

# *A Review and Prospect of Home-School Collaborative Education in the Past 20 Years*

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**Abstract:** Against the backdrop of constantly evolving educational concepts, as a comprehensive education model, home co-education emphasizes the cooperation between families and schools in the process of children's education. With the change of educational concepts, home co-education has gradually become an important part of the global education system. In recent years, the research focus of global scholars has gradually shifted from the traditional family education model to the in-depth exploration of home cooperation, especially in the field of preschool education and special education. This article reviews the research focus of home co-education in the past two decades, including three main theoretical foundations, three cooperation models, and related influencing factors, and looks forward to the future research direction. This paper analyzes the views of well-known scholars at home and abroad in this field, summarizes the existing research results, in order to provide theoretical and action support for the development of coeducation in China.

## **1. Introduction**

Home-School Collaboration (also known as Family-School Partnership) is an educational philosophy that emphasizes the joint effort and shared responsibility between families and preschools to promote children's holistic development. In recent years, with the changing educational concepts, Home-School Collaboration has gradually become an important component of global educational systems. Research indicates that the study of Home-School Collaboration not only has significant implications for children's growth but also drives the optimization of educational practices, the realization of social equity, and the improvement of educational policies. Therefore, strengthening the study of Home-School Collaboration has profound theoretical and practical significance.

In the past two decades, scholars have gradually deepened their research on Home-School Collaboration, making it an important research topic in the field of education. The number of studies on Home-School Collaboration has shown an increasing trend in various databases such as Wiley, Web of Science, CNKI, Wanfang Data and VIP Info. In the early 2000s, the number of related literature was relatively small. After 2010, with the updating and promotion of educational concepts, the number of related literature on Home-School Collaboration significantly increased, especially after 2015, when the attention of researchers to Home-School Collaboration has been

increasing year by year. In the field of Home-School Collaboration, the authors with the highest publication volume are mainly concentrated in fields such as education, psychology, and family education. The following discussion focuses on the research directions, key points, and important scholar views on Home-School Collaboration.

## **2. Theoretical Foundations of Home-School Collaboration**

The theoretical basis of home co-education not only depends on the theoretical support of a single discipline, but also forms a multi-level and multi-dimensional theoretical framework through the comprehensive construction of interdisciplinary theories. Pedagogy provides educational goals and basic principles of home co-education, while psychology provides guidance for individual psychological development, while sociology helps us understand the social mechanism and cultural background behind home co-education. Through the interaction of the three, home co-education can be popularized and applied in the global scope.

### **2.1. The theoretical basis of pedagogy Ecosystem theory**

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecosystem theory puts forward that children's development is influenced by many factors, such as micro-system (family and school), middle-system (home cooperation), external system (parents' working environment) and macro-system (culture and social policy)<sup>[1]</sup>. Home co-education emphasizes that family and school are the two main environments for children's growth, and the overall optimization of children's development environment should be realized through cooperation and interaction.

Cognitive development theory. Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory emphasizes that children have different cognitive structures and thinking abilities at different stages. He believes that education should adapt to the characteristics of children's cognitive development, so as to promote their better development<sup>[2]</sup>. Under this framework, parents and schools are encouraged to adopt appropriate educational strategies according to children's cognitive development level to promote the coordination of educational activities between families and kindergartens.

Social and cultural theory. Lev Vygotsky proposed that children's cognitive development is gradually developed through social interaction and language communication with adults and peers<sup>[3]</sup>. A key concept in home co-education is to create a beneficial social and cultural environment for children through the interaction between family and school. Parents and teachers should pay close attention to children's learning process and social interaction and provide appropriate support and guidance.

Theory of multiple intelligences. According to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, intelligence is multidimensional, including not only linguistic intelligence and mathematical intelligence, but also spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, introspective intelligence and other types<sup>[4]</sup>. A core idea of home co-education is that parents and teachers should provide personalized educational support and environment according to children's different intelligence types to help children explore and develop their respective advantages.

Theory of progressive education. John Dewey thinks that education is a socialized process, and education is not only carried out in schools, but also involves families and society. One of the theoretical foundations of home co-education is to take the family and kindergarten as a common educational body, and carry out interactive learning to promote children's all-round growth. Dewey advocates that education should pay attention to children's interests and needs, and home co-education is the concrete practice of this educational thought<sup>[5]</sup>.

Behaviorism learning theory. Edward L. Thorndike's behaviorist learning theory emphasizes guiding behavior change through rewards and punishments<sup>[6]</sup>. Another important aspect of home

co-education is that parents and schools should jointly monitor children's behavior, and promote children's good behavior and study habits through positive feedback and appropriate incentives.

## **2.2. The theoretical basis of psychology**

**Social learning theory.** Albert Bandura's social learning theory has a far-reaching impact on the theoretical basis of home co-education. Bandura believes that individual behavior can be learned not only by direct experience, but also by observing the behavior of others, especially parents and teachers<sup>[7]</sup>. The interaction and communication between family and school not only affects children's academic development, but also affects their social skills, emotional adjustment and self-efficacy. Therefore, home co-education can promote children's behavior pattern learning and mental health development by providing consistent information and behavior models.

**Attachment theory.** John Balbi's attachment theory also provides psychological support for home co-education. Balbi believes that children's attachment to their primary caregivers (usually parents) has a profound impact on their emotional, behavioral and social adaptability<sup>[8]</sup>. In the practice of home co-education, parents and teachers work together to establish and maintain a safe attachment relationship between children and adults, which helps children form positive self-awareness and emotional stability.

**Self-determination theory.** The self-determination theory put forward by Deci, E.L., & Ryan, R.M. also provides theoretical support for home co-education. According to this theory, children need to feel autonomy, competence and belonging in the process of growing up<sup>[9]</sup>. Through the cooperation between parents and teachers, home co-education provides an educational environment that not only supports children's autonomy but also respects their individual differences, helps children develop their intrinsic motivation and cultivate their ability of self-management and independent thinking.

## **2.3. The theoretical basis of sociology Social capital theory**

The social capital theory put forward by scholars such as Pierre Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman provides a profound sociological perspective for home co-education. Social capital theory holds that individuals accumulate social capital through the interaction of social networks, which can promote their social integration and economic success. In home co-education, the good relationship between family and school can be regarded as a kind of social capital, which promotes children's learning and socialization process through the interaction between teachers and parents. The success of home co-education requires the establishment of a strong social network, including mutual trust and cooperation among families, schools and communities<sup>[10]</sup>.

**Symbolic interaction theory.** George Herbert Mead's symbolic interaction theory emphasizes that individual behavior is established through the communication of language and symbols in the process of social interaction. In home co-education, symbolic interaction between family and school (such as communication between parents and teachers, parents' participation in school activities) has an important influence on children's behavior and values. Family and school provide a model for children to learn and adapt to society through dialogue, feedback and interaction<sup>[11]</sup>.

**Cultural capital theory.** According to prerre bourdaud's theory of cultural capital, family background (especially cultural capital) has an important influence on children's educational achievements. Parents' educational level, cultural background and educational concept affect the degree and way of participation in home co-education. Parents of families with high cultural capital are more likely to participate in school education activities and can provide more educational resources for their children. Families with low cultural capital may face the problem of insufficient participation. The effectiveness of home co-education depends largely on the accumulation of

family cultural capital and the adaptation of schools to these differences<sup>[12]</sup>.

### **3. The Mode and Strategy of Home Co-Education**

The implementation of home co-education needs effective models and strategies, and the research focus is on how to improve the educational effect through a reasonable home cooperation model. Scholars have put forward various modes of cooperation, such as family education guidance, home-school communication mechanism and parents' participation in school management.

#### **3.1. Epstein's six types of home co-education model**

Joyce L. Epstein, an American scholar, is one of the founders of home co-education research. She put forward "six types of home co-education", namely, home-school communication: maintaining information flow between schools and families; Family support for school activities: parents participate in school activities, such as parent-teacher conferences and volunteer activities; Family support for students' learning: parents help their children learn and provide learning resources; Decision-making participation: parents participate in school decision-making and education plans; Community cooperation: schools and communities unite to support children's growth; Family education: parents receive education and training to improve their educational ability. Epstein believes that home co-education is not limited to the interaction between family and school, but also needs the participation of community and wider social forces<sup>[13]</sup>.

Information technology to support the home co-education model. With the development of information technology, the mode of information-based home co-education came into being. Kindergartens use WeChat APP and other platforms to share children's dynamics in the park with parents in real time, and parents can also give feedback through the platform. Henderson and Mapp's research emphasizes that digital chemical industry can help parents to obtain more educational resources and information, thus improving the efficiency of home cooperation<sup>[14]</sup>. Feng Zhaojun (2020) pointed out that the traditional home-school communication methods, such as parent-teacher conferences and paper notices, have time and space limitations, but the emergence of intelligent platforms (such as WeChat and Home Education App) has effectively overcome these problems<sup>[15]</sup>. The key to home co-education is to promote effective communication between schools and families, and information technology can provide strong support for this communication<sup>[16]</sup>.

#### **3.2. Parental education model**

This model pays attention to the educational role of parents and improves the level of family education through training. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler(1995) put forward a model of parents' motivation to participate in children's education, arguing that parents' motivation to participate in children's education is influenced by their own beliefs, expectations, family cultural background and the degree of school support for family participation<sup>[17]</sup>. Lareau(2003) put forward two different modes of parents' education, namely "Concerted Education" and "natural growth", by studying the educational modes of families of different social classes. In families with high social class, parents tend to cultivate their children's academic and social skills through active participation, arrangement of extracurricular activities and school activities. In low-class families, parents rely more on schools to educate their children, and their participation is less<sup>[18]</sup>.

#### **3.3. Eco-community home co-education model**

This model integrates the resources of family, kindergarten and community, emphasizes the

cooperation of the whole ecosystem, and advocates the tripartite cooperation among kindergarten, family and community to jointly create a good educational environment. The collective parenting practice of Kibbutz, an Israeli collective community, shows the unique form of shared parenting and emphasizes the role of the community in children's education<sup>[19]</sup>. Wang Xinmin (2012) put forward the "cooperative education mode" of home co-education, and thought that home co-education is a collaborative process, not only the interaction between families and schools, but also the joint participation of society, families and schools. The core of home-based co-education lies in effective communication and cooperation between parents and teachers. By jointly setting educational goals, we can reach an educational consensus, and finally realize the synergistic effect of education<sup>[20]</sup>. Tan Xueqing (2018): It is proposed that the integration of community education resources is an important means to solve the problem of educational inequality<sup>[21]</sup>. Qin Xufang (2020): He thinks that community resources (such as libraries and museums) are an important supplement to education, and can promote children's development through joint design activities between families and schools<sup>[22]</sup>.

#### **4. The Influencing Factors of Home Co-Education**

The effect of home co-education is related to many factors, including parents' educational literacy, school support policies, family economic conditions and social and cultural background. Scholars have conducted extensive empirical research on the influence of these factors, revealing the practical challenges and coping strategies of home co-education.

##### **4.1. The degree of parental participation**

The active participation of parents is the key factor for the success of home co-education. Research shows that parents' investment in educational activities directly affects children's learning interest and social adaptability. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler(1995) believe that parents' participation motivation and behavior directly affect children's academic achievement<sup>[23]</sup>. Epstein(2001) proposed that parents' participation is an important factor for students' academic success<sup>[24]</sup>. Masayuki Sakamoto (2013) believes that parents' words and deeds, interaction with children and positive attitude towards learning can directly affect students' learning results<sup>[25]</sup>. Liu Xiaoyan (2021) found that parents' enthusiasm in family education has a significant impact on children's social development<sup>[26]</sup>. Li Hua (2022) pointed out that parents' active participation in kindergarten activities is helpful to improve children's cognitive and emotional development<sup>[27]</sup>. Zhang Ming and Wang Li (2023) emphasized that parents' participation is closely related to children's academic performance and behavior<sup>[28]</sup>.

##### **4.2. The professional quality of teachers**

Teachers' professional ability and understanding of home co-education also have an important impact on its effect. High-quality teachers can effectively communicate with parents and formulate educational strategies suitable for children's development. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystem theory emphasizes that teachers, as the core role of children's microsystem, have a significant impact on the effect of home co-education<sup>[29]</sup>. Pianta et al. (2002) research shows that teachers' professional quality is significantly related to children's academic and social development<sup>[30]</sup>. Sheridan et al. (2010) point<sup>[31]</sup>. Wang Haiyan (2017) pointed out that teachers should have the ability to design and implement home interaction activities and promote the integration of educational resources<sup>[32]</sup>. Li Hong (2019) emphasized that teachers' professional development level directly affects the enthusiasm and effect of parents' participation<sup>[33]</sup>.



### 4.3. Home communication quality

Effective communication is the foundation of home co-education. Frequent and high-quality communication helps parents and teachers reach a consensus on educational concepts and methods, thus forming a joint educational force. Christensen and Sheridan(2001) emphasized that effective communication in home-school cooperation has a positive impact on students' academic and behavioral development<sup>[34]</sup>. The meta-analysis of Fan and Chen(2001) shows that the communication frequency between parents and schools is positively correlated with students' academic achievement<sup>[35]</sup>. Henderson and Mapp(2002) pointed out that home communication is helpful to form educational synergy and improve children's learning effect<sup>[36]</sup>. Meng Xiaoming (2018) found that the frequency and quality of home communication significantly affect children's behavior problem solving<sup>[37]</sup>. Guo Yumei (2018) believes that establishing a smooth communication mechanism is conducive to the sustainable development of home cooperation<sup>[38]</sup>. Yang Rong (2019) pointed out that regular parent-teacher conferences and home visits can enhance the trust between homes<sup>[39]</sup>.

### 4.4. Social and cultural background

Social and cultural factors will also affect the effect of home co-education. Under different cultural backgrounds, parents and teachers may have different expectations and methods of education, which need to be coordinated in practice. Trumbull et al. (2001) pointed out that cross-cultural home cooperation needs to pay special attention to cultural sensitivity in communication<sup>[40]</sup>. Gonzalez et al. (2005) found that cultural background significantly affects parents' expectations and participation in education<sup>[41]</sup>. Zhang Xiaojing and Li Xiaojie (2018) pointed out that cultural traditions in different regions have different educational methods for parents<sup>[42]</sup>. Hu Xiujuan (2019) emphasized that respecting parents' cultural customs is an important factor in promoting home cooperation<sup>[43]</sup>. Xue Xiaomei (2020) studies show that parents' cultural background affects their attitudes and behaviors in educational participation.

### 4.5. Policy support

The policy support of the government and educational institutions plays an important role in the promotion and implementation of home co-education. Perfect policies can provide institutional guarantee for home co-education and promote its effective development. Epstein(2005) pointed out that education policy plays an institutional role in promoting home-school cooperation<sup>[44]</sup>. Sanders(2008) thinks that the policy coordination among family, school and society is helpful to optimize the effect of home cooperation<sup>[45]</sup>. Weiss et al. (2009) research shows that policy support can provide stable resources for home co-education<sup>[46]</sup>. Wang Dingxia (2017) believes that the resource input and policy support of local education departments are very important<sup>[47]</sup>. Zhang Liwei (2017) emphasized that education policy should be tilted towards home cooperation, providing it with resources and training support<sup>[48]</sup>. Feng Li (2018) proposed that the government should issue clear policies to guide the implementation of home co-education<sup>[49]</sup>.

## 5. The Future Research and Development Direction

The first is the deep application of information technology. With the development of artificial intelligence and big data technology, future research will focus more on how to use intelligent technology to enhance the efficiency and quality of home interaction. Liu Weimin (2020) thinks that this model improves the efficiency and effectiveness of home communication, but we should pay

attention to information security and parents' digital literacy<sup>[50]</sup>. Wang Min (2020) believes that the home co-education model supported by information technology greatly improves the communication efficiency, but we need to pay attention to the issues of information privacy and digital divide<sup>[51]</sup>. Liu Wei (2022) suggested that the interaction between parents and children should be strengthened by designing an immersive parent-child game App<sup>[52]</sup>. Liu, M., & Lee, C. (2022) studied the role of information technology in home co-education practice in China and the United States. Research shows that parents can keep close contact with schools through mobile phone applications, get timely feedback on students' academic performance and behavior, increase interaction, enhance the transparency of the education process, and improve parents' trust in teachers and schools<sup>[53]</sup>.

The second is the adaptability research under the multicultural background. Cultural background has an important influence on the way and effect of home co-education. The theory of "knowledge fund" put forward by Gonzalez et al. (2005) points out that the life experience and knowledge accumulated by parents and community members (that is "knowledge fund") is very important for children's learning. If educators can recognize and respect these cultural and social backgrounds and use these knowledge resources to design classroom teaching, they can promote students' learning more effectively and strengthen home cooperation<sup>[54]</sup>. William Jeynes confirmed through a number of meta-analysis studies that parents' participation has a significant impact on students' academic performance, especially in low-income and minority groups, including emotional support and the transmission of values<sup>[55]</sup>. Zhang Yawen (2020) found that the educational needs of multicultural families need personalized strategies to support them, and educational institutions should provide culturally sensitive educational support, adopt multilingual communication and culturally appropriate family education courses and community support services, so as to better help multicultural families integrate into the school education system and maximize the effect of co-education at home<sup>[56]</sup>.

Third, policy support and system improvement. Policy plays a key role in promoting the implementation of home co-education. Karen Mapp(2013) emphasized that home co-education is not only parents' participation in school activities, but also parents' active support in the family, including helping children set learning goals and motivating students. Advocate the establishment of supportive policies and encourage two-way interaction between schools and families<sup>[57]</sup>. Zhou Kangjian (2024) pointed out that the current policy system still has some shortcomings in promoting home cooperation by analyzing the current home cooperation policy in China. He believes that although the country has issued some policy documents on home cooperation in recent years, such as "Guiding Opinions on Strengthening Family Education", these policies are mostly focused on the basic cooperation framework and concept level, lacking practical support for home cooperation, especially in terms of policy implementation and local implementation<sup>[58]</sup>.

The fourth is the establishment and optimization of the evaluation system. Scientific evaluation tools are very important to measure the effect of home co-education. Epstein(2021) proposed that the evaluation of home co-education should not only pay attention to students' academic performance, but also consider the influence of family participation on students' behavior, emotional development and family atmosphere. The evaluation of home co-education should adopt diversified standards and combine quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to fully reflect the effect of cooperation between parents and teachers. Evaluation should focus on long-term follow-up data to evaluate the impact of educational strategies and family participation on students' long-term development<sup>[59]</sup>. Mapp and Kuttner(2021) proposed that the evaluation tools should take into account the parents' participation mode of different cultural backgrounds to ensure the fairness and comprehensiveness of the evaluation results<sup>[60]</sup>. Lopez and Figueira(2022) put forward that the evaluation of home co-education needs the help of technical means, and the use of data-driven

evaluation methods can help teachers and parents understand students' academic and emotional development trajectory more clearly, thus optimizing home cooperation strategies<sup>[61]</sup>.

Fifth, the synergy between teachers and parents has improved. Teachers' professional quality and parents' ability to participate in education are the key to the success of home co-education. Pianta et al. (2002) research shows that teachers' educational background, teaching skills, emotional support ability and attention to children directly determine students' cognitive, emotional and social development effects. Hideki Kimura (2008) believes that parents with different cultural backgrounds may face different challenges when participating in school education, so schools should adopt flexible strategies to adapt to this diversity<sup>[62]</sup>. Souto-Manning(2020) believes that the effective cooperation between parents and teachers depends on teachers' understanding and respect for the cultural background and educational concept of the family, and puts forward a home co-education training program based on multicultural understanding<sup>[63]</sup>. Kratochwill(2020) put forward a framework for improving collaborative ability. Teachers should conduct collaborative training regularly to learn how to communicate effectively, handle conflicts and establish a trust relationship between home and school. It is also necessary to enhance the depth and breadth of home cooperation through collective participation and joint decision-making<sup>[64]</sup>. Xiao Dan Gu (2021) said that the implementation of the parental education model needs to be combined with the family background, and personalized guidance courses should be designed<sup>[65]</sup>. Jiang Zhihua (2020) proposed that fathers' awareness of participation should be improved by setting up a column on fatherhood education and launching a father salon, so as to give full play to their unique role in early childhood education<sup>[66]</sup>.

## 6. Conclusions

In the past two decades, significant progress has been made in research in the field of home co-education, showing the importance of family-school synergy in children's education and growth. Research results show that effective home education can improve students' academic performance, social adaptability and mental health. The research gradually shifted from focusing on the frequency of parental participation to quality, emphasizing the two-way interaction and trust building between home and school. In addition, the development of information technology has promoted the application of digital platforms in home co-education, making home-school communication more convenient and efficient. In the future, the study will further explore how to achieve fairness and inclusiveness of home co-education in the context of multiculturalism, and pay attention to the impact of social environmental changes (such as the popularization of distance education) on the home co-education model. At the same time, strengthening parent education, personalized support and interdisciplinary cooperation, and building a co-education ecosystem will become an important direction to promote the development of home co-education.

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