

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL
DIVERSIFYING MODES IN THE NEW ERA OF SOCIALISM WITH
CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS**

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Abstract: The purpose of this research was to develop transformational leadership strategies for the development of preschool educational diversifying modes in a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Opinionnaire was developed to collect data from 468 respondents through the stratified selected sampling design covering 254 kindergartens and related offices in 11 counties, cities and districts of 11 provinces from 27 June to 5 July, 2020. The data was then analyzed by demographic statistics, means, PNI, standard deviation, SWOT analysis, Pearson's correlation, and content analysis. Deriving from the analysis, a proposal of the transformational leadership strategies was drawn up, by which the government vigorously increase supports of technology, politics, economy, social-culture, legal and security, steadily increase education inputs in all modes of kindergartens, in terms of: enlarging caring for staff, playing full roles of vision, better creating opportunities, exploring empowerment orientation, enforcing communication, enhancing trust relationship, arousing self-confidence and constructing organization culture as well.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership Strategies; Preschool Educational Diversifying Modes; Preschool Educational Administration Reform; New Era of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

Introduction

China has achieved great achievements in education in the past 70 years,

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especially in the preschool education, however, there are problems and challenges hiding behind the honor wall of achievements to solve for better and further development in future.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, public preschool education, as a unit welfare system nationwide, implemented the policy of "serving national construction", mainly playing a role in nursing rather than education, which was much imbalanced. It became much worse than imbalance, with either nursing or education completely stopped during the cultural revolution from 1966 to 1976. After the reform and opening up since 1978, a greater imbalance has led to a major decline in preschool education. (Shan, 2016)

In the middle of 1990s', with social forces encouraged to construct preschool education, in the imbalanced development between the public-private relationship has been more and more slanting to the private end of preschool education from mid 1990s' up to 2010. (Liu, 2018) Despite the rapid development of private preschool education institutions with the support of policies, it was still difficult to fundamentally meet the huge demand for preschool education, and phenomena of "difficulty in entering kindergartens" and "expensiveness in kindergartens" have increasingly been tougher and tougher difficulties at the turn of the century, (Shan, 2016) one of the rooted problems behind which is: lastingly serious insufficient opportunities for preschool-aged children to go to kindergarten has led to inequity in children education, which is selected for the research problem, and seek effective strategies for it.

Objectives

There are four main objectives covering in this research in a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which are:

Firstly, to identify the current and desirable states of Transformational Leadership (TL) for the development of the Preschool Educational Diversifying Modes (PEDM).

Secondly, to show the analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) to TL, together with Politics, Economy, Social-culture, Technology, Legal, and Environment (PESTLE), for the development of PEDM.

And then, to identify relationships between current and desirable states of, internally, in terms of eight factors of TL, and, externally, PESTLE, for the

development of preschool education. Lastly, to propose appropriate TLS for the development of PEDM.

Review of Related Literature

A review of related literature covers four main aspects according to the following: overview of education in China, reform and development of preschool education, transformational leadership strategies, and a new era with Chinese socialistic characteristics.

Overview of Education in China

It covers guiding principle of education, current school education system, and reform and development of education, three of which respectively, clarify and emphasize the importance and necessity, position, and urgency of development and reform of preschool education in the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics as follows: The socialist Guiding Principle of Education (GPE), proposed that education serves a New Era of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (NESCC) must ensure the promotion of all-round human development and social progress had set new and higher requirements for education and learning to train participants of and successors to the socialist cause who develop morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically, (Hu, 2012) from childhood and for lifelong, which clarifies the importance and necessity of preschool school education. And then, education system in China, referring to the internal structure of and relationships of various types of school education and their mutual relations, at vertical and horizontal directions among all kinds of schools at all levels (Gu, 2011) has clearly written that preschool education is the first stage of the four ones in the national education system, whose position has been clarified. Lastly, the great achievements of the other three stages of education make it critical and urgent to emphasize the reform and development of preschool education.

Reform and Development of Preschool Education

Reform and development of preschool education covers three aspects as illustrated below.

Stages of reform and development of preschool education. There are, chronologically, five stages: preschool education in the planned economy period (1949-1978); tortuous development of preschool education period (1978-2010); And current strengthening public preschool education period (2010-2020). Now, preschool education is required to meet the people's satisfaction and truly reassure parents, the new requirement of "all early children to be educared" put forward, as never before, (Gao & Du, 2018)

Preschool educational diversifying modes. Educational mode refers to the concrete patterns of education being formed in which children are treated as human beings. (Gu, 1986) Preschool educational diversifying modes include five ones: public modes, private modes, blended modes, joint and chain kindergartens, and inclusive modes, in which development relationship of the public modes and the private modes has closely and greatly influenced by the relationship between the government leadership and the market growth, (Li, 2019) which can be presented in Table 1.

Current preschool education administration (PEA). (1) Definition. PEA can be defined, according to Haimann and Scott, (1974) to lay down basic principles, policies, objectives, purposes, programs and projects for the development of the preschool education to effectively control the process of activities to realize previous contents. (2) Four stages: PEA experienced from highly centralized leadership, hierarchical management and establishment of leading group for childcare during 1978-1982; local responsibility, hierarchical management and division and collaboration among the relevant departments during 1982-1992; local responsibility, hierarchical management, and further clarification of competent departments during 1992-2009; and return of the leading responsibilities of the government, local responsibility, division of labor and collaboration between relevant departments from 2010 to present time. (3) Three problems and deficiencies of PEA: Management mechanism of preschool education was not sound; administrative management mechanism of preschool education-- rule by people rather than rule by law and serious education function dislocation, vacancy, offside of the government; single operation mode of preschool education management mechanism.

Table 1. *Development process of preschool education diversifying modes*

Items	Relationship between government and the market		Relationship between public and private preschool education (p-e)		Preschool education Diversifying Modes
	Role of government and the market	Relationship between government and market	Relationship between public and private preschool education (p-e)	Relationship between public and private preschool education (p-e)	
1949 - 1978	The government permission non-market	Weak Almost government Weaker market	Public domination	Public p-e Few private p-e	Unary Mode: Public mode State-owned and collective kindergartens Binary Mode: Public modes:
1978 - 1992	The government permission The market guidance	Weak market Weak government	Public p-e strong to weak Private restoration	Public p-e Private restoration	A. State-owned and B. Collective-owned kindergartens Private mode kindergartens restoration

Items	Role of government and the market	Relationship between government and market	Relationship between public and private education (p-e)	Preschool education Diversifying Modes
Periods				Diversifying Modes:
1993 - 2002	The government leading the market	Strong market growing stronger government	Strong public p-e Rapid growth of private p-e	1. Public modes: A. State-owned public kindergartens, B. Collective-owned public kindergartens;
2003 - 2009	The government encouragement The market leadership	Strong market Weak government	Strong private p-e Weak public p-e	2. Private modes: private kindergartens, public-funded private kindergartens, equity and sole - proprietorship private kindergartens; 3. Blended modes: State-owned private kindergartens, Collective public private kindergartens;
2010 - 2018	Great support of the government Limited leadership of the market	Strong market Minor government	Strong private p-e Minor strong public p-e	4. Joint and Chain kindergartens 5. Inclusive kindergarten modes: Inclusive public kindergartens Inclusive public nature kindergartens Inclusive collective kindergartens Inclusive private service kindergartens (Education Department of Guangxi, Aug. 28, 2015)
2019 - future	The government leadership The market supplement	Minor market Strong government	Minor private p-e Strong public p-e	

Note * 1. Chain kindergarten; Cooperative operation of kindergarten; Joint venture kindergarten; Joint-stock operated kindergarten; Listed holdings operate kindergartens. 2. Subject of joint venture: Chinese and foreign funds; Chinese and foreign institutions; Public and private; Competent departments of education and local or individual educational institutions; Famous kindergartens and local general kindergartens; The famous international Cooperation are very successful --Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City -- Huangpu District of Guangzhou. 3. Multi inclusive kindergartens: quality public kindergartens, state-owned enterprises kindergartens, social organization kindergartens, individual kindergartens and kindergartens held by other social forces.

Note: The relationship between government and market in the development of private preschool education (Li Hui, 2019)

Direction of current preschool educational administration reform. There are 5 perspectives proposed to reform in preschool education to promote fairness and ensuring quality, to clarify the leading responsibility of the government,

to transform government functions, to allocate powers and responsibilities reasonably and implement performance management, and to carry out reform in stages and at different levels in different regions.

Transformational Leadership Strategies

This part covers transformational leadership and strategic planning, which are, respectively, detailed as follows:

Transformational leadership (TL). TL, as a concept, has been studied and discussed by many people since it was first put forward by Downton in 1973 and by Burn in his political leadership book titled *Leadership* in 1978. (Burns, 1978) According Sashkin and Sashkin (2003), TL, one of the six major areas of leadership in schools, five others of which are instructional leadership, moral leadership, participative leadership, contingency leadership and managerial leadership, refers to a leadership style in which leaders have an ability to transform people into self-directed followers to accomplish what is beyond their own expectations which focus on the commitments and capacities of organizational members covering: four factors on behaviors which are communication, trust, caring, and creating opportunities; and another four factors on characteristics which are self-confidence, empowerment orientation, vision, and organization culture. (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003) which is to be taken in this research.

Strategic planning. Strategic planning refers to systematic process of envisioning a desired future, and translating this vision into broadly defined goals or objectives and a sequence of steps to achieve them can be, sequentially, managed in five steps of environmental analysis, establishment of an organizational direction, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategic control, with feedback between steps. SWOT Matrix and PESTLE are frequently used ones among many tools in making a strategic planning.

New Era of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

New era of socialism with Chinese characteristics (NESCC) , according to Xi Jin Ping (2017, 2019) refers to a new era, with long-term efforts, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered, which marks a new historical period for China's development and is characterized by: socialism with Chinese characteristics; a society of moderately prosperous in all respects and of a great modern socialist; all Chinese people working together to create a better life and achieving common prosperity; China having moved to the center of the world stage and made greater contributions to mankind. NESCC has impact on education in aspects: leading to the highest design of new era education, helping sectional policies be efficiently made, and mass anticipating the new

era education. Significance of NESCC, as a development theory, is far-reaching for the promotion of education diversifying modes, which can be displayed in Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework

In this research, researcher uses the concepts and theories related to leadership and so as to develop strategies for TL for the development of PEDM in NESCC.

TL is one of the six major areas of leadership in schools, including instructional leadership, out of which TL covers eight factors: communication, trust, caring, and creating opportunities, self-confidence, empowerment orientation, vision, and Organization culture. (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003)

According to the China Quality Award Causal Model, (Xiang et al., 2010) there are seven key factors including: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resource focus, process management, and results, out of which 16 relation chains at four levels are worked out, so as to achieve high quality results, details including: level 1 (one-knot chain): leadership -- results; level 2 (two-knot-chain): leadership -- (customer and market focus // human resource focus // process management) -- results; level 3 (three-knot-chain): leadership -- (information and analysis // strategic planning) -- (customer and market focus // process management // human resource focus) -- results; and level 4 (four-knot-chain): leadership -- information and analysis -- strategic planning -- (customer and market focus // process management // human resource focus) -- results. In all these above-mentioned relation chains, it is the relation in level one, “leadership -- results”, that is optimal in length, the direct relation with least knots between leadership and results, indicating the most effective one in attaining the high quality results. (Hollander, 2012).

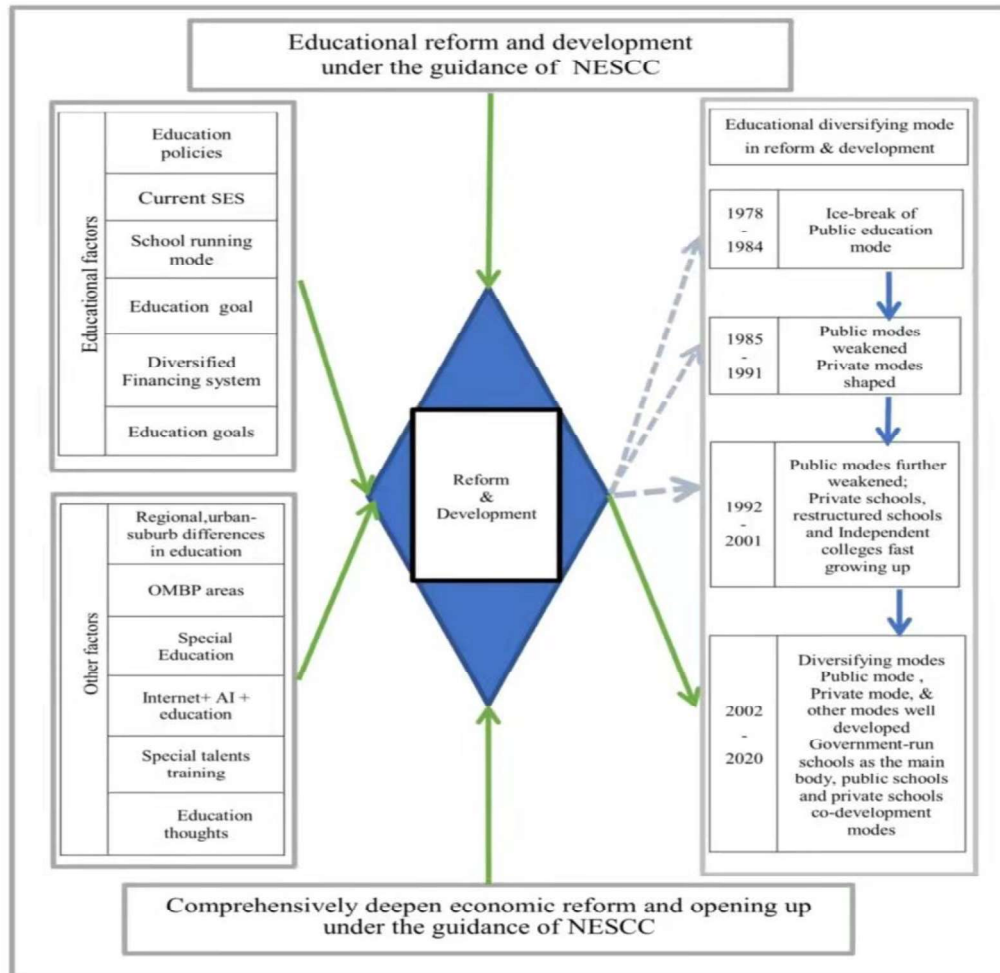


Figure 1. Education Diversifying Modes in NESCC

The relation, between leadership -- results, is accordingly set as the framework of this research, together with three aspects as follows:

First, implement SWOT analysis by employing PNI Modified to work out both the current and desirable states of TL for the development of PEDM in NESCC.

Then, figure out TLS by operating SWOT Matrix.

Finally, modify and adjust strategies to meet needs of all aspects. Therefore, these related concepts and theories can be systematically combined to get the conceptual framework of this research as Figure 2.

Delimitation of the Research

This research is conducted to improve the problem of the lastingly insufficient opportunities for preschool aged children to go to kindergartens, so as to develop PEDM in NESCC with the identification of the TL, which are, on the one hand, delimited in eight factors of TL including: communication, trust, caring, creating opportunities, self-confidence, empowerment orientation, vision, and organization culture, and, on the other hand, delimited in the shadowed areas in Figure 2.

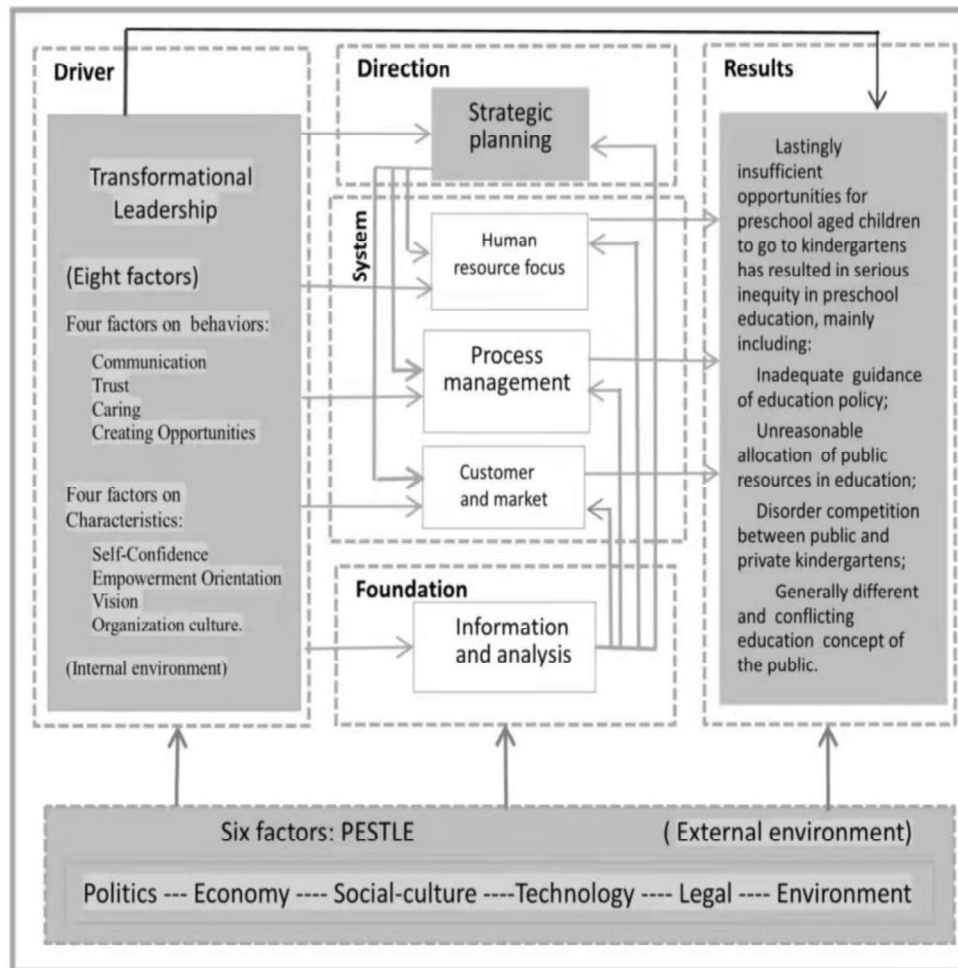


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of the TLS for the Development of PEDM in NESCC

Methodology

In this research, a mixed method of qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis is adopted so as to carry out the research on TLS for the development of PEDM in NESCC, in which the research inquiry and survey are proposed

and the hypothesis are made to gather all data to offer a resolution of research problems. The research sets out with an extensive survey to promote popularize the results to the general public, and then concentrate on detailed qualitative in the second step to gather opinions from informants in detail.

Population and Sample

There is a population of 731 kindergartens, both public and private, of the selected 11 counties, cities or districts (CCD) in 11 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities (PAM) Department of Education in the 11 PAM. (2019-2020) according to which, the sampling size of kindergartens is 253 by “Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population” developed by Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) whose informants covers: 11 kindergarten principals; 130 kindergarten principal; 121 deputy principals: 251 heads of subjects and teachers from each kindergarten; and 251 parental representatives. All these above mentioned 764 informants’ response voluntarily to the survey opinionnaire. (Alden, 2007)

Survey methods of stratified selected sampling are applied to select the 11 sample kindergartens from 11-CCD in 11-PAM in mainland China where preschool educational administration policies are same or similar.

Research Instrument

Opinionnaire is applied as research instrument, in terms of rating scale, whose statements or questions are discussed in two parts. Part-1: informants’ demographic data, including: gender, age, qualification, position and experiences. Part-2: statements or questions about the current state of TL for the development of PEDM in NESCC. The informant’s responses to the statements or questions by choosing a number out of a set of given answers; each number stand for the level of practices. The rating scale of 5-4-3-2-1 in the current state indicates: the (highest, high, moderate, low and lowest) level of practices in the current state, respectively. While the rating scale of 5-4-3-2-1 in the desirable state indicates: the (highest, high, moderate, low and lowest) level of need for the practices in the desirable state, respectively. (Weiss & Davison, 1981)

The Index of Objective Congruence (IOC) of the opinionnaire are tested by five experts with knowledge or expertise on the TLS and the development and the IOC value of this opinionnaire is 0.99, each single question higher than 0.50. The reliability of the opinionnaire is checked by a 30-participant-group of 5 kindergarten principals, 5 deputy principals 10 teachers and nurses, and 10 parental representatives. With the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient formula, (Lance et al., 2006) the alpha coefficients are 0.995 for the questions on the

current state, 0.994 for those on the desirable state, including the high reliability values of opinionnaire and it can be applied for data collection.

Data Collection

The letter of cooperation for data collection from the Graduate School of Eastern Asia University and a copy of the opinionnaire in Chinese version were emailed to selected kindergartens of 11 CCD in 11 PAM in June, 20 data collection online was completed in July 2020.

Statistical Analysis

Five aspects are covered in statistical analysis: sample's demographic data; current and desirable states of internal and external environments of TL; PNI Modified of the internal and external of TL and SWOT analysis of TL; relationships between the current and the desirable states of TL; and effective TLS for the development of the PEDM.

Findings

There were four primary supportive findings and one grand finale finding, as was detailed in the followings:

Firstly, current and desirable states of internal and external environments of TL show that overall are at a middle level and all data are homogeneous: $\bar{X} = 3.28$, $SD = 0.77$, and at a highest level and all data are homogeneous: $\bar{X} = 4.55$, $SD = 0.59$, respectively; and secondly, that the overall external current and desirable states of TL are at a middle level and all data are homogeneous: $\bar{X} = 3.22$, $SD = 0.71$, and at a highest level and all data are homogeneous: $\bar{X} = 4.54$, $SD = 0.59$, respectively.

Secondly, PNI Modified of the internal and of TL and SWOT analysis of TL show internally that the caring factor scores the highest PNI Modified, 0.767, within the external the high PNI Modified interval values: 0.812-0.50 (W) identified as the weakness of the internal environment of TL. According to their PNI Modified, the other seven factors are ranked in descending order as: vision creating opportunities, self-confidence, empowerment orientation, communication, trust, and organization culture, within the low PNI Modified interval values: 0.200-0.505 (S), identified as the strengths of the internal environment of TL. And externally, findings show that technology factor scores the highest PNI modified value of 0.461, within the the high PNI Modified interval values: 0.498-0.429 (T), identified as the threats of the external environment of TL. According to their PNI Modified, the other five factors are ranked in descending order as: the environmental factor, legal factor, economic factor, political factor and social-cultural factor, all of which

are within the low PNI Modified interval values: 0.360-0.428 (T), identified as the opportunities of the external environment of the TLS.

Thirdly, SWOT analysis of TL show that, according to their PNI Modified values, strengths cover factors of playing full roles of vision, better creating opportunities, exploring empowerment orientation, enforcing communication, enhancing trust relationship, arousing self-confidence and constructing organization culture; weaknesses cover enlarging caring for staff; opportunities cover factors of environment, legal, economy, politics and social-culture; and threats cover technological factor.

Fourthly, relationships between the current and the states of TL show that, internally, the respondents are not satisfied with the situations, while externally, respondents are highly satisfied with the situations at $p < 0.05$.

Lastly, the grand finale finding, effective TLS for the development of the PEDM show that, with the PNI Modified values of factors of the internal and external environment, and sub-aspects of each factors, and SWOT of TL, effective TLS of eight strategies (S), including measures of the strategy (MS), and steps of the strategy (SS), which are synthetically proposed for the development of PEDM in NESCC as follows: 1) As to strategy-1 (S-1) to strategy-8 (S-8), it is required to promote leaders and kindergarten principals' transformational leadership in eight themes namely, enlarging caring for staff, playing full role of vision, better creating opportunities, exploring empowerment orientation, enforcing communication, enhancing trust relationship, arousing self-confidence, and constructing organization culture for the development eight strategies for the development of the PEDM in NESCC. 2) As to the steps of the strategy, three main steps are designed. The first of which, local educational departments and private educational organizations are required to set up policies for technology, security, steadily increase educational fiscal inputs in purpose of carrying out the theme of the strategy. The second of which leaders and kindergarten principals promote transformational leadership in implementing the five fixed minor steps in descending order according to their PNI Modified values. The third of which leaders and principals probe, listen carefully to feedback opinions and the overall situation of its development, so as to improve the policies for it after a period of time. The wholeness of eight strategies are refined and abstracted in Figure 2 (see *Figure 2*, overleaf)

Discussions

Discussions of research findings were conducted in four aspects according to the research objectives, as follows:

The current and desirable states of the TLS. Discussions on the analysis of the current state of the internal and external environment. Firstly, findings of the overall analysis of current state of the internal and external environment of the TL is at a middle level and highest level, respectively, so are the separate factors of the current state of the internal and external environment, meaning the leaders and kindergarten principals should improve transformational leadership by improving separate factors. Secondly, as for the separate factors of the internal environment.

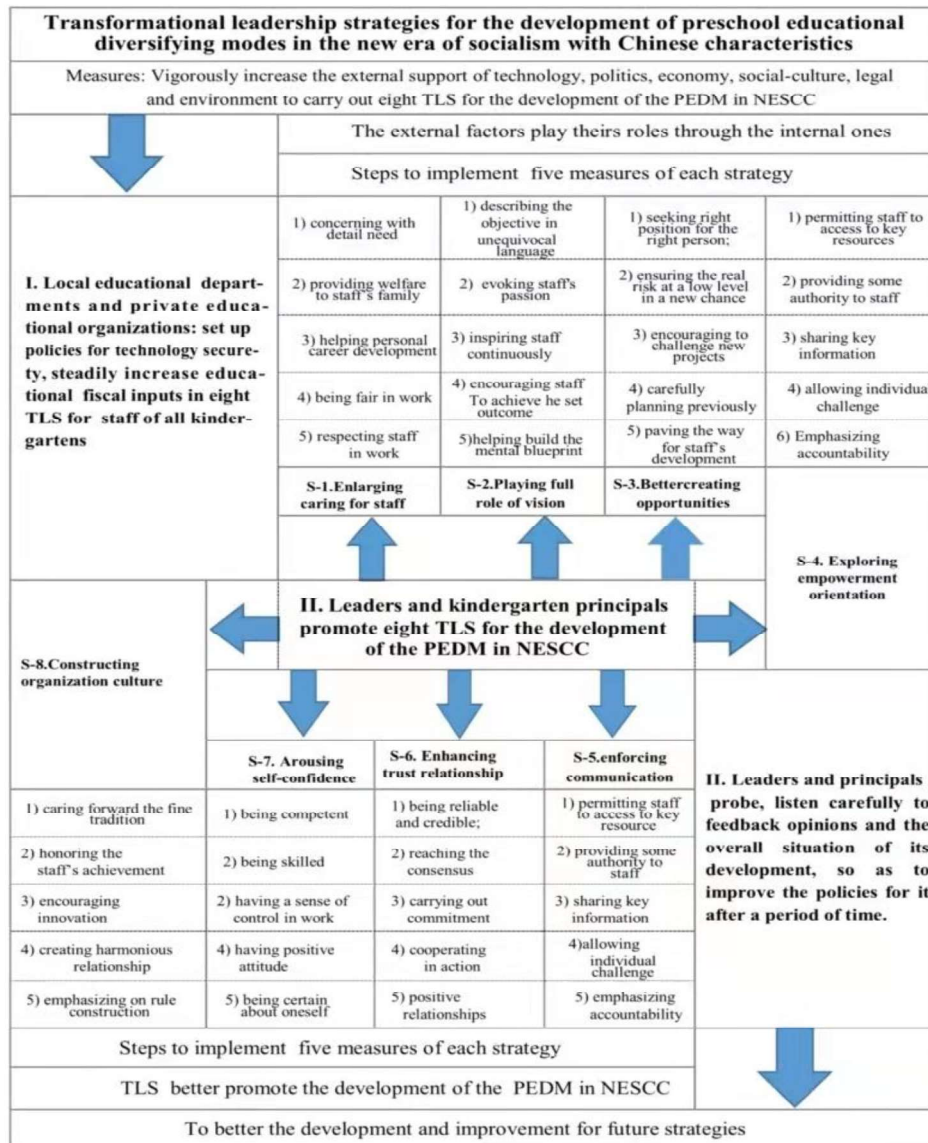


Figure 3. A Systematic Process and Methods to Promote TLS for the Development of PEDM in NESCC

The highest and lowest means. Constructing organization culture, scored the highest mean value, while enlarging caring for staff scored the lowest mean value, meaning the latter is the most urgent factor for the development of the PEDM, while the former, not so urgent. Externally, the factor with the development of the PEDM, while the former, not so urgent. Externally, the factor with the lowest mean is the most urgent one to improve. Thirdly, the order of the eight or six separate factors ranked according to their mean values, which can be changeable in different contexts of development.

SWOT of the TL. Firstly, the research findings show that the seven factors of Strengths are a interrelated and supportive relationship in TL for the development of the PEDM in NESCC. Secondly, the research findings of the Weaknesses of the TL for the development of the PEDM in NESCC cover: enlarging caring for staff. Thirdly, the research findings of the Opportunities of the TL for the development of the PEDM in NESCC cover 5 aspect of the external environment including: environmental factor, legal factor, economic factor, political factor, social-cultural factor, which require local education departments and education departments of the private education organizations to set up the policies, catch and keep opportunities for the development of the PEDEM in NESCC. Fourthly, the research findings of the Threats of the TL for the development of the PEDM in NESCC cover technological factor, appealing to much attention, on the one hand, technology itself is application of scientific knowledge, and on the other hand, its application is also scientific knowledge itself.

Relationships between the current and desirable states of TL. With Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Calculator, the relationship internally turned out that the respondents are not satisfied with the situation, while, externally, the respondents are highly satisfied with the situations. The relationship between the current and desirable states of the environments of TL are dynamic especially in a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, though they relatively constant and stable during some quite long period of time, the rapid development and changes take place in any possible places before mass recognition of them. Keep pace with time, uptake our mind and rules and policies so as to avoid being blocked by the slow sense to outside changing.

Development of effective TLS. It is a systematical project to develop effective TLS for the Development of the PEDM. Effective strategies, worked out with with eight strategies, with five-measures for each strategy and several steps to carry them out, were based on the support of the research findings of the SWOT with their values of PNI Modified. The systematic project if it requires leaders and kindergarten principals to probe the notion of the changeability of

factors of the TL, listening carefully to staff's feedback, and the overall situation of development, so as to improve the policies for it.

Recommendations

Three aspects of recommendation, including: carrying out the research findings, future research on TLS, and other solution-oriented researches on the research problem of this research.

As to carrying out the research findings: Firstly, TLS, can play their roles in current situation of the development of PEDM nationwide. Secondly, local governments and educational departments and private education organizations should work out policies to allocate the local resources; Thirdly, the education departments of 11 PAM should enhance policy-making so as to construct healthy and capable teams of educational teachers and nursing teachers by applying TLS in details.

As to future researches on the research problem: keep education reform being always on the way, and insist on educational reform.

As to other solution-oriented strategies: beside TLS, other solution-oriented strategies can be obtained, and effectively adopted to deal with aspects of the research problem coming up in the development of PEDM, only when full accounts of the contexts of PEDM are accordingly taken.

To systematically carry out the research findings, unceasingly future research on the research problem, and develop solution-oriented research, together with education reform, are helpful in exploring and probing effective approaches to the research problem both in symptoms and root causes.

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