increase enrollment rates and the proportion of coverage by universal kindergartens, improve

the management system, enhance the quality of pre-primary education, focus on creating exemplary kindergartens, establish resource management centers for rural kindergartens, and strengthen group management.

After more than a decade of exploration and development, the development of universal kindergartens in Guiyang City has become more nuanced, with implementation measures becoming more targeted, laying a foundation for the development of universal access to high-quality education services.

In summary, the policy development of universal kindergartens in China has gone through a process from its inception to a mature stage. It started with the emergence of *universal kindergartens* as a new element in pre-primary education, leading to transformative changes. Gradually, *universality* became the core attribute of pre-primary educational development, and the broad concept of universal kindergartens evolved into concrete policy through implementation. By promoting the development of universal kindergartens, China can achieve the goals of education reform and educational equity, providing more comprehensive services and guarantees for talent development. As the times change and education demands change, the future policy direction for universal kindergartens will place greater emphasis on practicality, balancing universality with education quality, to enhance the development quality of universal kindergartens. In the future, policies will pay more attention to providing equitable learning opportunities and creating higher-quality learning environments.

A series of measures must be taken at the policy level to achieve this goal. Firstly, the government should increase policy support for universal kindergartens, enhance financial investment, ensure improved teacher salaries, and facilitate the development of kindergarten infrastructure. Secondly, the government should strengthen supervision and evaluation of kindergartens to ensure that their teaching quality and management meet standards. Furthermore, it is essential to build a comprehensive and effective oversight structure that can swiftly detect and resolve any difficulties that may arise inside kindergartens. This will guarantee that every child has

equal opportunities to get a pre-primary education of the highest quality. The government should strengthen collaboration with social actors, encouraging private investment in pre-primary education and promoting the diversified development of universal kindergartens. By engaging in collaborative efforts with various societal entities, the effective usage of social resources will be optimized, hence facilitating the provision of a broader range of high-caliber pre-primary education programs that cater to the varying requirements of different families. The government must augment training and assistance for kindergarten educators, elevating their educational attainment and pedagogical competencies. Only with a high-quality teacher workforce can high-quality pre-primary education services be provided, ensuring that every child receives sufficient care and education.

In conclusion, the future development of universal kindergartens will focus on enhancing quality and striking a balance between universality and educational standards. The government will increase policy support, strengthen supervision and evaluation mechanisms, foster collaboration with social actors, and improve teacher qualifications and training. These endeavors aim to attain enhanced equity and superior quality in pre-primary education, affording children improved access to learning resources and surroundings. This will further drive systemic education reforms and promote educational equity in China, offering robust support for nurturing future talents.

2.2.1.3 Summary of Publication Trends and Policy Document Context

Scholars' attention to a specific issue changes with the evolution of national policy documents. Therefore, combining the research field of universal kindergartens with relevant national, provincial, and municipal policies helps us better understand the policy environment and future research direction on this topic.

Firstly, based on the results from CNKI data, from 2010 to 2023, the number of publications related to universal kindergartens has shown an upward and stable trend. It has rapidly increased from only 4 papers in 2010 to 244 papers in 2019

and is projected to reach 142 papers in 2023. This highlights the rising scholarly interest in universal kindergartens and the growing importance of research. It suggests that China's commitment to reform and expanding its pre-primary education system is steadily advancing. The crux of this transformation is shifting China's developmental paradigm from a mere quest for monetary progress to a profound quest for personal worth via educational means.

In human development, pre-primary education guarantees equitable educational opportunities for all eligible children. It is fundamental in pursuing educational fairness and establishing a basis for societal justice. Considering these factors, universal kindergartens have become a significant topic of discussion among scholars.

The increasing number of publications indicates that the research on universal kindergartens is continuously deepening, and the research perspective has extended to various related fields, such as policy development and application research, as well as practical exploration. Additionally, based on the official government websites at the national, provincial, and municipal levels, the importance attached by the Chinese government to universal kindergartens has shown a trend of continuous growth.

Beginning with the 'National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)' and the 'State Council's Opinions on the Current Development of Pre-primary Education' in 2010, both the national and regional governments have regarded the development of universal kindergartens as a significant strategy for the development of pre-primary education. The focus of these policies is on expanding the supply of pre-primary education resources to meet the educational needs of eligible children.

As the development of universal kindergartens progressed, subsequent policy documents have proposed more specific tasks and development directions concerning the layout, planning, urban-rural development disparities, education cost-sharing mechanisms, and management standards of universal

kindergartens. This reflects a deepened commitment from the government to promote systemic education reform and highlights their determination to achieve educational equity and high-quality education through the development of universal kindergartens.

Universal kindergartens have become an integral part of China's systemic education reform, and the year-on-year increase in the number of publications indicates that scholars' interest in this research topic is growing. This provides a theoretical and practical foundation for developing universal kindergartens in China while creating the prerequisites for social equity, economic development, and talent cultivation, ultimately realizing high-quality educational development and equity.

In summary, pre-primary education had occupied a relatively weak position in China's educational system before 2010. Therefore, the government emphasized promoting the development of universal pre-primary education, mainly through establishing universal kindergartens, to advance the goals of systemic education reform. Whether expanding pre-primary education resources, constructing universal kindergartens, or deepening systemic educational reform, the core objective is to nurture talent, support society's long-term development, and achieve educational equity and sustainable social development goals.

Governments at various administrative levels have proactively implemented strategies to guarantee universal access to three years of pre-primary education for children in urban and rural areas. These efforts aim to promote the creation of *universal kindergartens*. Adopting these principles paves the way for future talent development and cultivation and points to systemic educational reform. At the policy level, the government intends to increase its financial investment in pre-primary education, enhance the accessibility of pre-primary education resources, and construct additional universal kindergartens. These measures will enhance the accessibility of educational opportunities for more children by mitigating the discrepancy in the availability of pre-primary education resources between urban and rural areas and across various regions. The government will also tighten oversight and evaluation,

encourage the development of universal kindergartens, and ensure the educational quality meets requirements. Creating a higher standard learning environment and offering better services improves the overall standard of kindergarten education.

Additionally, the government will provide training and professional development support to raise kindergarten teachers' educational levels and teaching abilities. The comprehensive development of young children can be aided by better educational and instructional services, which can be delivered by raising the caliber of teachers. Additionally, the government actively urges societal actors to get involved in pre-primary education, fostering the growth of cooperative public and private kindergartens. Social capital can be introduced to provide diverse pre-primary education services that fulfill families' needs.

China aims to enhance the advancement of universal kindergartens to provide access to high-quality pre-primary education for all pre-primary-age children. Universal kindergartens are expected to assume a vital role in the growth of talent and the promotion of social sustainability, thanks to the support and endorsement provided by government policies. Simultaneously, the government will persist in augmenting investment, enhancing the caliber of pre-primary education, fostering a proficient cadre of kindergarten educators, fostering social engagement, and collaboratively advancing the progress of pre-primary education. These efforts will provide a solid foundation for reforming China's education system and contribute to building an educated, strong nation.

2.2.2 Co-occurrence Knowledge Graph Analysis of Author Representations and Core Institutions

2.2.2.1 Co-occurrence Knowledge Graph Analysis of Author Representations

The author conducted data processing and analysis regarding the representative authors in universal kindergarten research. Specifically, using Citespace software, we selected "Author" as the "Node Types" and set the "time slice" to 1. After

running the analysis, we obtained an author co-occurrence knowledge graph with 380 nodes and 102 links (see Figure 2.2).



Figure 1.2 Co-occurrence Knowledge Graph of Representative Authors in the Research on Universal Kindergarten

In Figure 2.2, the size of each node represents the number of research contributions by the corresponding author in the field of universal kindergartens. Wang Haiying, Wang Shengping, Jiang Yong, Wang Mo, Qin Xufang, and Liu Yan are among the leading researchers with a significant number of publications in this domain. Based on the knowledge graph, we compiled and sorted a list of the top ten representative authors according to their publication counts and supplemented it with the total citation frequency of their articles, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2.3 Top Ten Representative Authors and Total Citation Frequency of Publications on “Universal Kindergartens”

No.	Author	Number of Publications	Total Citation Frequency
1	Wang Haiying	13	390
2	Wang Shengping	9	240
3	Jiang Yong	8	270
4	Wang Mo	8	385

5	Qin Xufang	8	369
6	Liu Yan	7	169
7	Ren Huijuan	5	21
8	Zhang Aihua	5	1
9	Pang Lijuan	5	76
10	Yang Dawei	5	68

Table 2.3 First lists the order and specific number of publications for the top ten authors in universal kindergartens. Secondly, the total citation frequency of articles by the representative authors in universal kindergartens is shown. However, the ranking of authors based on the number of publications does not align with the ranking based on total citation frequency, indicating that solely relying on the number of publications to assess academic contributions requires examination.

An analysis of Table 2.3 reveals the following observations: Firstly, Wang Haiying has published 13 papers and has a total citation frequency of 390, ranking first. This indicates that this scholar is highly active in the field of universal kindergartens and has substantial academic value, with reliable research and recognition from numerous scholars. Although Wang Shengping ranks high with 9 publications, the total citation frequency of his articles is only 240, lower than the 8 publications by Jiang Yong, Wang Mo, and Qin Xufang, each having a citation frequency of 270, 385, and 369, respectively.

Secondly, while Jiang Yong, Wang Mo, and Qin Xufang each have 8 publications, Wang Mo ranks first with 385 total citations, followed by Qin Xufang with 369 citations, and then Jiang Yong with 270 citations. This phenomenon suggests that, in terms of academic contribution and value, the articles of Wang Mo and Qin Xufang have a greater impact on the academic community. Their viewpoints are more widely dispersed among scholars. In contrast, Wang Shengping, despite having more publications, lags in terms of citation frequency, possibly due to some of his articles having lower academic value.

Additionally, Liu Yan has 7 publications and a citation frequency of 169, indicating that this scholar has made some academic contributions in this research

field, although the level of recognition is moderate. Finally, among the authors with 5 publications, Pang Lijuan and Yang Dawei have a higher citation frequency, with 76 and 68 citations, respectively, demonstrating that their research has a certain degree of influence. However, Zhang Aihua, despite having the same number of publications (5), only has 1 citation, reflecting that this scholar's research influence is relatively weak and lacks significant research value. While Ren Huijuan has 21 citations, an overall assessment suggests this scholar's research remains obscure.

These data provide preliminary insights into the influence of authors in the field of universal kindergartens. However, relying solely on the number of publications and citation frequency to assess a scholar's academic contributions in this field is insufficient. It may overlook scholars with valuable and noteworthy viewpoints despite having fewer publications. Therefore, evaluating scholars' academic contributions in this field should involve a systematic assessment considering quantity and quality. In future research, it may be beneficial to examine the specific content, academic value, and reliability of the articles produced by these scholars to make more in-depth judgments and evaluations, leading to a more comprehensive and systematic understanding.

2.2.2.2 Analysis of Core Publishing Institutions

To analyze and summarize the core publishing institutions, we utilized Citespace software by selecting "Institution" as "Node Types," setting the "time slice" to 1 and the "threshold" to the top 50. After running the analysis, we obtained a co-occurrence knowledge map of 380 nodes and 102 institutional links (see Figure 2.3).

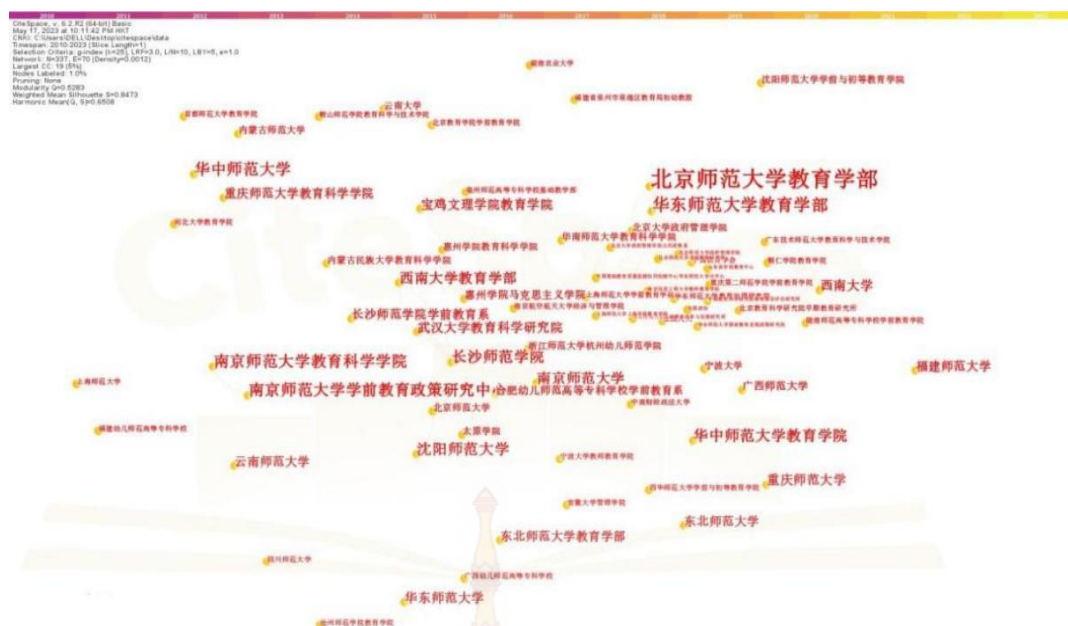


Figure 2.2 Knowledge Map of Core Publishing Institutions on ‘Universal Kindergartens

In the knowledge map, larger nodes represent higher publication numbers, and connections between nodes indicate a stronger association. Figure 3 shows that major higher education institutions in China are the main research bodies for universal pre-primary education, particularly with more significant research activity in teacher training universities. However, the number of connections between nodes is relatively low, indicating that research among different institutions is primarily conducted independently, and collaborative research within teams is yet to be promoted and developed. This results in a limited level of interconnectedness among academics, hindering the formation of a systematic and progressive advancement of research output. This allows different institutions to have distinct research orientations and characteristics, which promotes the diversification of the research field and provides other scholars with multiple research perspectives. Combining the knowledge map, we compiled Table 4, which presents the top 10 institutions ranked by publication quantity. Based on the characteristics of the knowledge map, larger nodes indicate higher publication quantities, and more connections between nodes suggest stronger

associations.

As in Figure 3, the primary higher education institutions in China are the main contributors to research on universal kindergartens, with teacher-training colleges showing exceptionally high research activity. However, the limited connections between nodes indicate that research among these institutions is still primarily conducted independently, and team-based research needs further promotion and development. This situation results in less interconnectivity among academics, hindering the formation of more systematic, progressive, and advanced research output. Different institutions may have distinct research orientations and characteristics, promoting diversity in this field's research development and offering scholars multiple perspectives for their studies. By examining the knowledge map and organizing the top 10 institutions based on publication quantity, Table 4 is generated.

Table 2.4 Top 10 Institutions in Research Publications on Universal Kindergartens

No.	Number of Publications	Institution Name
1	30	Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University
2	12	Faculty of Education, East China Normal University
3	10	Pre-school Education Policy Research Center, Nanjing Normal University
4	10	School of Education Sciences, Nanjing Normal University
5	9	Huazhong Normal University
6	8	Faculty of Education, Huazhong Normal University
7	8	Changsha Normal University
8	8	Shenyang Normal University
9	7	Nanjing Normal University
10	7	Faculty of Education, Southwest University

Table 2.4 shows that the core institutions researching universal kindergartens are concentrated in the economically developed and educationally advanced regions of China, specifically the capital cities of the central and eastern provinces. Beijing Normal University's Faculty of Education has a significantly higher

publication quantity than other institutions, indicating its intense research activity in universal kindergartens. East China Normal University's Faculty of Education, the Research Center for Pre-primary Education Policy at Nanjing Normal University, and Nanjing Normal University's School of Education Sciences also exhibit substantial publications, signifying their research impact and value in this field. Central China Normal University, the Faculty of Education at Southwest University, Changsha Normal University, Shenyang Normal University, and the Faculty of Education at Nanjing Normal University also have a relatively high volume of publications, demonstrating their significant interest and attention to research on universal kindergartens.

Notably, many core research institutions are predominantly teacher-training colleges or education faculties within universities. The author believes that this could be attributed to teacher training colleges playing a pivotal role in cultivating kindergarten teachers and conducting education policy research, and they possess a robust research aptitude. These institutions serve as significant sources of kindergarten teachers and offer a research environment and practical application sites, contributing to talent cultivation, policy optimization, and implementation of universal kindergartens.

In summary, the use of Citespace software for visualizing and analyzing key research institutions in the domain of universal kindergartens has yielded valuable insights into the research endeavors and scholarly contributions of various institutions on this subject. This has helped the author understand the types of research entities currently involved in universal kindergarten studies, facilitating contemplation and exploration of future research directions and development trends.

2.2.3 Co-occurrence Knowledge Graph Analysis

2.2.3.1 Keyword Co-occurrence Knowledge Graph

In Citespace, "Keyword" was selected as the "Node Types," and "time slice" was set to 1 with a "threshold" of the top 50 keywords. Subsequently, the



In Figure 4, larger nodes and fonts indicate higher frequencies of keywords. Combining the data from Figure 4 and the connections between nodes, the research hotspots in universal kindergartens are relatively concentrated. Based on these critical research hotspots and directions, scholars have expanded their research perspectives to include policy development, urban-rural development, and kindergarten models, forming a relatively mature and standardized academic research network. To ensure the scientific and rational nature of the analysis and its reference value, the top ten keywords in occurrence frequencies were selected for further analysis, Table 5.

Table 2.5 Top Ten Keywords and Frequencies in Universal Kindergarten

No.	Keyword	Frequency
1	Pre-primary Education	283
2	Universal	262
3	Kindergartens	133
4	Public Kindergartens	95
5	Private Kindergartens	40
6	Difficulties in Enrollment	36
7	Public Welfare	31
8	Strategies	24
9	Kindergarten Teachers	23
10	Early Childhood Education	21

Table 2.5 shows that "Pre-primary Education" has the highest frequency of use, 283 times. As the research topic is "Universal Kindergartens," it is evident that kindergartens are closely related to pre-primary education. Kindergartens serve as essential educational environments for the implementation of pre-primary education. Therefore, "Pre-primary Education" is a crucial developmental stage to research this topic, a core aspect researchers focus on.

It requires scholars to delve deeper into "Universal Kindergartens" in conjunction with the developmental connotations of pre-primary education, accelerating the advancement of reforms in the pre-primary education system. Additionally, it reflects the scholars' research interest in developing pre-primary education, contributing to this keyword's higher frequency.

The keyword "Universal" appears 262 times in this research field, ranking second. This term reflects a fundamental starting point and core research objective on universal pre-primary education and universal kindergartens. It aims to provide affordable and high-quality public pre-primary education services, clarifying the nature and essential connotations of universal kindergarten development within the context of pre-primary education. The focus is on promoting universality and expanding its scope. Meanwhile, the term "Kindergarten" appears 133 times, but with a lower frequency than "Universal." While China aims to promote reforms in the pre-primary education system, kindergartens are an essential development target.

Influential factors are primarily studied and guided in establishing and developing universal kindergartens. The research focuses on universal kindergartens in China but is not solely centered on kindergarten construction but, more importantly, on the concrete manifestations and practical applications of *universality*.

The keywords "Public Kindergartens" and "Private Kindergartens" appear 95 and 40 times, respectively, with a relatively higher frequency for "Public Kindergartens." These two keywords represent the two main types of kindergartens in China. "Public Kindergartens" are primarily operated by government entities, while "Private Kindergartens" are operated by non-governmental entities. These two kindergartens differ in nature, as they are governed by different entities, leading to variations in kindergarten standards, management methods, and funding allocation. The fundamental goal of developing *universal kindergartens* is to meet the educational needs of age-appropriate children.

Relying solely on government-operated public kindergartens is insufficient to meet the educational demands of all eligible children in urban and rural areas. Thus, encouraging the establishment of private kindergartens becomes crucial, as it allows for a more comprehensive expansion of pre-primary education resources with the involvement of social actors. The development of universal kindergartens requires a deeper exploration and optimization of universality in public kindergartens, but also a comprehensive study and base reference for the admission standards, government subsidies, and material development challenges existing private kindergartens face.

As essential keywords in this field, both "Public Kindergartens" and "Private Kindergartens" have relatively high frequencies. However, the higher frequency of "Public Kindergartens" is due to its higher research value and more substantial potential for development and promotion within the current developmental model in China. On the other hand, private kindergartens, with their diverse ownership and various challenges, present difficulties in forming systematic analyses and studies, leading to a lower research frequency than "Public Kindergartens".

The keywords "Admission Difficulty" and "Public Welfare" appear with frequencies of 36 and 31 times, respectively, ranking 6th and 7th in the table. The relatively close occurrence frequencies indicate a specific connection between these two keywords. Further exploration reveals that the essence of the research topic on universal kindergartens is to address the issue of "Admission Difficulty" faced by age-appropriate children in the current stage of pre-primary education in China.

The cause of "Admission Difficulty" is the uneven planning and distribution of pre-primary education resources in urban and rural areas and imbalanced development. Additionally, many kindergartens, influenced by market conditions, have a solid profit-driven nature, resulting in high pre-primary education fees. As a response, the Chinese government has incorporated pre-primary education into the public service management system, where "Public Welfare" becomes a crucial characteristic. Emphasizing its non-profit nature, "Public Welfare" aims to protect public interests and ensure fundamental rights and benefits for the public.

The essence of "Public Welfare" aligns with the developmental objective of universal kindergartens, which is to guarantee the educational rights of age-appropriate children, expand the construction of non-profit kindergartens, and ensure that every child is not limited by economic or class conditions, enjoying equal educational opportunities and protecting their fundamental rights. Therefore, "Admission Difficulty" and "Public Welfare" are both central issues and developmental cores in the research on universal kindergartens. Their close relationship is reflected in their similar frequencies, further narrowing the research focus on universal kindergartens.

The keywords "Strategies," "Kindergarten Teachers," and "Pre-primary Education" appear with decreasing frequencies, but their importance in the research on universal kindergartens cannot be ignored. The keyword "Strategies" indicates that scholars in this field aim to analyze and address the challenging issues in developing universal kindergartens in specific countries or regions. They conduct in-depth analyses and propose strategies to facilitate universal kindergartens' overall

development and improvement. These strategies involve policy optimization, funding management, and measures to enhance the quality of care and education in universal kindergartens.

"Kindergarten Teachers" and "Early Childhood Education" are extensions of research focused on kindergarten teaching quality. Due to the non-profit nature of universal kindergartens, the tuition fees for preschoolers are lower than market levels, which challenges these institutions' development and teaching quality. Kindergarten educators assume a pivotal role in influencing the caliber of kindergartens. Hence, universal kindergartens must address the critical matters of teaching abilities, improving professional competence, ensuring fair compensation, and enhancing the attractiveness of their positions. These measures are essential for improving teaching quality and sustaining a stable pool of talented educators. These issues are also essential aspects of pre-primary education development, and both are mutually reinforcing. Consequently, "Kindergarten Teachers" and "Early Childhood Education" are significant issues that need to be explored in the practical implementation of universal kindergartens.

In summary, through the analysis of the existing research keyword frequency table in the field of universal kindergartens, it is evident that scholars are currently focusing on aspects related to pre-primary education, universality, kindergartens, public kindergartens, and private kindergartens. The statement indicates that the present focal points of research in the domain of universal kindergartens encompass subjects such as the reformation of the pre-primary education system, the specific manifestations and practical implementations of inclusivity, the establishment of kindergartens as educational establishments, and the enhancement and enlargement of both public and private kindergartens. These keywords help clarify the essence of universal kindergartens and their future development path. Based on the nature of universalness and public welfare, while considering the management and teaching quality of kindergartens, it is possible to propose optimization strategies for public-run kindergartens and provide more practical and effective support strategies for private-

run kindergartens, thereby promoting the development of universal kindergartens and achieving educational equity more effectively.

Furthermore, through an in-depth analysis of the research keyword frequency table in the field of universal kindergartens, it can be observed that achieving educational equity is one of the main themes in China's current social and economic development. As a fundamental and critical stage for subsequent education development and improvement, pre-primary education can address the issues of imbalanced and insufficient educational development by promoting and developing universal kindergartens. This can balance the distribution of educational resources, provide equal educational opportunities to every eligible child, break the intergenerational transmission of poverty, and serve as an essential path toward social equity. Additionally, the table reflects the innovative educational development concepts pursued by the Chinese government, which focus on individual and social development and educational system reform, injecting intellectual impetus into the modernization of education. The government has actively introduced various policies to promote the development of universal kindergartens and provide high-quality pre-primary education services to children.

Finally, the table also highlights exploring the development of pre-primary education and teaching quality. The enhancement and development of pre-primary education and educators directly impact the quality of children's educational experiences. The Chinese government has enacted a range of initiatives to increase the availability of pre-primary education resources and guarantee the right to education for all children. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the quality of instruction is of equal significance. Otherwise, children's education would lack substance and fail to achieve educational equity. Therefore, the future development of universal kindergartens will also focus on exploring kindergarten quality, providing more targeted development strategies based on actual social development, enhancing teaching quality, and achieving higher-quality educational equity.

In conclusion, developing universal kindergartens will play a significant role in pre-primary education. Through government support and promotion and in-depth research by scholars, we can expect universal kindergartens to have a greater impact on educational equity and sustainable social development. The government intends to augment investment further, enhance education quality, foster proficient and skilled teaching staff, and stimulate societal engagement to advance pre-primary education. This will provide a solid foundation for China's education system reform and contribute to constructing an educationally strong nation. In future development, universal kindergartens will emphasize exploring kindergarten quality and providing higher-quality educational equity to meet children's individual development needs and adequately prepare them for their future.

2.2.3.2 Keyword Clustering Knowledge Map

The keyword clustering knowledge map visually represents related keywords within corresponding themes and concepts, categorized based on their semantics and context. In the keyword clustering knowledge map for universal kindergartens, keywords are treated as nodes, and analysis is performed for each year. The threshold item is "Top N per slice," with $N=50$. Clustering and keyword techniques are combined with the Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI) algorithm to present the keywords of relevant literature in a phased and visualized manner, resulting in the knowledge map for the keyword clustering of universal kindergartens, as in Figure 2.5.

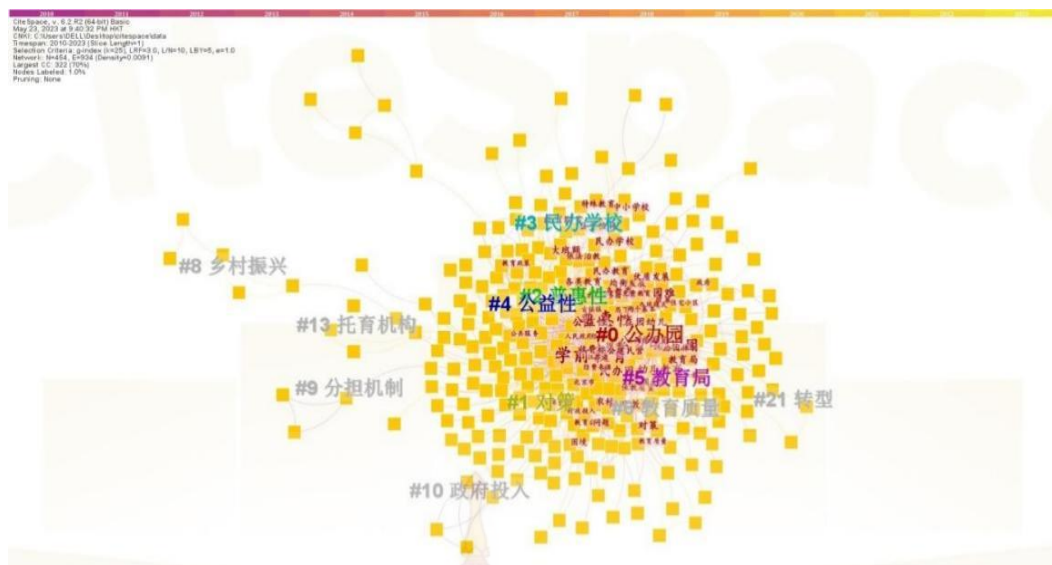


Figure 2.4 The Keyword Clustering, Knowledge Map of Universal Kindergarten

Figure 2.5 There are 12 meaningful keyword clusters in the research topic of universal kindergartens. They are as follows: 0# Public Kindergartens, 1# Strategies, 2# Universalness, 3# Private Schools, 4#: Public Welfare, 5# Cluster: Education Bureau, 6# Education Quality, 8# Rural Revitalization, 9# Burden-sharing Mechanism, 10# Government Investment, 13# Childcare Institutions, 21# Transformation. Further detailed analysis of these clusters is presented in Table 6.

Table 2.6 Keyword Clustering List for Universal Kindergartens

Cluster No.	Size	Cluster Name	LSI
0#	78	Public Schools	Admission Rate; Enrollment Difficulty; Residential Communities; Enrolled Children; Ministry of Education
1#	72	Strategies	Issues; Strategies; Recommendations; Current Situation; Financial Investment
2#	67	Universalness	Development Path; Special Funds; Research; Private Kindergartens; Pre-primary Education
3#	27	Private Schools	Large Class Sizes; Education and Poverty Alleviation; Governance by Law; Private Schools; Primary and Secondary Schools
4#	26	Public Welfare	Education Equity; Public Welfare; Value; Educational Policies; Policies
5#	20	Education Bureau	Education Bureau; Preschool Education; Yunnan Province; Education; Private Kindergartens
6#	9	Education Quality	School Management System; System; Implied Development; Implications; Mechanism
8#	6	Rural Revitalization	Teaching Staff; Rural Revitalization; Teaching Personnel; Rural Education; Kindergarten Management

9#	5	Cost-sharing Mechanism	Profit Orientation; Operating Costs; Operational Costs; Kindergarten Funding; Sound Operation
10#	5	Government Investment	Government Investment; Investment; Cost-sharing; Different Regions; Family Contribution
13#	4	Childcare Institutions	Infants and Young Children; Childcare Services; Childcare Institutions; Three-child Policy; Infant Care Services; Universal Care Services; Birth Policies
21#	3	Transformation	Interests Game; Game Model; Universal Private Kindergartens; Transformation

Cluster 0# is labeled as "Public Schools," and the core keywords under this cluster include "Admission Rate," "Enrollment Difficulty," "Residential Communities," "Enrolled Children," and "Ministry of Education." From these clustered keywords, it can be observed that the Ministry of Education focuses on optimizing public schools as the preferred approach for developing universal kindergartens. The emphasis is on establishing universal kindergartens in residential communities to address the issue of enrollment difficulty and improve the admission rate. Public schools serve as the primary building block in this development approach, starting with the rational allocation and planning of pre-primary education resources. By supplementing pre-primary education resources in different regions, the central operating units in residential communities are designated as the constructors of universal kindergartens. This division of construction responsibilities makes the development of universal kindergartens more feasible and yields better results.

Cluster 1# is labeled as "Strategies," and the clustered keywords are "Issues," "Strategies," "Suggestions," "Current Situation," and "Financial Input." This cluster focuses on an in-depth understanding and analysis of the current development status and practical issues related to universal kindergartens, proposing solutions and suggestions to support the sustainable development of universal kindergartens. From this cluster, it is evident that "Financial Input" is a crucial topic of discussion concerning the strategies for developing universal kindergartens. This relates to the non-profit nature of universal kindergartens, where their operating costs and development funding

are heavily dependent on government financial input. The strategies include how the government establishes a cost-sharing mechanism among kindergartens and families and how to allocate funds to establish a sound subsidy mechanism for universal kindergartens, thus providing economic policy support for their development.

Cluster 2# is labeled as "Universality," and the clustered keywords are "Development Path," "Special Funds," "Research," "Private Kindergartens," and "Pre-primary Education." These keywords reflect that in the current development environment of universal pre-primary education. However, universal kindergartens are both public and private. In practice, the universality of private kindergartens is constrained by the development and construction needs of private kindergartens, and their fees remain higher than those of universal public kindergartens. Therefore, scholars are focused on providing reasonable financial input to support the transformation of private kindergartens into universal kindergartens and support their construction and development.

Cluster 3# is "Private Schools," and the keywords in this cluster include "Large Class Size," "Education Poverty Alleviation," "Governance by Law," "Private Schools," and "Primary and Secondary Schools." This cluster mainly focuses on developing universal kindergartens in rural areas of China, providing local people with opportunities and hopes for knowledge, culture, and high-quality development through educational advancement. However, in practice, due to the geographical and economic challenges in rural areas, the education supply in universal private kindergartens cannot meet the local educational demands, leading to "large class sizes" and the inability to provide quality teaching guarantees. While the fundamental purpose of universal kindergartens is to achieve educational equity, it should not be at the expense of sacrificing teaching quality, as it would hinder the achievement of educational poverty alleviation goals. To ensure the development of educational equity and the practical effectiveness of educational poverty alleviation, the government should enact corresponding laws and regulations to standardize the planning and

development of educational resources, teaching quality, and teacher competence, extending these principles to primary and secondary schools in rural areas, emphasizing high-quality education, achieving high-quality educational equity, and helping them break free from poverty and change their destiny.

Cluster 4# is labeled as "Public Benefit," and this cluster includes five keywords: "Educational Equity," "Public Benefit," "Value," "Educational Policy," and "Policy." This cluster primarily explores the essence and pursuit path of universal kindergarten development, focusing on the deepening of public benefit in universal kindergartens through educational policies, promoting educational system reforms, and enhancing the value pursuit of universal kindergartens in the public service system of pre-primary education, thereby promoting educational equity.

Cluster 5# is labeled as "Education Bureau," and the keywords in this cluster are "Education Bureau," "Pre-primary Education," "Yunnan Province," "Education," and "Private Kindergartens." This cluster emphasizes the role and focus of local government departments in developing universal kindergartens, especially in the aspects of pre-primary education and the development of private kindergartens. The Education Bureau aims to accelerate systematic educational reforms, promote the construction of universal kindergartens, and explore the development of pre-primary education and the universality of private kindergartens, which are the current key directions of the Education Bureau.

Cluster 6# is "Educational Quality," and the keywords are "Management System," "System," "Development of Implications," "Implications," and "Mechanism." This cluster focuses more on improving and optimizing the educational quality of universal kindergartens. The current challenges in the development of universal kindergartens have shifted from initial issues of "difficulties in admission" and "high admission fees" to the issue of "difficulties in admission to high-quality kindergartens." One of the criteria for judging whether a kindergarten is of high quality or not is its educational quality. By innovating and reforming the management systems

and mechanisms of universal kindergartens and establishing new models for kindergarten operation, through optimizing the curriculum and innovative teaching methods in universal kindergartens, the high-quality development of pre-primary education can be promoted, and the development of pre-primary education's implications can be deepened.

Cluster 8# is "Rural Revitalization," and the keywords in this cluster are "Teaching Staff," "Rural Revitalization," "Teaching Personnel," "Rural Education," and "Kindergarten Management." This cluster's primary emphasis is establishing and administering universal kindergartens in rural regions and developing and enhancing the professional skills of teaching personnel to augment the educational standard. Education development is the foundation and necessary condition for rural revitalization, and consolidating the development of rural education is the fundamental way to alleviate educational poverty. Improving the quality of education is the core goal of rural education development. In this process, the nurturing and the cultivation of talented students is of paramount importance. Focusing on the development of rural teaching staff, organizing regular teacher training, improving the competence and treatment of rural teachers, mobilizing talents, accelerating the reform of curriculum in rural universal kindergartens, optimizing the management system of kindergartens, and improving the quality of rural universal kindergartens, fosters rural revitalization.

Cluster 9# "Cost-sharing Mechanism," and the keywords in this cluster are "For-profit," "Operating Costs," "Kindergarten Expenditure," and "Sound Operation." This cluster emphasizes establishing reasonable cost-sharing mechanisms for universal kindergartens to reduce the economic burden of education on families and better deliver educational equity. Based on the non-profit nature of universal kindergartens, the government must fund the essential expenditures of kindergartens, such as operational costs. Increasing financial investment and supporting the sound operation of universal kindergartens are essential to providing higher-quality educational and caring services.

Cluster 10# is "Government Investment," and the keywords in this cluster are "Government Investment," "Expenditure," "Cost-sharing," "Different Regions," and "Family Contribution." This cluster focuses on the government's financial investment and the cost-sharing model with families to develop universal kindergartens. As part of the public service system, universal pre-primary education relies on core financial support from the government. The economic capacity of families also plays a crucial role in children's access to education. Therefore, establishing a scientifically reasonable education cost-sharing mechanism among the government, kindergartens, and families, considering regional development disparities and socioeconomic differences is crucial. The government can set up special funds, formulate incentive standards, and increase financial investment to ease the operational pressure on universal kindergartens and promote their sustainable development. However, it is also evident from this cluster that scholars are concerned with policy formulation and strategies. There is limited research on evaluating the implementation of policies in universal kindergartens. Policies play a vital role in the government's macro-control of the development of universal kindergartens. However, the lack of attention and evaluation of policy implementation leads to unanticipated development outcomes.

Cluster 13# is "Childcare Institutions," and the keywords in this cluster are "Infants and Toddlers," "Childcare Services," "Childcare Institutions," "Three-Child Policy," "Infant Care," "Universal Care Services," and "Family Planning Policy." This cluster extends the research focus on universal kindergartens to strengthen the construction of childcare services for infants and toddlers. To improve the educational quality of the population, it is essential to consider the complete lifecycle of individual development. While pre-primary education serves children aged 3 to 6, the period from 0 to 3 years is also a critical foundation for children's development. With China's "Three-Child Policy," the birth rate has not increased but decreased, possibly related to the increasingly high cost of education and the conflict between

personal career development and childcare for infants and toddlers.

Despite some progress in developing universal kindergartens in China's current stage of pre-primary education, most cannot meet the demand for childcare services for infants and toddlers aged 0 to 3. Consequently, there is a strong demand for childcare and infant care. However, due to the relatively short development time of childcare and infant care services in China, there are issues such as mixed childcare markets and inadequate structures. In the future development of universal kindergartens, there should be a focus on planning and constructing childcare and infant care services, which will promote the development of universal kindergartens and foster the growth of universal care services.

Cluster 21# is "Transition," and the keywords in this cluster are "Interest Game," "Game Model," "Universal Private Kindergartens," and "Transition." This cluster focuses on exploring and developing the transition from private kindergartens to universal private kindergartens. In the process of vigorously expanding the construction of universal kindergartens in China, the transition from private kindergartens to universal private kindergartens significantly supplements pre-primary education resources and alleviates the shortage of universal kindergartens. However, during the ongoing development of universal private kindergartens, the divergent interests of various stakeholders, such as the government, kindergarten administrators, and parents, gradually appear. The inability to fulfill their core demands diminishes the developmental effectiveness of universal private kindergartens from the planned objectives. It is necessary, then, to adopt a research perspective on interest games and construct a game model. With the core demands of different stakeholders as guidance, policy optimization, management reform, and other approaches can be used to coordinate the interests of all parties, promote the benign transition and development of private kindergartens to universal private kindergartens, and drive the sustainable development of universal kindergartens.

In summary, as an essential measure in systemic education reform,

universal kindergartens aim to meet the educational needs of the public, promote urban and rural development, and achieve educational equity. From the 12 identified clustering themes, we can observe the complexity and diversity of the development process of universal kindergartens, which encompasses aspects such as kindergarten establishment, financial support, rural education, enhancement of education quality, and the transformation of private kindergartens into universal ones. These interconnected and complementary dimensions offer valuable perspectives and reference points for further understanding and researching universal kindergartens.

The construction of universal kindergartens is crucial. The government should increase support for universal kindergartens by building new ones and renovating existing ones, expanding the coverage of pre-primary education, and ensuring that every eligible child can access high-quality pre-primary education. During construction, attention should be paid to improving kindergarten infrastructure and educational resources, providing a conducive learning environment, and creating conditions for comprehensive child development.

Funding support is essential for the development of universal kindergartens. The government should increase financial investment in universal kindergartens to ensure sufficient operational funds. Additionally, it explores diversified funding mechanisms, such as involving private capital in kindergarten construction and operations through public-private partnerships, that can improve fund utilization and better meet the developmental needs of kindergartens. Furthermore, the development of universal kindergartens should address the specific needs of rural education.

In rural areas, efforts should be made to strengthen support for rural kindergartens, improve their operating conditions, and enhance the qualifications of teachers, providing high-quality pre-primary education for rural children. Moreover, promoting resource sharing and coordinated development across regions can reduce the urban-rural education gap and achieve a more balanced allocation of educational resources. Improving education quality is one of the core goals of developing universal

kindergartens.

The government should strengthen the supervision and evaluation of the quality of kindergarten education, establish relevant standards and guidelines, enhance teachers' professionalism and teaching capabilities, and propel kindergarten education to a higher level. The government should encourage kindergartens to offer focused education, cultivate children's abilities and creativity, and provide better support for individual child development.

Attention should be given to transforming private kindergartens into *universal kindergartens*. The government should formulate relevant policies to encourage private kindergartens to actively participate in the construction of universal kindergartens and facilitate their transition into universal kindergartens, thereby enhancing the supply capacity and coverage of universal kindergartens.

In conclusion, developing universal kindergartens requires comprehensive thinking and concerted efforts from multiple operators in the sector. Governments, scholars, and various sectors of society should work together to increase investment, improve quality, and optimize resource allocation, providing equal pre-primary education opportunities for every child. This will support China's systemic educational reform, achieve broader equity, and ensure sustainable development. Only in this way can we lay a solid foundation for children's growth and future endeavors.

2.2.3.3 Keywords with Bursts Knowledge Graph Analysis

"Keywords with bursts" refers to the words in a specific research field that show significant changes in frequency over a certain period. Analyzing "keywords with bursts" helps grasp future research trends and vividly presents the evolution of hot topics in the research of universal kindergartens over time. In this paper, the visualization tool Citespace was used for the burst analysis of keywords, and seven "keywords with bursts" were identified, as in Figure 2.6.

Top 7 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

Keywords	Year	Strength	Begin	End	2010 - 2023
公益性	2010	8.36	2010	2013	
幼儿教育	2010	3.22	2010	2012	
入园难	2010	2.94	2010	2012	
大班额	2018	2.96	2018	2019	
在园幼儿	2011	3.63	2019	2021	
教育质量	2018	3.98	2021	2023	
公共服务	2012	3.02	2021	2023	

Figure 2.5 Knowledge Graph of Bursting Keywords in Universal Kindergarten

Figure 2.6 shows that during the 13-year development process of universal kindergartens, 7 keywords with bursts have emerged, reflecting the research focus and trends in this field. From 2010 to 2013, three keywords with bursts appeared, "public welfare," "pre-primary education," and "admission difficulty," with burst coefficients of 8.36, 3.22, and 2.94, respectively. This indicates the emphasis on the public welfare characteristics of pre-primary education in the context of systemic education reform. Efforts were made to expand pre-primary education resources, establish universal kindergartens, and address the issue of "admission difficulty" to achieve better educational equity.

From 2018 to 2019, the keyword with a burst was "large class sizes," with a burst coefficient of 2.96. This indicates a shift from a simple pursuit of quantity in pre-primary education resources to a deeper exploration of quality. The teacher-to-child ratio imbalance and declining quality of care and education due to large class sizes became a research focus during that period.

From 2019 to 2021, the keyword with a burst was "children enrolled in kindergartens," reflecting universal kindergartens' rapid and in-depth development. Various forms of expanding pre-primary education resources and optimizing the planning and layout of universal kindergartens were explored to increase the proportion of children enrolled.

Starting from 2021, the keywords with bursts were "educational quality" and "public service," with burst coefficients of 3.98 and 3.02, indicating a more comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the development of universal kindergartens. The focus shifted from the quantitative expansion of universal kindergartens to high-quality development. Efforts were made to develop and improve the teaching staff of universal kindergartens, enhance teacher professionalism, establish better training mechanisms, and optimize kindergarten management systems to provide essential support for the sustainable development of universal kindergartens. Moreover, based on the nature and connotation of universal kindergartens, their inclusion in public services can strengthen the government's responsibility for their development and management of funding. By providing public service standards, the government can offer developmental guarantees for universal kindergartens, accelerate the progress of universal pre-primary education, and implement institutional reforms to achieve educational equity.

In conclusion, by analyzing the evolution of these 7 key terms, we can observe the transformation and development of China's educational system in the pre-primary education stage and discern the trends and explorations of universal kindergartens in their actual development. In future research on universal kindergartens, we will conduct more in-depth and innovative explorations based on China's actual economic and social development to better support systemic education reforms and achieve the goals of high-quality education and educational equity.

With the rapid development of China's economy and society, the importance attached to pre-primary education continues to increase. This point is reflected in the evolution of these 7 key terms. Scholars' attention to pre-primary education has gradually grown, and the government has increased its support for the construction of universal kindergartens, indicating that universal kindergartens are an essential means to promote systemic education reforms and are gradually gaining recognition and attention in the broader community.

The trends associated with Universal kindergarten are the exploration of their development, the promotion of universal kindergarten construction, strengthened funding guarantees, attention to the specific needs of rural education, the improvement of educational quality becoming an important topic, and the transformation of pathways for creating universal private kindergartens. These trends and practices provide valuable experience and insights for developing universal kindergartens and offer important topics and directions for scholars to explore universal kindergartens further in depth.

In future research, we need to deepen our understanding of universal kindergartens based on China's economic and social development and pay attention to the needs and directions of systemic Scholars should conduct innovative research, proactively seeking universal kindergarten developmental models and pathways that adapt to the requirements of the times. This includes emphasizing context-specific and timely policy formulation and implementation, considering local resources and demands to provide more personalized educational services for children. Additionally, strengthen the training and improvement of the teaching staff to offer more professional and high-quality education for children. Lastly, we must clarify that developing universal kindergartens is not solely about achieving educational accessibility; more importantly, it aims to achieve high-quality education and educational equity. Universal kindergartens should prioritize the comprehensive development of children, focusing on nurturing their creativity, thinking abilities, and social adaptability, thus laying a solid foundation for their future development.

In conclusion, future research on universal kindergartens will require more in-depth and comprehensive explorations at the policy, practice, and theoretical levels. We should fully utilize the perspectives and references provided by the evolution of these 7 key terms to actively promote the development of universal kindergartens and make more significant contributions to achieving educational equity and high-quality education goals.

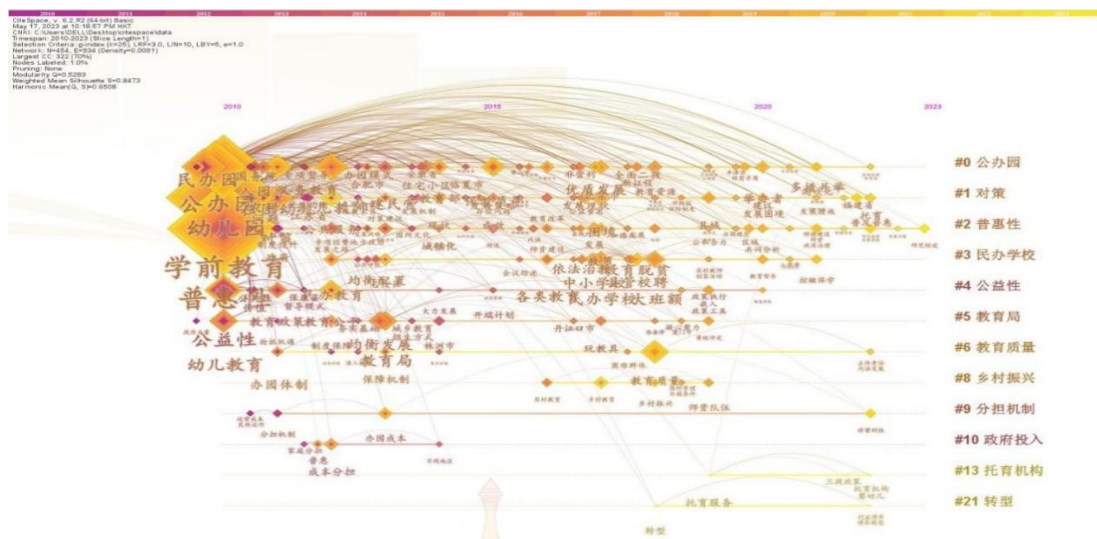


Figure 2.6 The Keyword Clustering Timeline Knowledge Graph of Universal Pre-primary Education

2.2.3.4 Timeline Knowledge Graph Analysis

The keywords, clustering, timeline, and knowledge graph visually represent the development process in the current research field over time. It illustrates the research progress, interrelationships among publications, and the overall development of the research area. In the Citespace software, the RefWorks data of relevant literature under the theme of universal pre-primary education is imported and visually processed. The timeline knowledge graph is plotted with publication time on the horizontal axis and keyword clusters on the vertical axis, Figure 2.7. Figure 2.7 is then analyzed in conjunction with Figure 2.1, Table 2.1, and Figure 2.6 to divide the research development of universal pre-primary education in China into three stages.

In the Germinal Stage (2010-2014): In 2010, two pivotal documents, the 'National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)' and the 'State Council's Opinions on the Current Development of Pre-primary Education', first introduced the concept of 'Universal Pre-primary Education' and emphasized universality and equitable education for all. This brought the concept of universal pre-primary education into the public attention. During this period, a few scholars, such as Feng Xiaoxia (Feng Xiaoxia, 2010) and Wang Jintang (2010), initiated

preliminary exploratory research on the reasons for the development of universal pre-primary education and its implications. The number of publications was relatively low, and the research perspectives were singular.

Following the completion of the first phase of China's Pre-primary Education Action Plan in 2013, there was a significant increase in the number of publications and a rapid expansion of research perspectives and practical explorations in universal pre-primary education. As shown in Figure 7, the density of keyword nodes and connections between nodes vividly illustrate the increasing research intensity on universal pre-primary education during this stage. The research primarily revolved around critical terms such as 'Pre-primary Education,' 'Universality,' 'Kindergarten,' 'Countermeasures,' and 'Balanced Development,' exhibiting a more diverse and complex range of research perspectives. The bursting keywords 'Public Welfare,' 'Pre-primary Education,' and 'Admission Difficulty' gained research attention, particularly with 'Public Welfare' attaining the highest burst coefficient of 8.36.

It is evident from these three keywords that the research focus in this stage was more inclined towards theoretical and empirical summaries, with the research direction being relatively disordered. There was a need for more profound theoretical thinking and practical application in exploring issues and devising strategies for universal pre-primary education, indicating that research in this field required further depth.

Rapid Development Stage (2015-2019): During this period, the Chinese government successively issued policy documents such as the 'Opinions on Implementing the Second Three-Year Action Plan for Pre-primary Education', the 'Central Financial Support Management Measures for the Development of Pre-primary Education', the 'Opinions on Implementing the Third Phase of Action Plan for Pre-primary Education', and the 'Several Opinions on Deepening Reform and Standardizing the Development of Pre-primary Education'. These documents provided robust policy guarantees and support for developing universal pre-primary education, propelling it into a rapid growth phase. The research intensity surged, and the number of publications

steadily increased. In 2018, under the backdrop of the policy document 'Several Opinions on Deepening Reform and Standardizing the Development of Pre-primary Education', which positioned pre-primary education as a key component of education reform and included it in the top-level design, the focus on nurturing moral character and cultivating talents became the fundamental educational task. The number of publications reached the highest at 244 papers during this year. During this period, research keywords became more diverse and explicit, centered around the key terms 'Education Quality,' 'Large Class Size,' 'Education and Poverty Alleviation,' and 'High-Quality Development.'

The research focus on universal pre-primary education shifted from expanding the number of resources to a high-quality development approach that optimizes and improves the existing kindergarten education management system and addresses the challenges of education quality. Pre-primary education was considered the foundation of China's poverty alleviation efforts. The government and scholars deepened their research perspectives on the development of universal pre-primary education, reinforced the planning and investment in pre-primary education, and focused on exploring education quality, challenges in rural universal pre-primary education, and development mechanisms. They accurately grasped the core connotation of universal pre-primary education, tackled barriers hindering the reform of the pre-primary education system, and optimized the details of the development framework of universal pre-primary education in response to changes in China's birth policy. This research stage held significant academic value, providing rich and systematic research perspectives and guiding the practical application of universal pre-primary education.

Stable Growth Stage (2020-present): During this stage, China's universal pre-primary education has undergone ten years of development, and the total quantity of pre-primary education resources has increased rapidly, achieving a leap forward in development. The fundamental universality of pre-primary education has been realized, and the development of universal pre-primary education has entered a

stable phase. In 2021, the '14th Five-Year Plan for Enhancing Pre-primary Education Development' proposed to continue promoting the universality and coverage of pre-primary education, especially in rural and impoverished areas. At the same time, it emphasized the continuing reform and innovation of pre-primary education, improving the quality and level of teaching, strengthening supervision and evaluation, and standardizing the development of universal pre-primary education. This reflects the government's determination to emphasize the importance of and further promote the development of universal pre-primary education.

Following on from this foundation, as evident from the combination with Figure 7, the density of connections between nodes has decreased, but there is still continuity and focus on old and new keywords. The research now revolves around the key terms 'sponsors,' 'multiple measures,' 'development challenges,' 'teacher teams,' and 'universal care and universal education.' The emergent keywords in this stage are 'education quality' and 'public service.' The changes in keywords and differences in network connections in the graph reflect a more explicit direction and clear purpose in the research development of China's universal pre-primary education. The concept of pre-primary education continues to evolve, focusing on achieving high-quality pre-primary education as the main development direction. The research perspectives are more specific and in-depth.

Although the number of publications decreases during this stage, the overall quantity remains stable at over 100 papers, with more specific and in-depth research themes. Combining the requirements for high-quality development with China's population development strategy, research in this stage targets regional and structural contradictions in pre-primary education development, teacher team construction, and the management system of kindergarten groups. The research quality is higher, and practical applicability is more robust, which better promotes the construction of universal pre-primary education, making pre-primary education development more equitable and of higher quality and promoting the development of systemic educational reform.

In conclusion, universal pre-primary education is vital to China's systemic education reform. From 2010 to the present, its development has moved through three stages: the budding stage, rapid growth stage, and stable growth stage. During the budding stage, with the introduction of policy documents on universal pre-primary education, the research interest gradually increased, focusing more on the integration of universality and public welfare, the summarization of experiences in developing universal pre-primary education, and proposing recommendations and strategies to address surface-level issues in the development process.

In the rapid growth stage, the concept of universal pre-primary education shifted from a simple expansion of resource quantity to a pursuit of improving teaching quality. Researchers adopted broader and more diverse perspectives, and the number of publications increased rapidly, providing richer theoretical support for the further development of universal pre-primary education.

In the stable growth stage, China's universal pre-primary education achieved a leap in development by implementing three phases of pre-primary education action plans. The concept of pre-primary education continued to evolve, and the focus shifted from promoting the construction of universal pre-primary education to high-quality education. Researchers' perspectives became more in-depth and innovative. Overall, the development of universal pre-primary education in China has shown a trend of continuous deepening, with exploration becoming more profound, perspectives more innovative, and methods more specific. This includes the following four aspects.

Promoting the Development of Universal Private Kindergartens: Universal private kindergartens are an essential supplement to China's pre-primary education resources. The government should increase financial investments and establish reasonable admission criteria to expand and develop universal private kindergartens. These measures will attract and support higher-quality private kindergartens to participate in the universal education initiative.

Accelerating the Establishment of a Rational Education Cost-sharing Mechanism: In the sustainable development of universal kindergartens, a scientific and reasonable education cost-sharing mechanism among the government, universal kindergartens, and parents needs to be established. This mechanism would ensure that the government fulfills its responsibility to provide educational guarantees and optimizes the financial investment structure of universal kindergartens. When establishing a dynamic adjustment mechanism, operational costs, local economic development, and children's backgrounds should be considered. Financial investments, subsidies, and tax incentives can support the construction and operation of universal kindergartens. Additionally, the government should ensure the reasonable allocation of education funds to cover more needy children, especially those from economically disadvantaged families.

As education providers, universal kindergartens should also bear specific responsibilities and obligations, including setting appropriate tuition fees and ensuring the improvement of education quality. In the cost-sharing mechanism, universal kindergartens should transparently demonstrate their financial status and the use of funds to build trust and cooperation. Strengthened management and supervision will ensure the rational allocation and utilization of educational resources, enhancing the efficiency of education expenditure. Parents, as the primary caregivers, should also share the education costs according to their children's financial capabilities and special needs. The government can provide differentiated fee policies and financial assistance to alleviate the burden on economically disadvantaged families, ensuring all children have access to a universal kindergarten education.

In the sustainable development of universal kindergartens, joint efforts from the government, kindergartens, and parents are necessary to establish a scientific and rational cost-sharing mechanism, guaranteeing accessibility and equity in education, promoting the development of universal kindergartens, and ultimately providing high-quality educational services for children.

Implementing Multiple Measures to Enhance Education Quality: The transition of universal kindergartens towards high-quality development is essential to improving the overall quality of pre-primary education in China. Multiple measures can be taken, such as establishing a sound pre-primary teacher training system, enhancing teachers' professional competence, establishing a communication system for teachers to share teaching resources and experiences, optimizing curriculum structures, and promoting curriculum reforms in universal kindergartens. These multidimensional efforts will lead to the improvement of the quality of education in universal kindergartens.

Enhancing Regulatory and Evaluation Mechanisms: Relying on big data platforms, it is crucial to establish a multi-channel supervision and evaluation system. This ensures the efficient use of funds and effective implementation of policies, further promoting the healthy operation and sustainable development of universal kindergartens and providing valuable references for policy formulation and optimization. Using big data platforms offers unprecedented opportunities for monitoring and managing universal kindergartens. These platforms enable data collection from various aspects, including student enrollment, teacher qualifications, curriculum development, and resource allocation. Based on data-driven approaches, the development of universal kindergartens can be monitored and evaluated in real-time, allowing for timely adjustments and interventions. A multi-channel supervision and management system ensures the participation of different stakeholders, including government departments, educational institutions, parents, and communities. Each stakeholder contributes unique perspectives, expertise, and experiences supervising and managing universal kindergartens. Such collaborative efforts promote transparency, accountability, and efficient use of resources.

In conclusion, based on the analysis and the knowledge map generated from the keyword clustering timeline, it is evident that China's research on universal kindergartens has yielded fruitful and diverse results. The research covers a

wide range of topics, from the developmental implications of universal kindergartens to the pathways of their establishment, providing a solid research foundation for this thesis. Looking ahead, as China continues to develop and create universal kindergartens, scholars will delve further into discussions on supporting and managing universal private kindergartens, establishing a sound and rational mechanism for sharing pre-primary education costs, enhancing the quality of education in universal kindergartens, and improving the regulatory and evaluation mechanisms. These efforts aim to promote the high-quality and sustainable development of universal kindergartens.

More in-depth investigations are needed. Firstly, regarding research perspectives, most current studies in China focus on constructing and reforming the management system within universal kindergartens. The main emphasis is on studying the status of universal kindergartens and proposing strategies to address related issues. From this perspective, scholars tend to explore the formulation of policies and the manifestation of government responsibilities. Only a few researchers approach the research from the perspective of policy implementation and discuss its applicability and rationality in different regions. Most of the research in this aspect is concentrated in economically developed first and second-tier cities, with relatively few studies conducted in economically disadvantaged areas.

Compared to research on universal kindergartens in urban areas, there needs to be more research on universal kindergartens in rural areas. As a result, considering the continuous improvement in urbanization in China, future research on universal kindergartens will likely focus more on exploring and studying the development of universal kindergartens in economically underdeveloped areas in the country's western regions. This research will further investigate the implementation and deepening of government responsibilities. Additionally, the research perspectives will concentrate more on discussing the policy implementation process and the feasibility and rationality of policies to promote reforms in the pre-primary education system better and strengthen the top-level design of universal kindergarten policies.

In terms of research subjects, future research on universal kindergartens will focus on children as the primary subjects. There will be more exploration into the impact of the kindergarten environment on child development and the education of children with exceptional needs. Research on kindergarten teachers will extend beyond the pursuit of individual professional competence, with a greater emphasis on cultivating teachers' moral and ethical standards. This approach aims to support the healthy growth of children both physically and mentally.

Regarding research content, as the development of universal kindergartens continues to advance, scholars will increasingly focus on the high-quality development of universal pre-primary education in rural areas to support rural revitalization efforts. More research will be conducted on how universal kindergartens can contribute to integrating childcare and education services aligned with China's current population development strategy. Future research on universal kindergartens will delve into service models and fiscal investment mechanisms to further enrich the theoretical implications and practical effects of promoting "childcare-education integration" in rural universal kindergartens. This approach will foster rapid development in the field and better achieve the fundamental goal of equitable education.

2.3 Comparative Analysis of Representative Literature

Table 2.7 Main Contents of Representative Literature

Author	Purpose	Theory	Methodology	Findings	Limitations
Ding Xiutang (2013)	Focus on the current situation and development direction of private preschool education in China, analyzing the issues of "tight kindergartens" and "expensive kindergartens."	-	Analyze policy text content and combine it with the actual development of inclusive preschools to propose targeted suggestions.	Government should provide subsidies, raise kindergarten teacher salaries, establish a title evaluation mechanism, and social security policies for private kindergarten teachers. It also suggests setting reasonable proportions of education and teaching activity funds in school budgets, providing teacher training opportunities for private kindergartens, and implementing quality evaluation and monitoring systems for public and commissioned kindergartens.	The analysis is mainly based on the implications of policy documents, emphasizing practical exploration of the development path of inclusive private preschools and attempts to explore the reasonability and implementation effects of policies.
Wang Haiying (2011)	Interpret the principle of inclusiveness in the "Opinions of the State Council on the Current Development of Preschool Education."	-	Policy content analysis is the main research method.	The implementation of inclusive preschool education at the current stage contributes to achieving social equity through educational equity and breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. It emphasizes that the principle of inclusiveness in preschool education must begin from weak areas such as rural and western regions, be led by the government, and provide various forms of inclusive kindergartens to meet the needs of the people in choosing kindergartens freely.	In-depth analysis of the inclusiveness of inclusive preschools but limited to the analysis based on policy text content, lacking exploration of the practical process.

Zhuang Xiaoman (2012)	Explore the significance of the development of inclusive private kindergartens and the difficulties and coping strategies in the actual development process.	-	Analyze policy content in different regions and adopt quantitative research methods to investigate the development issues of inclusive private kindergartens.	It is necessary to clearly define the connotation of inclusive private kindergartens and widely promote the significance of developing inclusive private kindergartens. It suggests establishing long-term support and management mechanisms, implementing hierarchical and classified support and management, and providing sufficient early education professionals and education research personnel to strengthen the management and supervision of inclusive private kindergartens.	Mainly discuss the development and transformation of inclusive private kindergartens, but do not discuss inclusive public kindergartens.
Jiang Xiaoyue (2014)	Explore the current status of policy formulation for inclusive preschools and propose optimization strategies.	Public-private partnership research, government-market relationship research, and government-non-governmental organization relationship research.	Literature analysis is used to analyze the policy documents of inclusive preschools in various regions, and the case study method is used to consider four factors: economy, region, system, and history, to select typical cases for a further understanding of the policy concept of inclusive private kindergartens.	Rational planning and layout, standardized funding allocation and supervision, stable teachers' teams, strengthened guidance, and improved teaching quality are essential to the systematic institutional design of inclusive private kindergartens to ensure their standardized and quality development.	The analysis mainly focuses on the policy content of inclusive private kindergartens and lacks research on the actual implementation process.
He Hongfan (2017)	Promote the effective implementation of inclusive preschool policies.	Smith's policy implementation process model	Literature analysis is the main method to analyze the content of policy texts combined with theoretical models.	To enhance the clarity and rationality of inclusive preschool policies, improve the implementation capacity of personnel, enhance the recognition and support of the target groups for inclusive preschool policies, and optimize the social environment for the implementation of inclusive preschool policies.	The research process mainly analyzes the content of policy texts, focusing on the process of policy formulation, and discusses the effective implementation of inclusive preschool policies, but lacks research on the actual implementation process.

Wang Haiying(2011)	Exploration of institutional design of inclusive private kindergartens.	Literature analysis is used to analyze existing policies and systems of inclusive private kindergartens.	The institutional design of inclusive private kindergartens should include access, fees, quality standards, and policies for support.	The discussion mainly focuses on the front-end process of policy formulation for inclusive private kindergartens, lacking evaluation and discussion of policy implementation effects.
Wang Shengpi ng(2018)	Investigate the current status, influencing factors, and existing problems of government recognition and development of inclusive private kindergartens in central China, to determine whether local government policies and practices meet the actual needs of inclusive preschool education resource development.	A self-compiled questionnaire is the main research tool and a combination of questionnaire survey and interviews is used. The study focuses on 240 inclusive private kindergartens in the central provinces of China to conduct field research on the current status of local government development of inclusive private kindergartens.	The government should establish a unified provincial-level evaluation standard for the quality of inclusive private kindergartens, improve the proportion and weight of process quality indicators in the evaluation system, establish a reasonable cost-sharing mechanism for inclusive private kindergartens, improve the supervision of subsidy funds, and establish an external support system for promoting the development of inclusive private kindergartens. An internal and external evaluation system should be constructed, and a two-way interactive evaluation feedback mechanism between the government and inclusive private kindergartens should be formed.	The study explores the current status and influencing factors of inclusive private kindergartens, and deduces optimization strategies for policy formulation, but lacks a quantitative analysis of policy implementation of
W. Steven(2008)	Compare and analyze the actual development of inclusive preschool education and policies of various states.	Compare and analyze the policies of inclusive preschools in different regions.	Current public policies for preschool education fail to achieve the expected educational development goals. Later-stage governments should appropriately increase financial subsidies and attract public investment to guarantee the development of inclusive preschool education.	Through comparative analysis, explore the development differences and practical difficulties of inclusive preschool education policies among different regions, and propose optimization suggestions for policy content, but also lacks quantitative analysis of policy implementation effects.

W. Steve Discuss the n Barnett current status t, Mary and future Beth Brdevelopment uder(201 trends of 0) inclusive preschool education in the United States.	-	Literature analysis is used to discuss the current status of inclusive preschool education in the United States from the perspectives of accessibility, affordability, and feasibility, development progress, and social integration.	Emphasize the promotion of the future development of inclusive preschool education in the United States from aspects such as kindergarten administrative structure, personnel preparation, licensing, and standards.	The discussion mainly reflects the impact of policy on the current development of inclusive preschool education and explores policy content but lacks in-depth research on policy implementation effects.
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The above table illustrates that existing domestic and foreign studies have discussed various aspects of universal kindergarten policies, policy development, content, elements of government investment, teacher remuneration, and quality standards. However, the policy research has been limited to the rationality of the textual content or considerations during the formulation and design process. However, further enrichment of research on implementing universal kindergarten policies is needed. Most of the research methods used in the above literature are primarily literature analysis, which focuses on the theoretical exploration of universal kindergarten development, with limited quantitative data on evaluating universal kindergartens' development and policy effects. There is a need to enhance the objectivity of evaluative results. In the study of universal kindergarten policies, scholars analyze various influencing factors independently, lacking comprehensive consideration of the interrelationships between these factors.

Therefore, based on the above limitations, this study will adopt a policy implementation perspective and utilize the balanced scorecard tool to construct an evaluation index system. This research will establish a comprehensive and balanced evaluation framework, encompassing multiple factors and associated indicators, covering

various aspects of policies and critical elements in the implementation process.

This research collects firsthand experiences and perspectives of those directly participating in and impacted by the policies by conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders involved in policy implementation, including universal kindergarten principals, teachers, parents, and government officials. Combined with questionnaire data as support, it aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation outcomes of universal kindergarten policies, ensuring the objectivity and scientific nature of the evaluative results. This will allow for an in-depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Guiyang's universal kindergarten policy. The evaluation results will provide targeted policy adjustments and suggestions for improvement to government departments, further enhancing the implementation outcomes of universal kindergarten policies and expediting the reform of the pre-primary education system.

2.4 Theoretical Foundation

2.4.1 Policy Implementation Theoretical Framework

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) found that government officials and scholars studying policies often overlook the actual implementation effects and focus more on the pre-policy formulation process, resulting in some regulations and policies failing to achieve the expected results. They proposed a theoretical framework for policy implementation aimed at exploring the complexities of the implementation process and factors contributing to successful implementation. This theoretical framework focuses on the policy implementation process, emphasizes the integration of various research findings, and presents a comprehensive conceptual framework to guide future studies.

The framework first considers the statutory attributes of policies, including the policy objectives, intended beneficiaries, and executing organizations, all of which

hold a pivotal position in policy implementation. The theoretical framework for policy implementation considers the influence of socioeconomic changes on the implementation of policies. It examines the changing characteristics and trends of socio-economic background factors such as economic development level, education resource allocation, and social demands during policy implementation, which influence the actual outcomes of policy implementation and help researchers understand the background and impact of policy implementation.

The framework emphasizes the influence of public opinion on policy implementation. Public opinion and engagement are crucial factors in successfully implementing policies for establishing universal kindergartens. These factors include a range of perspectives, including support, disagreements, and inquiries, which shape the trajectory of policy development. In addition, the theoretical framework also considers several elements, including the administrative competence of policy implementers, the process of policy dissemination, and the mechanisms for policy oversight and assessment, to examine the influence on the efficacy of policy implementation thoroughly.

When studying the effectiveness of policy implementation, this theoretical framework highlights the importance of focusing on the macro-level and social variables throughout the policy implementation process. This implies considering the overall operation of policy implementation and the social development context, including socio-economic trends and constraints on government behavior, to deeply understand the complexity of policy implementation and key factors for successful implementation.

In the research on the effectiveness of universal kindergarten policy implementation in China, various factors such as reasonable allocation of pre-primary education resources, coordination mechanisms among government departments, and interest conflicts among stakeholders have a multifaceted impact on the development of universal kindergartens. Hence, the present study focuses on implementing the

universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang, drawing on the research implications of policy implementation theory.

Using the Balanced Scorecard tool, an evaluation system based on the theoretical foundation of policy implementation is created to provide comprehensive guidance for the research on policy implementation. This tool aids in acquiring a more profound understanding of the interplay and consequences of diverse aspects during the policy implementation phase, offering valuable perspectives to enhance the efficacy of policy implementation and foster progressive development.

2.4.2 Framework Construction

Based on the essence of policy implementation theory, the theoretical analysis framework of this study consists of the following three parts: First, the construction of a policy, implementation effectiveness indicator, and system. The study analyzes the policy implementation process in Guiyang's universal kindergartens based on the theoretical framework of policy implementation and the indicator system established in this research for four key areas: funding operation, social value, management system, and sustainable development. The policy implementation effectiveness is evaluated item by item. Assessing the efficacy of policy implementation entails examining many issues that arise during the actual implementation process. These issues are analyzed from the perspective of policy features, socio-economic development, and public perception. The objective is to identify the underlying causes of these difficulties. Thirdly, policy recommendations are proposed based on the previous analysis. Drawing on the process and outcome of policy implementation, more targeted strategies are suggested for optimizing and improving Guiyang's universal kindergarten policy.

2.5 Summary

In summary, the present emphasis in research is on promoting universal kindergartens with a focus on high-quality development. The advancement of the previous educational reforms and economic and social growth have influenced the emphasis on universal kindergartens in China. This shift entailed a move away from a quantity-oriented approach towards an understanding of high-quality education. The change in parental attitudes towards education and the emphasis on the core of educational development highlight the importance of quality education. Now, there is an emphasis on enhancing the educational standards of universal kindergartens.

The establishment of a proactive policy environment and the implementation of fair policy norms are essential factors that significantly contribute to the advancement of universal kindergartens. The growth of universal kindergartens within the public service system is significantly shaped by government policies and the efficacy with which they are implemented. Government authorities need to formulate policy measures that are practical and effective based on the actual development status and challenges faced by universal kindergartens. Research in China focuses on developing appropriate fiscal support policies and admission standards for universal kindergartens, providing strong policy support and development guidance.

Guiding private kindergartens to perform successfully is another topic for research. Based on the existing population development policies in China, the development path of universal kindergartens needs to be optimized. More significant support should encourage private kindergartens to transform into universal private kindergartens, further supplementing the resources of universal pre-primary education. In the planning and layout of universal kindergartens, universal care services should be developed, promoting the integration of childcare and early education.

In the future, research on developing universal kindergartens in China will increasingly focus on improving educational quality. To accomplish this objective, it is imperative to investigate the implementation of a viable and enduring framework for

teacher training that may augment educators' professionalism and instructional aptitude. Enhancing the educational quality of universal kindergartens may be successfully achieved via the reinforcement of the teaching team and the provision of additional training opportunities and professional assistance.

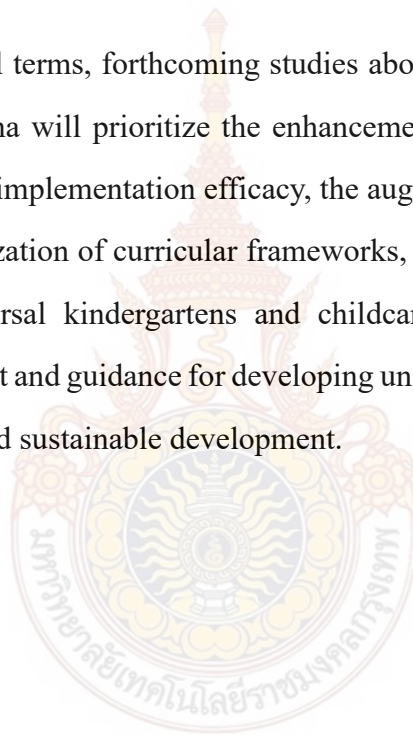
Optimizing the curriculum structure of universal kindergartens will also be a key research area in the future. Through research and practice, we can continuously improve and adjust the curriculum settings of kindergartens to ensure they meet the children's developmental needs and learning characteristics. Furthermore, it is essential to prioritize cultivating children's holistic capacities, including but not limited to creativity, critical thinking, social skills, and many facets of development, to facilitate the advancement of universal pre-primary education on a high-quality trajectory.

Advancing the process of educational legislation is also one of the future research priorities. By establishing a legal foundation and clarifying the rights and obligations of children's education, we can guarantee the development of systemic education reforms and better achieve educational equity. Drawing on the experiences of Western countries, we can expedite the legislative process, enact more comprehensive laws and regulations, and provide legal protection for the development of universal kindergartens. Deepening the government's responsibility is also a key focus of future research. The augmentation of financial investment by the government is imperative to bolster the building and advancement of universal kindergartens while concurrently enhancing the oversight, assessment, and administrative framework. By standardizing the development of kindergartens and providing appropriate support, we can ensure the smooth operation of universal kindergartens. Evaluating the effectiveness of policy implementation is crucial. Through the evaluation of policy outcomes, we can provide a reference for policy optimization and subsequent implementation, helping to promote the task of educational equity more effectively.

Coordinating the planning of pre-primary education and resources such as teaching staff is essential to promote the integrated development of universal

kindergartens and childcare services. By integrating pre-primary education with childcare services, we can better meet the needs of parents and provide comprehensive educational and care services. Research and exploration of local, universal childcare are also necessary, deepening our understanding of the development of local universal kindergartens and providing targeted support and guidance. Through comprehensive planning and in-depth research, we can further enhance the value of the development of universal kindergartens and provide better support for the holistic development of children.

In general terms, forthcoming studies about the advancement of universal kindergartens in China will prioritize the enhancement of educational standards, the assessment of policy implementation efficacy, the augmentation of teacher preparation programs, the optimization of curricular frameworks, and the facilitation of integrated growth within universal kindergartens and childcare services. These studies will provide robust support and guidance for developing universal kindergartens, facilitating educational equity and sustainable development.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This paper selects Guiyang City's universal kindergartens as a specific research case. Firstly, by reviewing relevant literature on universal kindergartens in China and using Citespace software for visual analysis, the development of universal kindergartens in China is understood, including research focus, practical challenges, and future trends. Secondly, through field investigations, interviews, and questionnaire surveys, the attitudes and opinions of various policy implementers in Guiyang City's universal kindergartens are collected, and data on the development of these kindergartens are gathered to analyze policy implementation. Thirdly, based on the above research, the balanced scorecard tool is used to build the corresponding evaluative dimension, and the questionnaire content and interview outline are appropriately designed. The questionnaire and interview data are analyzed as a whole, and finally, an evaluation of the Guiyang universal kindergarten policy implementation process is obtained. This paper's structure and writing logic follow the order of "Finding problems - theoretical analysis - describing policy implementation status - constructing evaluation dimensions of policy implementation - analyzing evaluation results - proposing strategies", as in the research roadmap shown in Figure 3.1.

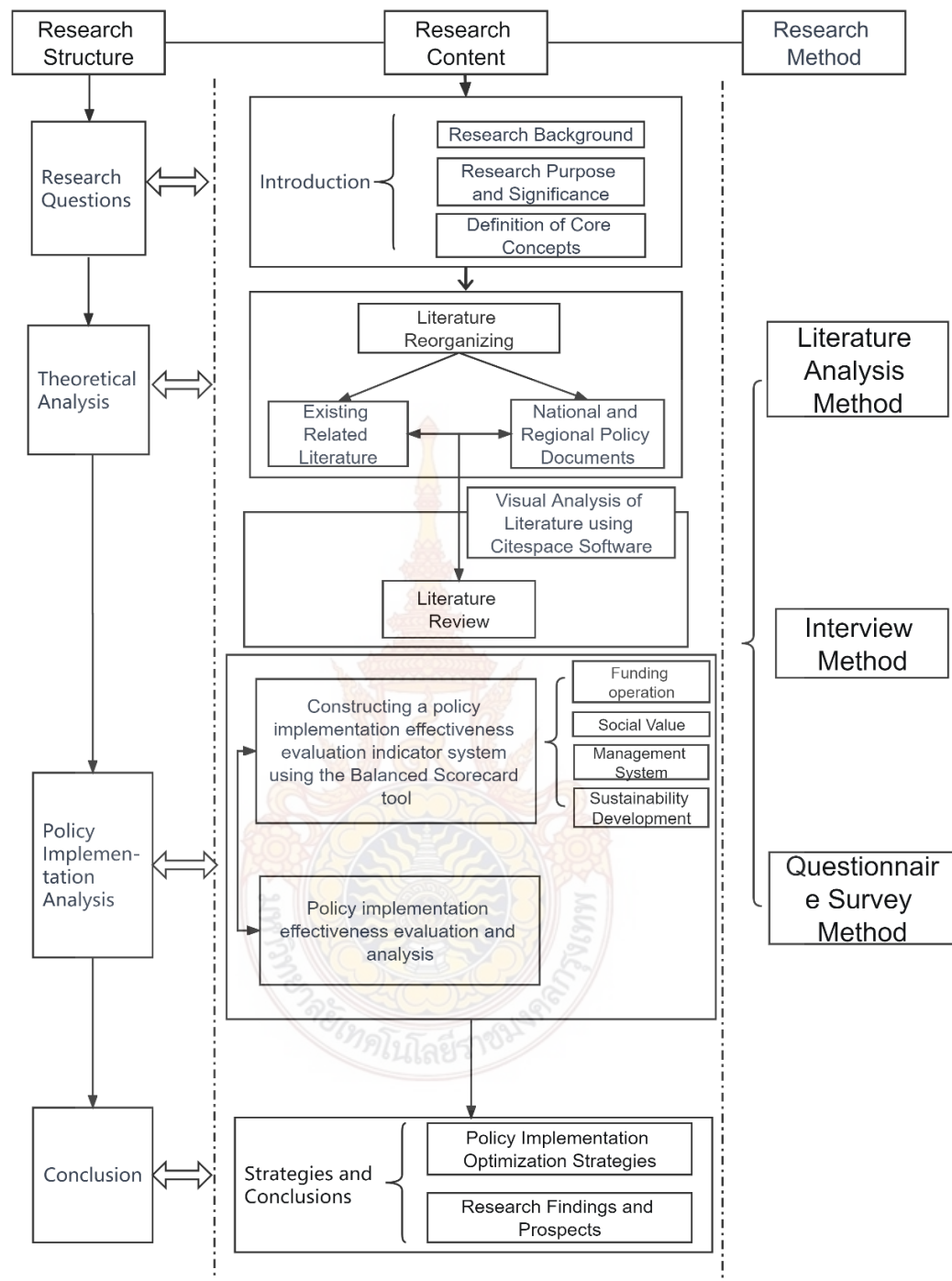


Figure 3.1 Research Design Roadmap

3.2 Research Population and Samples

3.2.1 Population

This study assesses and analyses the implementation of policies related to universal kindergartens in six major urban areas of Guiyang City: the Yunyan District, Nanming District, Guanshanhu District, Huaxi District, Baiyun District, and Wudang District. These six major urban areas are relatively well-developed in Guiyang, accounting for 73% of the city's overall population (Government, 2023), and are currently the critical areas of concern for the construction and development of universal kindergartens in Guiyang, as well as areas in which municipal government departments are taking the lead in policy formulation or implementation. By choosing these areas for the study, we can understand the overall development trend of universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang.

At the same time, the problems in these areas are also quite generalizable and can provide a reference for other areas in Guiyang or other regions in Guizhou Province. Therefore, the people who directly or indirectly participate in or benefit from these policies will serve as the main body of the study, and the implementers and beneficiaries of the policies will reflect the outcome of the policy implementation process from different perspectives.

3.2.2 Samples

This study examines the policy implementation process and the actual implementation outcome, involving the subjects of policy implementation, the subjects of policy management and implementation, and the subjects benefiting from the policy. This study uses a random sampling method to select questionnaire samples, including universal kindergarten directors, teachers, and parents. The sample is guaranteed to be representative of this group. This study aims to broadly view policy implementation's ease, challenges, and potential benefits. Parents, as the beneficiaries of the policy, will likewise influence the overall implementation of the policy. In addition, universal kindergarten principals and teachers were chosen to be questionnaire respondents

because their positions provide insights into the implementation of the policy, with principals focusing primarily on the feasibility and benefits of the policy implementation. In contrast, teachers serve as a key communication channel between the policy and families of young children.

The questionnaire's sample size was determined based on official data from the Guiyang Municipal Bureau of Education, which indicated that there were approximately 10,000 universal kindergarten staff in the city (Education, 2022). According to the guidelines proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), approximately 450 questionnaires were distributed in this study. This sample size was chosen to ensure a reasonable and effective population representation so that the study results would be valid and reliable. The purposeful selection of this sample enriches the study by providing different perspectives on policy understanding and acceptance as well as the potential benefits to teachers.

This study used purposive sampling to select the interview sample to screen out subjects. The research subjects are selected according to the nature of different aspects of policy implementation. This study selects the implementers of the universal kindergarten policy, including specific policy implementers, those in education departments at all levels, and finance departments. Second, regarding policy management and implementation subjects, universal kindergartens are the main background of policy implementation, so the directors of universal kindergartens are selected as interview subjects.

3.3 Research Instrument

1. Interview Method: The interview is a research-oriented communication process where the researcher seeks insights and perspectives from the participants by asking questions. It helps construct a suitable theoretical framework for the study and gathers deeper information data (Dang & Wang, 2002). In this thesis, a semi-structured

interview guide titled "Interview Outline on the Implementation of Universal Pre-primary Education Policies in Guiyang City" was designed based on the content and evaluation indicators of policy performance. Semi-structured interviews offer more flexibility in the data collection process, providing the interviewees with greater freedom of expression (Kallio et al., 2016). Thus, semi-structured interviews aid the researcher in this study to enrich interview data during the policy implementation of universal kindergartens. This allows the researcher to analyze policy implementation issues in-depth and make more effective recommendations.

2. Questionnaire Survey Method: The questionnaire survey method involves the researcher designing standardized questionnaires based on the research theme and distributing them to specified research subjects. The collected data are then organized and analyzed statistically to obtain research results (Zheng, 2014). This method allows researchers to gather quantitative data and obtain information on attitudes, attributes, and other factors (Chen et al., 2015). In this study, the researcher employed the questionnaire survey method to achieve the research objectives regarding implementing universal pre-primary education policies in Guiyang City.

The questionnaire method was used to obtain the thoughts and feelings of multiple subjects who implement, manage, or benefit from the universal kindergarten policy in this study. Simultaneously, the questionnaire data can be analyzed quantitatively to support the implementation of the Balanced Scorecard. This will help derive the specific proportion of each indicator and the extent of mutual influence. Such an analysis will provide more intuitive data support for the subsequent optimization of the universal kindergarten policy.

3. Literature Analysis Method: According to the research objectives of this thesis, the CNKI was searched with "universal kindergarten" as the subject term of unlimited years, and invalid literature such as "conference", "newspaper", "books," and "academic journals" were removed after the manual screening. After manually screening and removing invalid literature such as "conference", "newspaper", "results",

"books," and "academic journals", the literature was exported and organized in Refworks format and then visualized with the help of Citespace software.

After exporting and organizing the literature such as "Refworks", "Books," and "Academic Journals" in Refworks format, the literature was visualized by Citespace software, and combined with the knowledge map of keywords, the trend of the number of articles issued and the policy documents of universal kindergartens, we analyzed the background of the development of universal kindergartens in China. The history of the research, as well as the trend of the research in the future, will form a systematic understanding of the development of universal kindergartens. At the same time, it also analyzes the policy documents related to universal kindergartens issued by the state and the region, as well as the data statistics and other information.

3.4 Data Collection

This study collected data from interviews and questionnaires. To collect interview data, the study was conducted in the six main urban areas of Guiyang City that have been previously mentioned. Representative kindergartens in the previously mentioned regions will provide 3 government officials and 3 kindergarten principals as interviewees. The interviews were conducted on-site and online to provide interviewees with flexible options and reduce psychological pressure. Different interview data from various participants were encoded based on the questions and the sequence of interviews, facilitating the organization of interview materials. The encoding followed the format of "Interview Sequence - Interviewee Type - Question Number." The government officials and kindergarten principals were represented by "G" and "K," respectively. For example, the response from the third interviewed government official to the first question was coded as "3-G-Q1." In contrast, the response from the first interviewed kindergarten principal to the third question was coded as "1-K-Q3."

In order to collect data from the questionnaire, the Likert (1932) scale method was used. The scale has five levels from 1 to 5 to measure the respondent's perception of the views expressed. The questionnaire focused on three main groups: kindergarten principals, teachers, and parents of kindergarten children, with the help of software for online surveys. Considering the different roles of these respondents in the development of universal pre-primary education, two types of questionnaires were designed: "Questionnaire on Evaluation of Policy Implementation from the Perspective of Kindergarten Principals and Teachers", and "Questionnaire on Feedback on Policy Implementation for Parents of Universal Kindergarten Children in Guiyang City". These questionnaires contribute to a more comprehensive and in-depth investigation and analysis of the whole process of implementation, execution, and outcome of the universal kindergarten policy.

3.5 Content Validity and Reliability

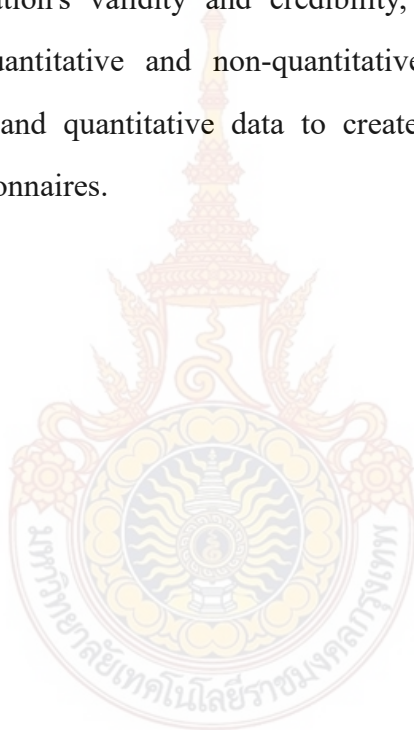
The validity and credibility of the data are crucial in determining the study's results.

To ensure the suitability of interviewees for this study, this study first considered the selection of interviewees from the point of view of interview data and selected government officials and principals who have practical experience in implementing and managing universal kindergarten policies and have a high level of personal competence.

The questionnaire data was analyzed using SPSS software. To ensure the credibility of the questionnaire data, the researcher developed the questionnaire based on the subject-object. This will ensure that the questionnaire's content matches the subject's characteristics. Moreover, experts validated the questionnaire content before formal distribution and collection to ensure its scientific and rational nature. SPSS software was used to test the reliability and validity and ensure that Cronbach's alpha

is greater than 0.6 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Subsequently, the questionnaire data was processed using SPSS software and analyzed for mean and standard deviation using descriptive statistics.

Considering the construction of the Balanced Scorecard index system, the researcher ensured the credibility of the research data from the design and application of the index system. To ensure the objectivity and scientific validity of the indicators, the researcher carefully selected and constructed indicators based on their content. To guarantee the evaluation's validity and credibility, the researcher considered the characteristics of quantitative and non-quantitative data sources, systematically applying qualitative and quantitative data to create the indicator system through interviews and questionnaires.



CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS RESULT

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

4.1.1 Frequency Analysis, Principals and Teachers, Universal Kindergartens Questionnaire

As Tallaksen and Laaha (2023) mentioned, frequency analysis is commonly employed, especially in survey research. The application is highly efficient in processing aggregated data, mainly when the data files are of substantial size.

Table 4.1 Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	46	17.6	17.6	17.6
	Female	215	82.4	82.4	100.0
	Total	261	100.0	100.0	

Most of the participants in the study were female, 215 individuals, which accounts for 82.4% of the total respondents. The proportion of male individuals amounts to 17.6%, 46 individuals.

Table 4.2 Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	31-35	71	27.2	27.2	27.2
	36-40	131	50.2	50.2	77.4
	41 and above	59	22.6	22.6	100.0
	Total	261	100.0	100.0	

The age group with the highest representation among respondents is the 36-

40-year-old category, comprising 131 individuals (50.2%). Conversely, the individuals aged 41 and above have 59 respondents (22.6%).

Table 4.3 Educational Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	College	78	29.9	29.9	29.9
	Undergraduate	155	59.4	59.4	89.3
	Postgraduate and above	28	10.7	10.7	100.0
	Total	261	100.0	100.0	

Regarding educational background, a significant proportion of participants, 155 individuals (59.4%), have undergraduate degrees. This is closely followed by 78 respondents (29.9%) with college degrees. Notably, 28 responders, accounting for 10.7% of the total, possess postgraduate and higher degrees.

Table 4.4 Working Time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2 to 3 years	21	8.0	8.0	8.0
	4 to 5 years	77	29.5	29.5	37.5
	More than 5 years	163	62.5	62.5	100.0
	Total	261	100.0	100.0	

The bulk of respondents in this research, 163 individuals (62.5%), had reported having worked for more than 5 years. In comparison, groups of 4 to 5 years and 2 to 3 years account for 77 (29.5%) and 21 (8%).

4.1.1.2 Reliability Test

Table 4.5 Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.959	.956	51

During the administration of the reliability test using SPSS, it was seen that all the Cronbach's Alphas for the questions about each variable exceeded the threshold of 0.7, with a calculated Cronbach's Alpha of 0.959. Hence, all the variables utilized in this study possess utility and are deemed appropriate.

4.1.2 Frequency Analysis Based on Parents in Universal Kindergartens Questionnaire

Table 4.6 Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	93	46.0	46.0	46.0
	Female	109	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	202	100.0	100.0	

Most of the participants in the study were female, 109 individuals, which accounts for 54.0% of the total respondents. Male individuals amount to 46.0%, 93 individuals.

Table 4.7 Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25-30	59	29.2	29.2	29.2
	31-35	93	46.0	46.0	75.2
	36-40	35	17.3	17.3	92.6
	41 and above	15	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	202	100.0	100.0	

The age group with the highest representation among respondents was the 31–35-year-old category, consisting of 93 individuals (46.0%). Conversely, the group of individuals aged 41 and above is the least, with 15 respondents (7.4%).

Table 4.8 Educational Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High school or secondary school	39	19.3	19.3	19.3
	Junior college	49	24.3	24.3	43.6
	Undergraduate	98	48.5	48.5	92.1
	Postgraduate and above	16	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Total	202	100.0	100.0	

Regarding educational background, a significant proportion of participants, 98 individuals (48.5%), have undergraduate degrees. They are followed by 49 respondents (24.3%) with junior college degrees. A mere 16 responders, 7.9%, possess postgraduate or higher degrees.

Table 4.9 Length of Time Children Have Been in Kindergarten

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 year and less	32	15.8	15.8	15.8
	1 and a half to 2 years	97	48.0	48.0	63.9
	2 to 3 years	73	36.1	36.1	100.0
	Total	202	100.0	100.0	

The bulk of respondents in this research, 97 individuals (48.0%), reported having their children in kindergarten for one and a half to two years. In comparison, the groups of two to three years and one year and less account for 73 (36.1%) and 32 (15.8%) of the total.

4.1.2.1 Reliability Test

Table 4.10 Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.956	.953	49

Using the reliability test SPSS, all the Cronbach's Alphas for the questions about each variable exceeded the threshold of 0.7, with a calculated Cronbach's Alpha of 0.956. Hence, it can be inferred that all the variables utilized in this study possess utility and are deemed appropriate.

4.2 Inferential Statistics

4.2.1 Regression Analysis, Principals and Teachers in Universal Kindergartens

Regression analysis utilizes a mathematical model to illustrate the associations between the independent factors and the dependent variables in a simplified manner (Ren et al., 2023). Regression analysis examined the association between each aspect and the research model. The dependent variable in this study was policy effectiveness.

Table 4.11 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.922 ^a	.849	.847	.31274

Table 4.12 ANOVA^a

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	140.993	4	35.248	360.393	.000 ^b
	Residual	25.038	256	.098		
	Total	166.031	260			

a. Dependent Variable: Policy Effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainable Development, Funding Operation, Social Value, Management System

Table 4.13 Coefficients^a

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.098	.096		1.023	.307
	Funding Operation	.249	.025	.280	9.785	.000
	Social Value	-.013	.024	-.016	-.559	.577
	Management System	.597	.025	.683	23.594	.000
	Sustainable Development	.131	.025	.155	5.273	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Policy Effectiveness

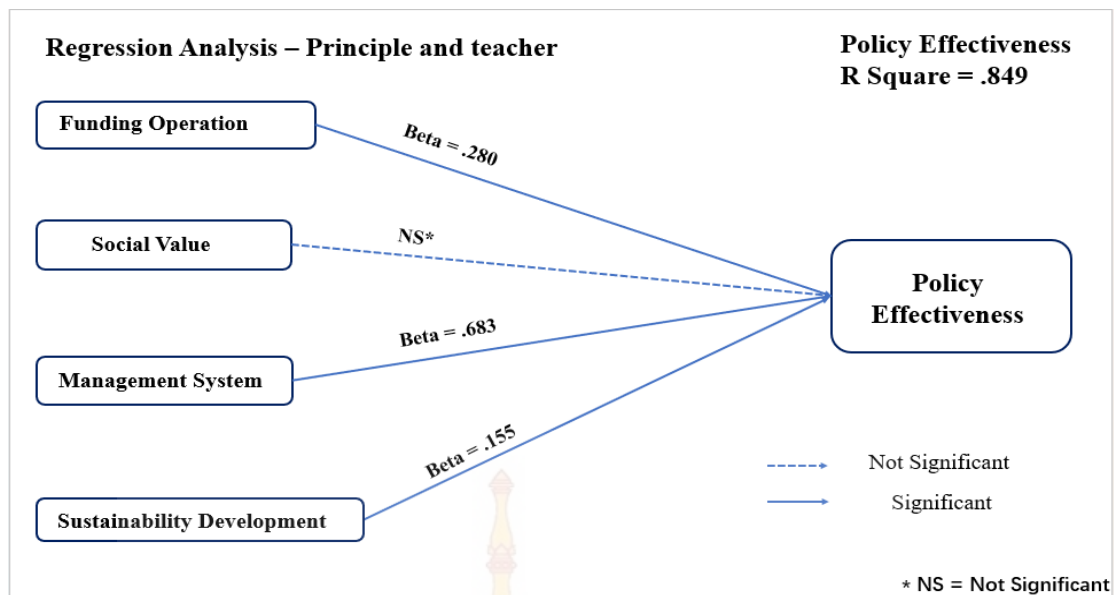


Figure 4.1 Regression Analysis – Principle and Teacher

The model summary indicates that the collective independent variables can account for 84.9% of the variance observed in the dependent variable, policy effectiveness (R Square = 0.849). In the analysis of variance (ANOVA) table, the significance value (sig.) is reported as 0.000. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, as the significance value is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05.

In the table of Coefficients^a, the independent variable of social value (sig. = 0.577) does not significantly affect the dependent variable of policy effectiveness. Both variables' significance values are more than or equal to 0.05. The independent variables of funding operation (sig. = .000) and sustainability development (sig. = .000) exhibit significant positive effects on the dependent variable policy effectiveness. Both independent variables have a significance level of less than .05, with beta coefficients of 0.280 and 0.155, respectively. Among the variables examined, it was found that the management system ($p < .001$) exhibited the most substantial positive impact on the dependent variable, policy effectiveness ($\beta = 0.683$).

4.2.2 Regression Analysis, Parents in Universal Kindergartens

Table 4.14 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.923 ^a	.851	.848	.31585
a. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainable Development, Funding Operation, Management System, Social Value				

Table 4.15 ANOVA^a

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	112.634	4	28.159	282.259	.000 ^b
	Residual	19.653	197	.100		
	Total	132.287	201			

a. Dependent Variable: Policy Effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainable Development, Funding Operation, Management System, Social Value

Table 4.16 Coefficients^a

Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.181	.111		1.629	.105
	Funding Operation	.141	.027	.162	5.326	.000
	Social Value	.148	.029	.177	5.151	.000
	Management System	.666	.029	.756	23.194	.000
	Sustainable Development	.001	.029	.001	.042	.967

a. Dependent Variable: Policy Effectiveness

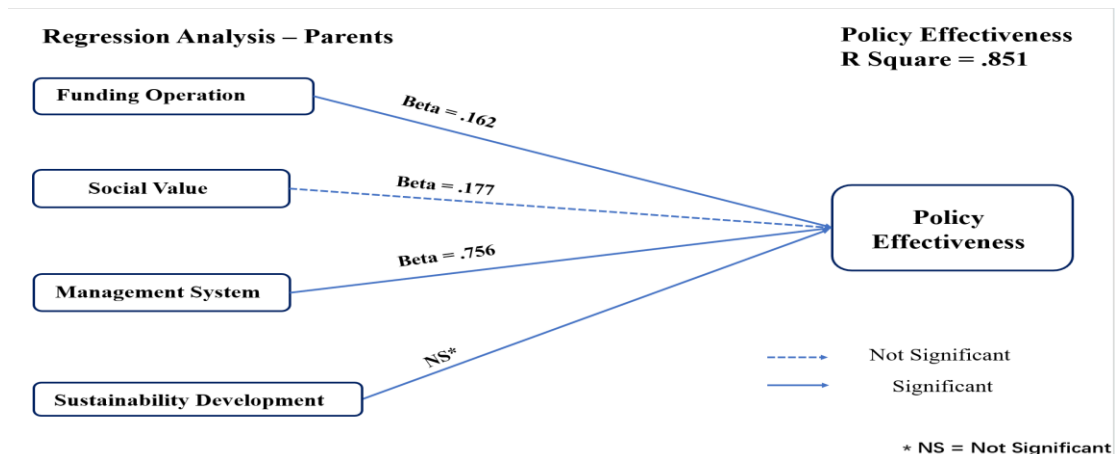


Figure 4.2 Regression Analysis – Parents

The summary model indicates that the collective independent variables can account for 85.1% of the variance observed in the dependent variable of policy effectiveness (R Square = 0.851). In the analysis of variance (ANOVA) table, the significance value (sig.) is reported as 0.000. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, as the significance value is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05.

Coefficients^a, the independent variable of sustainable development (sig. = 0.967), does not significantly affect the dependent variable of policy effectiveness. This is because both variables' significance values are more than or equal to 0.05. The independent variables of funding operation (sig. = .000) and social value (sig. = .000) exhibit significant positive effects on the dependent variable, policy effectiveness. This is supported by the fact that both independent variables have a significance level of less than 0.05, with beta coefficients of 0.162 and 0.177, respectively. Among the variables examined, the management system ($p < .001$) exhibited the most substantial positive impact on the dependent variable, policy effectiveness ($\beta = 0.756$).

4.3 Interview Data Analysis

In this chapter, the author interviews three Guiyang City universal kindergarten government staff and three universal kindergarten principals through the online method to obtain their views on the implementation of universal kindergarten policy and to help the researcher establish a more scientific and objective understanding of the effectiveness of the current Guiyang City universal kindergarten policy implementation in practice.

4.3.1 The Balance Between Financial Subsidies for Universal Kindergartens, Actual Construction, and Development Expenditures Needs Further Optimization

Guiyang City's universal kindergarten policy provides support and assistance for developing universal kindergartens through financial subsidies in the development process. In the policy implementation process, organizers of universal kindergartens have faced a series of challenges and reflections, among which the balance between financial subsidies, actual construction, and development expenditures is fundamental.

Due to the developmental trends of universal kindergartens, more and more private kindergartens are gradually transforming into universal private kindergartens. This change, like kindergartens, requires private kindergartens to change from for-profit to non-profit, accepting the government's pricing standards. Initially, many directors of universal kindergartens were concerned that this pricing change would have a negative impact on the development of the kindergartens. This was because the implementation of the universal policy is usually accompanied by a reduction in tuition fees, which directly affects the financial situation of the kindergartens and their future development plans. The interviews revealed that the primary consideration of universal private kindergarten directors at the beginning of the transition of their kindergartens was the impact of lower tuition fees on the development of the kindergartens.

“Sometimes the financial support may not be sufficient to meet the actual development needs of universal private kindergartens, resulting in some kindergartens facing financial pressure to provide high-quality pre-primary education services. (3-K-Q7)” The heads of kindergartens have some concerns about policy changes and price adjustments, as they need to maintain the operation of their kindergartens within the price range set by policy and consider how to provide adequate financial support for quality development in their kindergartens. Uniform pricing brings more challenges to the development of universal private kindergarten governments. Administrators must think about how to comply with the government's criteria for recognizing universal kindergartens in terms of teaching quality and other aspects while scientifically balancing the needs of kindergartens' actual construction and development.

Contiguous with the current policy implementation, the Guiyang municipal government has recognized the problem of balancing financial subsidies with actual construction and development expenditures. Therefore, special funds and subsidies are needed to develop universal pre-primary education to support the development of universal kindergartens. However, as the overall economic level of society rises and the demand for education increases, the existing financial subsidies may not be able to meet the actual construction and development needs of universal kindergartens and private universal kindergartens.

Private universal kindergartens may rely more on the government's support to provide high-quality pre-primary education. Interviews revealed that there is currently a difference in the "per pupil subsidy" between public and private universal kindergartens in Guiyang. "Compared to universal private kindergartens, universal public kindergartens can receive per-pupil subsidies provided by the government, which greatly provides more persistent financial security for the development of the campus. (3-G-Q7)" This difference in subsidies can create survival challenges for universal private kindergartens, and in the long term, does not contribute to Guiyang City's goal of pursuing an improvement in the overall quality of teaching and learning

in universal kindergartens and can create pressure on universal private kindergartens to survive and develop.

4.3.2 Capacity for Collaborative Work Among Government Departments Needs to Be Improved

In policy implementation by government departments at all levels, synergies between departments impact the effectiveness and success of policy implementation. In Guiyang City, various government departments are committed to promoting universal kindergartens and providing affordable, high-quality pre-primary education services.

"In the implementation of universal kindergarten policy, although all departments have formulated relevant policies to support the construction and development of universal kindergartens, in the implementation of the policy, there may be an interdepartmental overlap of responsibilities. Departments are not timely in clarifying the responsibilities and follow-up, so delineating the division of labor and responsibilities between the various departments in Guiyang City needs to be further clarified and explored. In building universal kindergartens, the division of labor and responsibilities between various government departments in Guiyang City still needs further clarification and exploration. (1-G-Q7)"

The interview data shows that it is evident in implementing Guiyang City's universal kindergarten policy. However, all government departments have issued relevant policies to support universal kindergartens. These policies may not have stipulated the specific responsibilities of each department in the construction and management of kindergartens, which has led to an unclear division of responsibilities in the work and implementation of universal kindergartens and the possibility of crossover and overlap between different departments.

Due to unclear responsibilities, when problems arise, various departments cannot carry out timely follow-up and resolution. For example, a universal kindergarten may have problems with its safety facilities. However, there is no way for the relevant

departments to determine which department should be responsible for solving the problem, resulting in the problem not being solved promptly and failing to safeguard young children's need for quality preschool education. The ability of government departments to work together is weak, and government departments spend more time on coordination and communication in the policy implementation process than on solving practical problems and promoting kindergarten development, thus affecting the effectiveness of implementing the universal kindergarten policy.

4.3.3 Lack of Quality Teachers in Universal Private Kindergartens

Talent is one of the key elements in the development of the education sector, especially in kindergarten education, where the teaching quality directly impacts children's growth and the quality of education. However, in view of the current development in Guiyang City, there is an obvious challenge: Universal private kindergartens are facing difficulties in attracting and training high-quality teachers. This problem involves several aspects, including teachers' academic qualifications, professionalism, social status, and salary levels.

"However, judging from the current development in Guiyang City, most pre-primary teachers are graduates from specialized colleges and universities, and a minimal number of undergraduate graduates will choose to enter kindergartens, especially universal kindergartens, for employment. This results in the fact that the quality of the teaching in most universal kindergartens, especially private kindergartens, cannot be guaranteed, and the teachers' academic qualifications and professionalism need to be further upgraded, which poses a challenge to the provision of high-quality universal pre-primary education. (2-K-Q13)" This has resulted in an insufficiently diversified academic structure of the kindergarten teachers and a relatively low level of teacher qualifications. This constrains providing high-quality universal pre-primary education, as teachers with higher academic qualifications have a richer knowledge of educational theory and practical experience in education.

According to the interviews, “First of all, the status of the teachers is crucial to the quality of kindergarten education. In Guiyang City, universal kindergarten teachers have a low salary, while in society, pre-primary teachers have a stereotypical image, and their social status in the community is not high. For the quality of the teaching to improve, there is a certain degree of difficulty, leading to fewer pre-primary teaching resources and failure to achieve the goal of universal kindergarten teaching quality improvement (1-K-Q14)”.

The status of the teachers is crucial to the quality of kindergarten education. Currently, the salary level of universal kindergarten teachers in Guiyang City is relatively low, which is not in line with their pay and professional requirements. At the same time, society has a stereotypical understanding of kindergarten teachers, which lowers their social status and increases the difficulty of improving the quality of the teaching. Few people are willing to join this field, and there is a high turnover of teachers, which is not conducive to the quality of teaching in universal kindergartens and the sustainable development of kindergartens.

4.3.4 Ways of Publicizing the Policy on Universal Kindergartens to Be Further Expanded

Providing high-quality pre-primary education during the current phase has been essential for the Government and society. To meet families' demand for quality pre-primary education, the relevant government departments in Guiyang City have adopted various policy measures, including supporting and promoting universal kindergartens. However, despite the government's commitment to formulating these policies to improve the quality and accessibility of pre-primary education, it often faces problems in the actual policy implementation, namely, that the avenues of policy dissemination need to be improved. There is inadequate publicity and relatively low parental recognition of universal kindergartens, which inadvertently impacts the actual effectiveness of policy implementation.

"First of all, from the perspective of parents of young children, many

parents are limited by their cultural literacy and social class. There is no standardized understanding of the relevant information on the policy of universal kindergartens. Parents cannot accurately and timely understand the content of the relevant policies on universal kindergartens. Parents cannot understand the corresponding systemic changes or fee adjustments made according to the policy adjustments, which causes certain difficulties for the normal work of our universal kindergartens. (1-G-Q6)" From the perspective of parents of young children, many parents may be limited by their own cultural literacy and social class and lack a standardized way to obtain relevant information about the policy of universal kindergartens. This prevents them from understanding the content of the universal kindergarten policy accurately and promptly. As a result, in the actual operation and development of universal kindergartens, the changes in the system or fee adjustments made by the policy adjustments are difficult for many parents to understand, and this has caused certain difficulties in the regular operation of universal kindergartens.

At the same time, "despite the many positive aspects of the policy itself, many parents and directors may not be sufficiently aware of the specific content and potential benefits of the policy, and may have a stereotypical understanding of the current state of the development of universal kindergartens, believing that the quality of teaching in universal kindergartens is at a disadvantage when compared to private kindergartens and that it is only the price-oriented approach that motivates parents to choose universal kindergartens, and they do not have a high degree of recognition of universal kindergartens, and do not realize that the government pays great attention to the improvement of teaching quality in the process of promoting the development of universal kindergartens. (2-K-Q6)" Despite the many positive aspects of the policy itself, many parents and kindergarten directors may not be sufficiently aware of its specifics and potential benefits. They may have a stereotypical understanding of the current development of universal kindergartens and believe that the teaching quality of these kindergartens is at a disadvantage compared to private kindergartens. Parents may

choose universal kindergartens solely for price considerations and may not have a high level of understanding of these kindergartens. They may not be aware that the government focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning in promoting the development of universal kindergartens.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusion

Applying a Balanced Scorecard framework, this study explored the effects of different factors on implementing the universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang City through a questionnaire to three groups: principals of universal kindergartens, teachers, and parents. Three government workers and three universal kindergarten principals were interviewed to gain insights into their understanding and views on implementing the current universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang City from the perspective of the policy implementers during the policy implementation process.

This study aims to address two research questions:

RQ1: With the tool of the Balanced Scorecard, what factors should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of policy implementation?

RQ2: Based on the actual development of universal kindergartens in Guiyang, what strategies should be adopted to enhance the effectiveness of the current policy implementation?

Based on the questionnaire and interview data collected in this study, two research answers were obtained:

A1: In the framework of the Balanced Scorecard, the focus should be on the "Management System" dimension to evaluate the effectiveness of policy implementation.

A2: Based on the actual implementation of the universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang City, the following four strategies are proposed:

- a. Optimizing the financial support and development of universal kindergartens to improve the quality and sustainability of pre-primary education.

- b. Improving the mechanism for monitoring and assessing government work.
- c. Establishment of a mechanism to standardize the training and employment of teachers in universal kindergartens and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- d. Broaden the publicity channels to guide the change of ideological concepts.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Discussion of Questionnaire

From Figure 9, Funding Operation (0.280), Management System (0.683), and Sustainable Development (0.155) significantly affect Policy Effectiveness. From Figure 10, Funding Operation (0.162), Social Value (0.177), and Management System (0.756) have a significant effect on Policy Effectiveness. Comparing the two graphs, it can be concluded that both principals, teachers, and parents of children believe that the management system's rationality and applicability will significantly affect "Policy Effectiveness" in implementing universal kindergarten policy.

Principals, teachers, and parents of universal kindergartens pay attention to the "management system" in implementing the policy of universal kindergartens because the policy itself is the standard for development. In the implementation process, the implementation outcome is closely related to the knowledge level and rationality of the policy. Through regression analysis of the questionnaire survey results of these three groups, the "management system" significantly impacts the policy implementation outcome. However, this study is not only based on the policy text and interview data but also adds quantitative methods questionnaires to collect the ideas of different subjects in the policy implementation process in different areas to provide quantitative data reference. This makes the influence or importance of the management system on

policy implementation more comprehensible and persuasive. Therefore, the strategies proposed in this study to improve the implementation outcome of Guiyang City's universal kindergarten policy are supported by the relevant government departments and the optimization and adjustment of the management system of the universal kindergartens in the direction of development.

5.2.2 Discussion of Interview

In the six interviews, the data collected shows that the overall implementation of the universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang City is reasonable and developing positively. However, there are still some issues to be addressed. First, balancing financial subsidies and actual construction and development expenditures is a crucial challenge in implementing Guiyang City's universal kindergarten policy.

The implementation of the universal policy is usually accompanied by a reduction in tuition fees, which directly impacts the financial status of universal kindergartens and their future development and construction plans. Although the government has set up special funds and subsidies to support the development of universal kindergartens, there is still a lack of financial support, especially for universal private kindergartens, where directors need to maintain the overall operation of the kindergartens within the price range set by the government and ensure the provision of high-quality pre-primary education services.

At the same time, the difference in per-pupil subsidies between universal public and private kindergartens has exacerbated the survival challenges of private kindergartens and challenged the goal of improving the overall quality of teaching and learning in universal kindergartens. Similar conclusions were reached in Jiang's (2014) study. She argues that the "per pupil subsidy" is an institutionalized way of subsidizing the development of universal private kindergartens with more long-term development potential and that it encourages the relevant departments to invest in funding for universal private kindergartens and to realize the transition to the provision of "per pupil subsidy". To help universal private kindergartens to transform better.

As mentioned in Mao (2017), there are differences between universal private kindergartens and universal public kindergartens regarding institutional protection. How the relevant government departments can adjust the existing interest pattern between the two major universal kindergartens and provide an appropriate resource allocation system can help the universal private kindergartens to develop better. Overall, the situation in Guiyang City reflects, to some extent, the common problems in implementing universal kindergarten policies across the country. Comparing it to other studies can help us understand the root causes of these problems and how different places might find solutions. This highlights even more how crucial it is to have institutional protection, financial support, and per-pupil subsidies in universal kindergarten policy, as well as how important it is to conduct further studies and develop existing policies.

The ability of government departments to work together needs to be further improved. Various government departments in Guiyang City may have overlapping duties and unclear responsibilities in policy implementation, resulting in problems arising in the actual development of universal kindergartens that cannot be resolved promptly, which affects the effectiveness of policy implementation. Government departments spend more time on coordination and communication, and the effectiveness of solving practical problems and promoting the development of kindergartens is affected. This problem is similar to the findings of Ren and Bian (2021). She argues that relevant government departments have actively responded to and supported the development and constructing of universal kindergartens. However, the development of inter-departmental working mechanisms is still immature, which affects the implementation of the universal kindergarten policy to a certain extent. As a result, government departments spend more time on coordination and communication than on effectively solving practical problems and promoting the development of kindergartens. Although they arrive at similar findings, their findings are based on an analysis and discussion of the texts of policies related to universal kindergartens issued

by various provinces in China. They did not choose to analyze the actual implementation of universal kindergarten policies in more depth. This study, however, is based on analyzing government departments' policies at different levels and combines questionnaire and interview data to obtain this finding, which is more convincing.

Zheng and Zhu (2021) argue that there are differences in the interests of various government departments in the process of universal kindergarten development. It is not easy to get a consistent opinion on the process of policy implementation, which affects the final implementation of universal kindergarten policy effectiveness and progress. The area they chose for their study was the exploration of universal kindergartens in one of the particular hardship areas in Liupanshui City, Guizhou Province. The comparison reveals that Guiyang City, the capital city of Guizhou Province, is at the forefront of economic development in the province. However, in implementing the universal kindergarten policy, the collaboration between relevant government departments in the special hardship areas of Liupanshui City and Guiyang City could be further improved. The ability to collaborate among departments has a significant impact on the actual implementation of the policy. It is a key point that Guiyang City and Guizhou Province need to consider and optimize the construction and development of universal kindergartens in the future.

In addition, the quality of teachers is another challenge. At present, among the universal kindergartens, especially the universal private kindergartens, most of the pre-primary teachers come from specialized colleges and universities due to their funding level. The rate of bachelor's degree graduates taking up jobs in universal kindergartens is low, resulting in the insufficiently diversified academic structure of the universal kindergarten teachers and the relatively low academic level of teachers, which has limited the ability to provide high-quality universal pre-primary education.

At the same time, universal kindergarten teachers have relatively low salary levels and low social status, which makes it challenging to attract and train high-quality teachers and limits the quality of the teachers. Like Zhao and Sun (2019), universal

kindergartens are limited by funding. Universal private kindergartens are thus unable to provide teachers with quality salary packages. In addition, the social status of universal pre-primary teachers in Guiyang City is not high. This makes it challenging to attract and train high-quality teachers, limiting the quality improvement of the teaching force. Lin (2017) found that some traditional stereotypes limit universal kindergarten teachers, and society and parents hold prejudices against teachers. As a result, some kindergarten teachers have a low sense of identity and achievement for their work, which does not provide positive incentives and affects the overall quality of the kindergarten teaching force. Nonetheless, Their findings are based on findings from mining the content of existing relevant policy texts.

In this study, the authors considered the policy content analysis and data collection from kindergarten directors and teachers. Considering that the policy implementation involves several subjects, the authors also took government workers and parents of young children into the policy implementation process as research subjects. This study attempts to collect data from the perspectives of policymakers and implementers, as well as beneficiaries, to provide a more comprehensive research basis for evaluating the implementation outcomes of the universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang City. It also helps the authors deliver more comprehensive and meaningful findings from different standpoints about teachers' optimization in implementing the universal kindergarten policy.

Finally, the interviews found that the government's policy publicity channels must be expanded further. The overall publicity of policies related to universal kindergartens in Guiyang City is better. However, the form of publicity is done by selecting representatives of the parents and in the form of offline publicity.

Many parents are limited by their own cultural literacy and social class. They cannot accurately understand information related to the policy of universal kindergartens, which results in the universal kindergartens' parents' recognition of universal kindergartens being relatively low, affecting the actual implementation of the

policy. In Xuan (2015), it was also noted that the community and parents have a minimal understanding of the policies related to universal kindergartens, and the planning and efforts made by the government in the process of universal kindergarten construction and development are rarely noticed. As a result, the overall implementation of universal kindergarten policies will be constrained, affecting the actual construction and development of universal kindergartens.

On the other hand, Yuan and Fang (2014) mentioned in their study that the government's efforts to publicize the universal kindergarten policy are insufficient. This not only leads to parents not understanding the essence of universal kindergartens but also brings confusion to the development of some universal private kindergarten directors, which greatly reduces the actual outcome of universal kindergartens in the policy implementation process. These scholars agree that policy publicity is essential to successfully implementing the universal kindergarten policy.

With the development of society and the improvement of the economic level, the status of universal kindergarten policy propaganda in Guiyang City has been different relative to the findings of the previously mentioned articles. The relevant government departments in Guiyang City have paid some attention to the policy propaganda of universal kindergartens and occasionally organize policy exchanges between parents and kindergartens. However, a complete publicity system has not yet been formed, and universal kindergartens account for a relatively low proportion of publicity in Guiyang's overall education section. In promoting the policy, the parents of young children, the beneficiaries of such universal kindergartens, will be confused, and the understanding of universal kindergartens is relatively shallow. At the same time, parents cannot find more comprehensive information to promptly increase their understanding of universal kindergartens, which impacts the policy's implementation.

In Guiyang City, the imbalance still exists between financial subsidies for universal kindergartens and actual construction and development expenditures. The ability of government departments to work together needs to be improved, the lack of

high-quality teachers for universal private kindergartens needs to be improved, and the publicity of universal kindergarten policy needs to be further expanded. Therefore, the author proposes the following four recommendations.

5.2.2.1 Optimizing the Financial Support and Construction Development of Universal Kindergartens to Improve the Quality and Sustainability of Pre-primary Education

Universal kindergartens play a vital role in the social and education system. However, Guiyang City has actively provided various policy support in developing and constructing universal kindergartens, setting up special funds and subsidies to support the operation of universal kindergartens. However, with the development of society and the increase in prices, the operating costs of universal kindergartens have also risen, especially because universal private kindergartens are still lacking in "per-pupil subsidies" to supplement the funds, and rely only on tuition fees to support the overall operation of the kindergartens. Therefore, at this stage, Guiyang City's universal kindergarten financial support and the actual construction and development of financial needs must be further balanced and optimized.

Government workers can optimize the existing financial assessment system of universal kindergartens to help ensure that the government's financial subsidies are used most effectively to help maximize the social benefits of universal kindergarten policy, including the analysis of each kindergarten's actual construction needs, taking into account the differences like the public and private kindergartens, and to formulate more knowledgeable and reasonable subsidy standards. This will ensure that the funds can be allocated more targeted to critical areas, such as improving the quality of teacher training, developing more creative educational curricula, and improving school infrastructure.

The government can explore new ways of financing, such as formulating incentive policies, including tax concessions, to encourage all sectors of society to actively participate in the construction and development of universal kindergartens, especially universal private kindergartens, in order to attract more

private capital to invest in the education sector, increase the government's capital reserve in the process of the development of the policy and construction of universal kindergartens, which will help to improve the sustainable development of universal kindergartens and reduce the pressure on the survival and financial operation of universal kindergartens.

Universal kindergartens play a crucial role in Guiyang's education system, and the Government has taken proactive policy initiatives to support their development and construction. However, in the face of the challenges of social development and rising operating costs, the government must continue its efforts to ensure that these kindergartens can provide high-quality educational services and to achieve a more rational allocation of funds and an adequate replenishment of funds by the optimization of the funding assessment system and the exploration of innovative funding channels, to improve the quality and sustainability of education in universal kindergartens, and at the same time to provide high-quality pre-primary education to a broader range of families.

5.2.2.2 Improving the Mechanism for Monitoring and Assessing Government Work

Various government departments are the force for the construction and development of universal kindergartens. However, to ensure that they work in concert and jointly promote the development of the cause of universal kindergartens, it is necessary to establish a more complete mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the government's work.

The government can consider strengthening the construction and optimization of cross-departmental mechanisms in the existing universal kindergarten work mechanism, which can be achieved by holding regular, cross-departmental coordination meetings, establishing a shared information platform, and clarifying the responsibilities and cooperation tasks of each department, in order better to integrate work progress resources, information and decision-making, which will help government

departments work better together, improve work and implementation efficiency, and jointly promote the development of universal kindergartens in Guiyang City.

Government departments should organize regular training for government workers related to universal kindergartens, such as training courses, seminars, and workshops, in order to ensure that government workers have the necessary knowledge and skills to understand better and promote universal kindergarten policies to support better the construction and development of universal kindergartens in Guiyang City.

Government departments can also develop precise assessment mechanisms and adopt specific indicators and targets to measure the performance of each government department in terms of efficacy in implementing the universal kindergarten policy and resource allocation. These measures will help government departments work better together to promote the development of universal kindergartens, thus improving the efficiency and implementation of the government's work in the operation and reform of the universal pre-primary education system.

5.2.2.3 Establishment of A Mechanism to Standardize the Training and Employment of Teachers in Universal Kindergartens and Improvement of the Quality of Teaching and Learning

Today, kindergartens play an important educational role and play a key role in children's intellectual, social, and emotional development. However, to provide high-quality kindergarten education, the professionalism of the teachers has a decisive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and it is crucial to establish a mechanism to standardize the training and employment of teachers in universal kindergartens to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Guiyang's relevant government departments can consider taking advantage of the existing "ASEAN" exchange platforms to carry out international exchange programs in pre-primary education and encourage pre-primary teachers to participate in international training and research to improve their educational level and

global perspective.

In view of the different development conditions of different regions of Guiyang and the actual construction of universal kindergartens, we should rationally deploy pre-primary teacher resources to ensure that each universal kindergarten has a sufficient number and quality of pre-primary teachers to satisfy the demand for quality pre-primary education for young children.

To improve the quality of universal kindergarten teachers, government departments need to innovate and construct an evaluation mechanism for universal kindergarten teachers, optimize the welfare benefits and salary structure, establish the stability of teachers' development, and enhance the attractiveness of kindergarten teachers' careers. The government should try to evaluate the professional quality of universal kindergarten teachers more comprehensively and reasonably by using a more comprehensive range of variables, including parent satisfaction and colleague evaluations, and establish clear promotion and reward mechanisms, scholarships, and academic research programs to motivate kindergarten teachers to improve their professionalism continually. Raise teachers' salaries and provide benefits, such as health insurance, housing support, and support for children's education, to increase the stability and attractiveness of the teaching force and thus build a higher-quality universal pre-primary education teaching force.

5.2.2.4 Broaden the Publicity Channels to Guide the Change of Ideological Concepts

Policy publicity is crucial in promoting the construction of universal kindergartens and guiding changes in ideology. When government departments formulate, publicize, and implement policies on universal kindergartens, the quality and breadth of their publicity efforts directly impact the acceptance and implementation of the policies. To ensure the successful implementation of the policy and to lead the society to change its understanding of pre-primary education, the relevant government departments in Guiyang need to take a series of decisive measures to broaden the

publicity channels.

Government departments can continue to strengthen the initiative of soliciting feedback from parents and principals of universal kindergartens through symposiums, questionnaires, and public hearings during the process of policy formulation to help government departments listen to the voices of all parties at the early stages of policy formulation and during the process of implementation, and to understand the needs and concerns of different subjects in the development of universal kindergartens, so that they can better meet their expectations. This will help ensure the transparency and fairness of the policy-making process and build a broad base of policy support.

Government departments can actively make use of various information media, such as WeChat and short-video platforms, to produce interesting promotional materials, launch educational micro-videos, and organize online interactive activities to publicize the main contents and objectives of the universal kindergarten policy and raise the awareness and recognition of parents of young children of the quality of universal kindergarten education and the mode of kindergarten operation. This emerging mode of information dissemination can quickly convey information on the universal kindergarten policy and attract more people's attention and understanding, thus promoting the smooth implementation of the policy. In addition, the government can build an information-sharing platform for the development of universal kindergartens, which brings together information and resources from the government, schools, society, and families and promotes collaboration and coordination among the principal parties and, at the same time, helps the government better understand the development needs of the main parties for pre-school education, and allocates resources for universal pre-school education in a targeted manner to ensure the efficient use of resources. It helps to break down information silos and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation.

5.3 Implication for Practice

Based on the framework of the Balanced Scorecard tool, a questionnaire was set up to understand the variables that have a significant impact on the implementation of the policy by kindergarten principals, teachers, and parents in Guiyang City, based on the main aspects in Guiyang City's existing policy documents. The study found that the "Management system" has a significant impact on the implementation of universal kindergarten policies in Guiyang City, and this result can help Guiyang municipal government departments improve their understanding of the "Management system" perspective in the process of formulating policies for universal kindergartens in Guiyang City.

This result helps Guiyang municipal authorities pay more attention to the perspective of the "management system" during the subsequent formulation of universal kindergarten policies to formulate more scientific, reasonable, and practical universal kindergarten policies and to help Guiyang municipal universal kindergartens provide more favorable support for the construction and development of universal kindergartens.

Second, this study focuses on the actual economic and social development of Guiyang City in implementing universal kindergarten policies. Guiyang City differs from other economically developed first- and second-tier cities in central or eastern China. The results of this study can provide a reference for the implementation of universal kindergarten policies in other second- and third-tier cities in China, which are relatively slow in economic development, to help such cities optimize or improve the effectiveness of the implementation of local universal kindergarten policies, and to promote the construction and development of universal kindergartens more favorably.

5.4 Recommendation for Future Research

In China, the fundamental purpose of the construction and development of universal kindergartens is to realize equality in education and to ensure that every child, regardless of wealth, class, or gender, enjoys an equal right to education. The effectiveness of developing and constructing universal kindergartens requires attention to both urban and rural situations. In this study, the author selected the universal kindergartens in Guiyang City and varied subjects as the research objects, such as government workers, principals of universal kindergartens, teachers, and parents, and the results of the study are about the implementation effect of the policy of universal kindergartens in Guiyang city.

The author believes that in future research, we can consider choosing Guiyang City and other slow-developing provincial capitals in China to enrich the implementation process of universal kindergartens and the study of rural universal kindergarten policy. To provide relevant government departments with more diversified perspectives, understand the implementation outcomes of universal kindergarten policies, and help government workers be more knowledgeable, targeted, and practical in formulating policies related to the construction and development of universal kindergartens.

In the future, we can consider the different interests of the government, universal kindergartens, and parents of young children, and consider the play of interests in the process of policy formulation and implementation to provide more targeted policies to achieve a higher degree of inclusion and better to realize the quality of pre-primary education for young children and achieve equality of education environment.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Although this study concludes that the "Management system" has a significant impact on the implementation of the universal kindergarten policy in Guiyang City, it also proposes policy optimization strategies in terms of strengthening policy coordination and supervision, establishing a standardized teacher recruitment and training system, improving the quality of teaching, and promoting the implementation and effectiveness of the universal kindergarten policy. However, this study still has some limitations.

First, the sample selected for this study focused on six major urban areas of Guiyang City. With the gradual expansion of the administrative areas under Guiyang's jurisdiction, the sample selection lacks consideration of the new areas, reducing the findings' applicability. In the future, researchers should consider conducting an overall study of Guiyang's newest administrative regions or several cities of the same type to expand the sample size and improve the generalizability of the findings.

Secondly, this study used the interview method to understand the views of relevant government workers and universal kindergarten directors in Guiyang City on the effectiveness of implementing the universal kindergarten policy. However, the author's mastery of the interview method and skills need to be improved, which may have resulted in the author not finding some valuable views promptly during the interview process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Evaluation of Policy Implementation from Principals and Teachers' Perspectives

Dear Principal (Teacher),

Kind regards! Thank you for taking your valuable time to participate in our survey, which aims to understand the effects of the inclusive kindergarten policy in actual implementation and its impact on families and society. Your participation will be of great significance to us in further improving the inclusive kindergarten policy and enhancing the quality of education.

Please fill in the following questionnaire carefully, as your answers will play a vital role in our understanding of the actual situation and effects of the inclusive kindergarten policy. Your answers will be treated confidentially and used only for research purposes. Please base your answers on your experience. We hope your comments and suggestions will help us improve our policy and enhance the quality of early childhood education.

Part 1: Basic Information

1. Gender: ☐ A. male ☐ B. female
2. Age:
3. Educational level: ☐ A. high school or secondary school ☐ B. college
☐ C. undergraduate ☐ D. postgraduate
4. Working time: ☐ A. one year and below ☐ B. 2 to 3 years ☐ C. 4 to 5 years ☐ D. more than 5 years

Part 2: Aims to understand the effectiveness of the implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy (where 1=strongly disagree; 2=commonly disagree; 3=fairly agree; 4=commonly agree; 5=strongly agree)

The funding operation part:

5. The government can provide timely funding for nursery school provision.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

6. It is effective for the government to provide timely incentive grant funding for nursery schools.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

7. The government has provided timely funding for children attending inclusive nursery schools.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

8. The existing fees of inclusive kindergartens are within the price range set by the government.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

9. Existing inclusive kindergartens do not charge any fees other than nursery and childcare fees.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

10. The government focuses on guaranteeing the funding required to implement the policy on inclusive kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

11. The government should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the funding of the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

12. The government's policy on inclusive kindergarten funding is clear and easy to understand.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

13. The funding of inclusive kindergartens has been affected by changes in policy or instability in policy implementation.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

14. The government subsidies for children attending inclusive kindergartens effectively reduce the financial burden on families.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

Social value part:

15. It is aware of the objectives and key elements of the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

16. Inclusive nursery schools have gained a higher social profile and influence.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

17. After implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy, kindergartens can better serve all community sectors.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

18. The current policy of inclusive kindergartens can meet the needs and expectations of parents.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

19. The publicity and promotion of the policy on inclusive kindergartens are sufficiently adequate.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

20. The inclusive kindergarten policy has effectively eliminated the pressure of choosing schools for young children of school age in the city in the current region.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

21. The inclusive kindergarten policy has played a role in the overall development of the early childhood education system.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

22. The implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy has positively impacted the improvement of the quality of national education and the development of human resources.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

23. The policy of inclusive kindergartens has played a positive role in improving the balanced distribution of early childhood education resources.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

24. The quality of early childhood education has improved after the implementation of the policy of inclusive kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

Management system part:

25. The existing inclusive nursery schools have a good system of linking homes and kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

26. The existing inclusive kindergartens have a better philosophy of running a kindergarten.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

27. The cooperation between the government and the community in monitoring and feedback on the policy of inclusive kindergartens is more effective.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

28. The current policy on inclusive kindergartens is less difficult to implement and easier to work with.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

29. The monitoring of the inclusive kindergarten policy is effective.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

30. Regular communication and reporting on the effectiveness of the inclusive kindergarten policy takes place in your area of responsibility.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

31. The government should deepen the sharing of experiences of implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy with other regions or sectors.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

32. The process of implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy is efficient.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

33. The process of implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy has a high degree of fairness.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

34. The government should strengthen cooperation and coordination with relevant departments and stakeholders to promote the implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

35. The capacity and quality of teachers of inclusive kindergartens in implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy need to be enhanced.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

36. The policy of inclusive kindergartens has made better progress in promoting the reform of the kindergarten management system.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

37. The existing policy on inclusive kindergartens has achieved significant results in standardizing the administrative processes of kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

38. Inclusive kindergartens receive regular mentoring from resident public teachers to support the professional development of their teachers.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

39. Inclusive kindergartens can independently organize training activities to meet the professional development needs of teachers.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

Sustainability development part:

40. The implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy has positively affected the long-term sustainability of kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

41. The implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy has made the overall operation of kindergartens more stable.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

42. The government should show the public the results of implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

43. Innovations and improvements have already been made in the process of implementing and managing the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

44. The government should build a platform for information sharing and experience learning in the implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

45. The government should develop risk management measures to ensure the effective implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

46. The capacity and quality of government staff in implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy need to be improved.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

47. The implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy has affected the financial stability and sustainability of kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

48. The inclusive kindergarten policy has promoted the rational allocation and utilization of kindergarten resources.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

49. The policy on inclusive kindergartens has helped to promote the sustainable improvement of kindergartens' internal management and operation mode.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

50. The policy of inclusive kindergartens positively impacts the stability and development of kindergarten teachers.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

51. The policy of inclusive kindergartens can help promote the integration and sharing of resources between kindergartens and society.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

Appendix B
Feedback Questionnaire on Policy Implementation for Parents
in Guiyang City's Inclusive Preschools

Dear Parents,

Kind regards! Thank you for taking your valuable time to participate in our survey, which aims to understand the effectiveness of the policy on inclusive kindergartens in actual implementation and its impact on families and society. Your participation will be of great significance to us in further improving the inclusive kindergarten policy and enhancing the quality of education.

Please fill in the following questionnaire carefully, as your answers will play a vital role in our understanding of the actual situation and effects of the inclusive kindergarten policy. Your answers will be treated confidentially and used only for research purposes. Please base your answers on your experience. We hope your comments and suggestions will help us improve our policy and enhance the quality of early childhood education.

Your participation is essential to our research. Thank you for your support and cooperation!

Part 1: Basic Information

1. Gender: ☐A. male ☐B. female
2. Age:
3. Educational level: ☐A. high school or secondary school ☐B. junior college ☐C. undergraduate ☐D. postgraduate
4. Length of time children have been in kindergarten: ☐A. one year and less ☐B. one and a half to two years ☐C. two to three years

Part 2: Aims to understand the effectiveness of the implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy (where 1=strongly disagree; 2=commonly disagree; 3=fairly agree; 4=commonly agree; 5=strongly agree)

The funding operation part:

5. The government can provide timely grant funding for nursery provision?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

6. Does the government provide timely funding for children attending inclusive nursery schools?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

7. Are the existing fees of inclusive kindergartens within the reasonable range of government prices?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

8. Inclusive kindergartens should not charge any other fees after removing the childcare and nursery school fees.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

9. Should the government focus on guaranteeing the funding required to implement the policy of inclusive kindergartens?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

10. The government subsidy for inclusive kindergarten education reduces your family's financial burden.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

11. The government should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of funding inclusive kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

12. The government's policy on the operation of funds for inclusive kindergartens is clear and easy to understand.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

13. The funding of inclusive kindergartens will be affected by policy

changes or instability in policy implementation.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

Social value part:

14. Understand the aims and key elements of the inclusive nursery policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

15. Inclusive nursery schools have increased their status and influence in society.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

16. After implementing the policy on inclusive kindergartens, kindergartens can better serve all community sectors.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

17. Has the current policy on inclusive kindergartens met your educational needs and expectations?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

18. The publicity and promotion of the policy on inclusive kindergartens are adequate.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

19. The policy on inclusive kindergartens effectively reduces the pressure of choosing schools for young children.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

20. Does the policy of inclusive kindergartens have a positive effect on the development of the overall early childhood education system?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

21. The effect of implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy will have an impact on the improvement of national quality and the development of human resources?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

22. The policy of inclusive kindergartens has played a positive role in improving the balanced distribution of resources for early childhood education.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

23. The overall quality of early childhood education has been improved after the implementation of the policy of inclusive kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

Management system part:

24. The existing inclusive nursery schools have a good system of the home-to-kindergartens contract in place.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

25. Aware of the philosophy of the existing inclusive kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

26. The cooperation between the government and the community in monitoring and feedback on the policy on inclusive kindergartens is more effective.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

27. Implementing the policy on inclusive kindergartens in your area/department is better.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

28. The monitoring of the inclusive kindergarten policy is effective.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

29. The district regularly communicates and reports to kindergartens about the effectiveness of implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

30. The government should deepen the exchange of experience with other regions or departments on implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

31. The implementation process of the inclusive kindergarten policy is

efficient.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

32. The implementation process of the inclusive kindergarten policy has a high degree of fairness.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

33. The government should strengthen the cooperation and coordination with relevant departments and stakeholders to promote the implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

34. The capacity and quality of government staff in implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy needs to be enhanced.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

35. The inclusive kindergarten policy has made progress in promoting the reform of the kindergarten management system.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

36. The existing policy on inclusive kindergartens has achieved significant results in standardizing the administrative processes of kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

37. Has the government's provision of resident teacher guidance for inclusive kindergartens contributed to the professional development of teachers?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

38. Inclusive kindergartens have the right to organize professional development activities independently.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

Sustainability development part:

39. The implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy has positively impacted the long-term sustainability of kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

40. Implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy has led to a more stable overall operation of kindergartens in your area.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

41. The government should show the results of implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy to the public.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

42. The government should build a platform for information sharing and experience learning in implementing the policy on inclusive kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

43. The government should develop risk management measures to ensure the effective implementation of the policy of inclusive kindergarten.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

44. The capacity and quality of government staff in implementing the inclusive kindergarten policy need to be enhanced.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

45. The implementation of the inclusive kindergarten policy has positively improved the financial stability and sustainability of kindergartens.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

46. The inclusive kindergarten policy has promoted the rational allocation and utilization of kindergarten resources.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

47. The policy on inclusive kindergartens has helped to promote the sustainable improvement of kindergartens' internal management and operation mode.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

48. The policy of inclusive kindergartens has helped promote kindergarten teachers' stability and development.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

49. The policy of inclusive kindergartens can help promote the integration and sharing of resources between kindergartens and society.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5



Appendix C

**Outline of Interviews on the Effectiveness of the Implementation
of Inclusive Kindergarten Policies in Guiyang City**

Hello,

Thank you for participating in this interview. This interview aims to understand the implementation effects of the Universal Preschool Policy in Guiyang City and gather suggestions for further policy optimization and improvement. Your experiences and insights are crucial for the future development of these policies. We assure you that your responses will be kept confidential and used for research. Please share your thoughts and experiences in as much detail as possible.

Part One: Basic Information

1. Gender: ☐ A. Male ☐ B. Female
2. Educational Level: ☐ A. High School or Vocational School
☐ B. College Graduate ☐ C. Bachelor's Degree ☐ D. Master's Degree or higher
3. Years of experience in the field related to Universal Preschool:
☐ A. 1 year or less ☐ B. 2 to 3 years ☐ C. 4 to 5 years ☐ D. 5 years or more

Part Two: Specific Questions

4. What do you know about the main contents and objectives of the Universal Preschool Policy in Guiyang City?
5. How do you perceive the support and regulations for preschools in the Universal Preschool Policy?
6. How do you assess the government's efforts in promoting and communicating the Universal Preschool Policy? Are the promotional measures sufficient, or do they need more support?
7. From your perspective, how well is the government implementing the Universal Preschool Policy? What are the strengths and challenges?

8. What impact has the implementation of the Universal Preschool Policy had on the management of preschools?

9. Do you believe that the Universal Preschool Policy has had any influence on improving the quality of preschool education?

10. How does the subsidy provided by the government for Universal Preschools affect the operation and development of preschools? Does it meet the actual needs?

11. In your view, what are the current factors affecting the effectiveness of the Universal Preschool Policy implementation?

12. What role do parents of preschoolers play in implementing the Universal Preschool Policy?

13. How is support and assurance provided for the quality of preschool education and the development of high-quality teaching staff in Universal Preschools?

14. Based on your experience, do you have any specific recommendations for improving and refining the Universal Preschool Policy in Guiyang City?

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your opinions and experiences are valuable for gaining deeper insights into our research. If you have any additional comments or thoughts, please share them with us. Thank you!

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