

A Study on the Current Sharing Behavior in Construction Zone Games among Large Class Children: A Case Study of L Kindergarten in Guangzhou City

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Abstract: Sharing behavior, a fundamental component of young children's prosocial development, plays a critical role in fostering their social and cognitive growth. Structured block play activities provide an ideal context for children to engage in material sharing (e.g., tools) and collaborative interactions, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation to share. However, observational data reveal persistent challenges, including low sharing frequency and insufficient reciprocal feedback among peers. This mixed-methods study employed systematic observation, interviews, and case analysis to examine the sharing behavior of 27 senior-class kindergarteners (aged 5 – 6 years) in Guangzhou during structured block play. The results indicated that sharing primarily manifested in two forms: (1) emotional exchange (e.g., joint celebration of achievements) and (2) material sharing (e.g., lending tools), with a strong preference for close peers as sharing partners. Notably, teacher-mediated reinforcement (e.g., verbal praise or social rewards) significantly increased sharing frequency, suggesting that scaffolded adult intervention facilitates the internalization of prosocial behavior. These findings contribute to developmental theories of sharing behavior and offer evidence-based strategies for educators to optimize peer interactions in early childhood settings.

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition of Sharing Behavior

The sharing behavior of young children refers to their voluntary and proactive act of sharing items, emotions, experiences, and so on with others during social interactions. This behavior is an important component of young children's prosocial behavior, reflecting their cooperative attitude and concern for others in social contexts[1-3].

1.2 Characteristics of Sharing Behavior in Early Childhood

The sharing behavior of young children exhibits different characteristics at different ages. Wei Xiaoping (2015) found that the level of sharing among young children initially decreases and then

significantly increases with age. Additionally, there is no significant difference in sharing behavior between genders. However, compared to younger girls, girls in middle and senior classes show a more pronounced tendency to share with same-sex peers. This may be closely related to the characteristics of gender cognition development in preschool children [4].

Further research indicates that young children display significant group selectivity in their sharing behavior, showing a higher willingness to share with familiar peers than with unfamiliar ones. Yi Chao (2013) summarized the characteristics of sharing behavior in 5- to 6-year-old children: Girls exhibit more sharing behaviors than boys; most sharing behaviors are driven by internal motivation; and the level of sharing behavior is primarily active sharing [5].

1.3 The Relationship between Construction Area Games and Sharing Behaviors

Construction area games are a vital component of kindergarten education. They promote children's exploration, creativity, and interaction by providing rich materials and a free space. Lee & Goh (2012) and Nath et al. (2014) noted that the characteristics of construction area games are mainly reflected in three aspects: openness, creativity, and interactivity [6-7]. Zhang Yuanyuan (2024) pointed out that the openness of the construction environment encourages children to share voluntarily and actively. In construction game activities, teachers typically impose few constraints on children's behavior, providing them with a relatively autonomous space for activity. Children are not required to remain in a fixed position or follow normative requirements such as "keep sitting" or "follow the teacher's instructions." They can move freely within the play area, select materials, and interact and collaborate with their peers without disturbing others. This open play environment feature is conducive to promoting children's spontaneous social interaction and experience sharing [8].

Wang Nan (2015) argued that construction games are a form of creative activity. Young children can fully exercise their imagination, use diverse construction materials for creative combination and construction, and achieve creative expression of the real world by manipulating various construction components. Moreover, in construction area game activities, young children often face challenges such as insufficient materials or unstable construction objects. These situations prompt them to seek solutions through independent exploration and practice. The process of solving such problems not only enhances children's practical operation skills but also positively promotes the development of their logical thinking ability and innovative consciousness. Additionally, construction area games allow young children to express their thoughts and emotions in various ways, which is conducive to their all-around development [9].

Interactivity is reflected in the fact that construction area games usually require the joint participation and cooperation of multiple children. For example, building a large block structure demands division of labor and cooperation among several children. Such cooperative games not only cultivate children's team spirit but also promote the development of their social skills. Furthermore, in construction area games, children need to engage in extensive verbal communication, such as discussing game plans, assigning tasks, and solving problems. These verbal interactions not only expand children's language reserves but also effectively enhance their language expression and social communication skills. Meanwhile, construction area game activities create a good emotional interaction space for young children, promoting emotional communication and connection among peers, which is conducive to children's emotional development and mental health. You Jing (2016) concluded that construction games offer not only entertainment but also enable young children to acquire skills while having fun. By participating in construction activities, children can exercise their body coordination and fine motor skills, stimulate creative thinking, and cultivate problem-solving abilities. By combining entertainment with learning, children can enhance their cognitive abilities and develop their creative potential through hands-on operation [10].

As an important form of activity in early childhood education, construction area games hold multiple values for children's development. These activities can not only stimulate children's practical operation ability and innovative thinking but also enhance their social communication skills and collective collaboration awareness by creating collaborative situations, effectively promoting the development of children's sharing behavior [11-13].

Construction area games offer young children rich opportunities for cooperation, which directly promote their sharing behavior. In construction activities, children often need to collaborate to achieve specific construction goals, such as jointly building a castle or assembling a large model. These tasks usually require participants to divide roles, and this kind of cooperative task prompts children to share materials, tools, and ideas, thereby enhancing their sharing awareness [14].

Construction area games effectively enhance children's social interaction skills through rich social interactions, thereby positively impacting the development of their sharing awareness. In these games, children need to engage in a large amount of language communication, such as discussing game plans, assigning tasks, and solving problems. This kind of language communication not only enriches children's vocabulary but also enhances their expression and communication skills. For instance, when a young child needs certain materials, he or she needs to express his or her requirements to peers through language. This process of expression promotes the child's sharing behavior [15].

Through team-based construction activities, children's collective awareness is effectively cultivated. The enhancement of this group awareness further promotes the development of their sharing behaviors. In the construction area games, young children often need to divide tasks and cooperate, with each person responsible for different tasks. This division of labor and cooperation not only improves the efficiency of the games but also cultivates children's team awareness. In the process of division of labor and cooperation, young children need to share materials, tools, and ideas, thereby enhancing their sharing behavior.

2. Method

2.1 Research Purpose

The present study employed the observation and interview methods to observe and record the sharing behaviors of senior class children in the construction area games at L Kindergarten in Guangzhou. A typical case analysis was conducted to elucidate the current situation of sharing behaviors among senior class children in these games. Based on the findings, reasonable and effective recommendations were proposed to address the existing issues in the development of sharing behaviors among senior class children. These recommendations aim to provide a scientific basis for preschool education practice and to promote the effective enhancement of children's social adaptability.

2.2 Research Object

The site for this study was selected at L Kindergarten in Guangzhou City. This kindergarten is a publicly funded institution established by the education department. It comprises three classes for each of the small, medium, and large grades, totaling nine classes. During the internship period, the researcher developed the greatest familiarity with the children in Class Two; hence, this class was chosen for observation and interviews. Class Two consists of 27 children in total, including 24 who are 5 years old and 3 who are 6 years old. The class has 14 girls, representing 52% of the total number of children, and 13 boys, representing 48%. The head teacher of Class Two, Teacher Lu, is 30 years old and holds an associate degree. She has been teaching for eight years and is highly familiar with the personalities and behavioral patterns of the children in her class. The language expression ability

of the children in this class is generally strong, and they are capable of clearly articulating their thoughts and emotions. This characteristic provides a solid foundation for the research.

2.3 Research Methods

2.3.1 Observation Method

This study referenced the "Observation and Measurement Scale of Children's Sharing Behavior" developed by Yi Chao (2013) and employed the non-participatory observation method to collect data through systematic observation and recording [5]. During the construction area play, the observer meticulously documented the children's sharing behaviors without interference, ensuring the authenticity and naturalness of the data. The research subjects were 27 children from Class 2 of L Kindergarten in Guangzhou City, comprising 13 boys and 14 girls. The observation period spanned from October 2024 to December 2024, totaling three months. During this period, 50 observations of children's sharing behaviors were conducted, with each observation focusing on one child to ensure the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the data. The observation content covered the following six aspects: Sharing Process, Shared Content, Sharing Frequency, Sharing Motivation, Sharing Object, Attitude and Emotion of the Sharing Subject.

Following each observation, the observer interviewed both the sharing subject and the recipient to further confirm the motivation and emotional experience associated with the sharing behavior. The recording method utilized was direct handwritten documentation, and the children's sharing mood was verified a second time after the observation was completed.

2.3.2 Interview Method

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the motives and psychological states underlying young children's sharing behaviors, this study employed the interview method as a supplementary research tool. The interviewees included the 27 children from Class Two and their head teacher, Mr. Lu. The interview content focused on reconstructing the specific context of sharing behaviors within the game setting, with the aim of obtaining more in-depth qualitative data.

Interview Content for Young Children:

- "Why did you share the building blocks with other children?"
- "Do you always give your toys to other children to play with during your daily games?"
- "How did you feel after sharing the building blocks with other children?"

Interview Content for Teachers:

- "What criteria do you use when distributing game materials to young children? What is the rationale behind your approach?"
- "During games, some young children are reluctant to share with others. How do you handle such situations?"
- "In your daily educational and teaching activities, how do you guide children to engage in sharing behaviors?"

Prior to conducting the interviews, consent was obtained from both the preschool teacher and the parents. An appropriate time and place were selected to ensure a comfortable and quiet interview environment. During the interview process, the researchers maintained a patient and friendly demeanor, guiding the children to express their thoughts in simple and understandable language. The detailed content of each interview was meticulously recorded.

3. Research Results

3.1 Observation Results of Sharing Behaviors in the Construction Area Games of Senior Class Children

Through systematic observation and recording of the sharing behaviors of 27 senior class children in Class 2 of L Kindergarten in Guangzhou during the construction area games, the study found that 20 children exhibited obvious sharing behaviors, accounting for 74% of the total number. However, 7 children did not display any obvious sharing behaviors, representing 26% of the total number. This indicates that the majority of children in the senior classes have developed a basic awareness and ability to share, although some children still require further guidance and cultivation.

In terms of shared content, children primarily shared toys (30%) and emotions (33%). The high proportion of emotional sharing may be related to the strong language and emotional expression abilities of the children in this class. An interview with Mr. Lu, the head teacher of Class Two, revealed that the children actively share interesting things from home every day and are highly engaged in activities. Mr. Lu stated, "The children in our class enjoy sharing interesting things from home daily. During activities, whenever I ask questions, they are very eager to raise their hands and respond." Additionally, teachers regularly lead the children in reading picture books and telling stories, which significantly enhances their language expression abilities (See Figure 1).

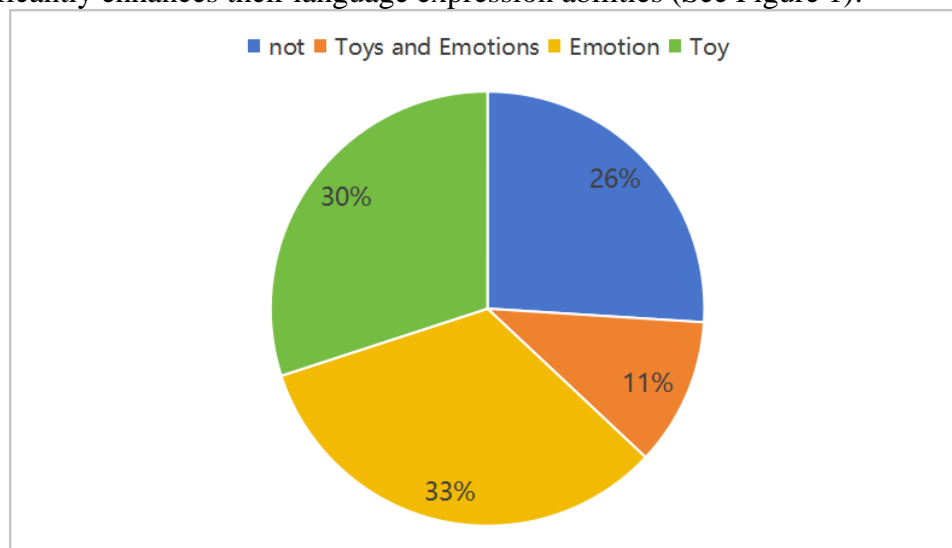


Figure 1: Content shared by children

Among children with obvious sharing behaviors, girls (57%) were more likely than boys (23%) to share toys or both toys and emotions. Specifically, girls were more willing to share toys, such as building blocks and snowflakes. In contrast, boys placed greater emphasis on emotional sharing, with a proportion of 62%. Only 7% of girls exhibited emotional sharing. Furthermore, 21% of the girls were able to share both toys and emotions simultaneously, demonstrating a relatively mature sharing ability. This difference may be related to the role expectations during the gender socialization process of young children and the positive guidance provided by teachers. Mr. Lu actively encourages children to share in daily life, enhancing their sharing awareness and promoting sharing behaviors. He mentioned, "I place great importance on the development of children's language skills and prosocial abilities. Apart from a few transfer students in our class, the sharing behavior skills of the other children have developed quite well". (See Table 1).

Table 1: Differences between Men and Women in Shared Content

Gender	Sharing content	Number	Percentage
Male	Emotions	8	62%
	Toy	3	23%
	Toys and Emotions	0	0%
female	not	2	15%
	Emotions	1	7%
	Toy	5	36%
	Emotions	3	21%
	not	5	36%

3.2 Sharing Motivation

After detailed observation of the sharing behaviors of senior class children in the construction game, sharing motivations were categorized into three types: internal motivation, external motivation, and both. The results show that among the observed sharing behaviors, 12 cases (44% of the total) were driven by internal motivation. This indicates that nearly half of the children's sharing behaviors are based on their own needs, such as achieving a sense of accomplishment or satisfying the need for self-expression. Six cases (22% of the total) were caused by external motives, such as obtaining praise from teachers or recognition from peers. This suggests that some children's sharing behaviors are in response to external rewards or expectations. Two cases (7% of the total) were the result of combined internal and external motivations, indicating that these children's sharing behaviors were driven by both internal needs and external influences. Seven cases (26% of the total) showed no obvious sharing motivation during the observation period, implying that these children may lack the willingness or need to share in specific situations. This result reveals that the sharing behaviors of senior class children in construction games are mainly driven by internal motivation, indicating that children have developed a certain degree of self-awareness and willingness to share. The presence of external and no motivation suggests that appropriate external incentives may enhance children's willingness to share, and further exploration is needed to stimulate the intrinsic drive of children who lack sharing motivation.

3.3 The Frequency of Sharing Behavior in the Construction Area among Senior Class Children is Relatively Low

In the statistics of sharing frequency, a sharing frequency of 0 times is recorded as none, 0 to 1 time as very few, 1 to 2 times as average, and 3 to 4 times as frequent. Through observation and statistics, most children's sharing frequency in the construction area games was concentrated at about 1-2 times.

During the observation period, children who shared 1-2 times included both emotions and toys in their shared content. A few children shared 3 to 4 times. This is because some children who are less popular in the class may try to gain others' recognition by sharing their toys or building blocks, thereby increasing their popularity. An interview with Mr. Lu from Class Two revealed that some children who are not very good at regular routines may not be as popular in the class. They often need reminders from other children to do things well. Therefore, in games, other children may not be as willing to keep them company, leading these children to voluntarily sacrifice some of their own interests to attract others to play with them.

4. Suggestions for Promoting Sharing Behaviors in Senior Class Children

4.1 Promoting Children's Understanding of Sharing through Multiple Approaches

Firstly, stories and picture books can be utilized to cultivate children's awareness of sharing. These educational materials, with their vivid narratives and distinct character images, can facilitate young children's comprehension of abstract concepts. Educators may select reading materials such as "Rainbow Fish," which incorporate the theme of sharing [16]. By narrating the story and organizing discussion activities, they can help children understand the significance and value of sharing behavior. Subsequently, teachers can organize role-playing activities for children, enabling them to experience the joy and meaning of sharing in context. Secondly, educators should design sharing scenarios and create practical platforms. In daily teaching activities, educators can carefully design interactive scenarios that require sharing, such as team games or collaborative projects, and encourage children to share toys, materials, or creativity during these activities. For example, in block-building activities, teachers can guide children to allocate limited resources reasonably and complete large-scale construction projects through collaboration. This kind of practical activity not only enables children to personally experience the value of sharing but also cultivates their collaborative ability and sense of collectivism. Thirdly, home-school collaboration should be enhanced to jointly cultivate sharing behaviors. As the primary environment for children's growth, the family's words and deeds significantly influence the formation of children's behavioral habits. Teachers can convey the significance of education to parents through parent symposiums, home-school communication handbooks, and other means, and provide family guidance suggestions. For instance, parents can be encouraged to prompt their children to share toys and snacks with siblings or peers during family gatherings, thereby gradually cultivating children's awareness of sharing.

4.2 Strengthening the Behavior of Sharing Happiness

The cultivation of sharing behavior requires not only that young children understand the meaning of sharing but also that they experience happiness and satisfaction during the process of sharing. Therefore, teachers should provide positive feedback in a timely manner. When children exhibit sharing behavior, teachers should promptly offer positive feedback to reinforce this behavior. This feedback can take the form of verbal praise, such as "You just shared your toys with your peers. That's wonderful!" or a behavioral reward, such as awarding a "Sharing Little Star" badge or sticker. Through positive feedback, children can feel that their sharing behavior is recognized and encouraged, thereby enhancing their motivation to share. Additionally, teachers can guide other children to express gratitude and praise for the sharing behavior, further enhancing the positive experience of the child who shared. Secondly, teachers should guide children to recognize the positive emotions associated with sharing. Through questioning and discussion, teachers can help children realize the joy and satisfaction that sharing brings [17-18]. For example, after a child shares a toy, the teacher can ask, "How do you feel when you share your toy and see the other child's happy expression?" Through such guidance, children can more clearly perceive the positive emotions associated with sharing. Moreover, teachers can use stories or situational simulations to help children understand that sharing not only brings happiness to others but also to themselves.

4.3 Providing Abundant Material Resources and a Pleasant Sharing Environment

The environment exerts a subtle yet significant influence on children's behavior. Teachers can create a warm and friendly classroom environment to foster a culture of sharing. For instance, a "sharing corner" can be established to encourage children to bring their favorite toys and books to

kindergarten to share with their peers. In the sharing corner, teachers can display slogans such as “Sharing Doubles Happiness,” and through decoration and arrangement, create an atmosphere that highlights the joy of sharing. Additionally, teachers can design group activities that require cooperation and sharing, allowing children to experience the pleasure of sharing in a relaxed and enjoyable setting [19-21].

5. Summary of Research on Sharing Behavior in Senior Class Children during Construction Area Activities

This study focuses on the sharing behavior of children in the construction area activities of the senior class. Through systematic observation and in-depth analysis, it explores the manifestation characteristics, developmental patterns, and related influencing factors of their sharing behavior. The research results indicate that there are gender and age differences in the sharing behavior of senior class children during construction games, and the development of this behavior is closely related to factors such as children’s cognitive development level, family education model, and teacher guidance strategies.

5.1 Gender and Age Differences in Sharing Behavior

Firstly, the research data reveal that senior class children exhibit gender differences in sharing behaviors, with girls demonstrating a higher frequency of sharing behaviors than boys. This disparity may be associated with the inherent gender role perceptions held by educators and parents. They generally believe that girls are more amiable and compliant, while boys are considered to have a later maturation in their social development, resulting in relatively lower sharing behavior performance among boys. Furthermore, the study also found that with increasing age, the sharing behavior of senior class children shows a gradually strengthening trend. Sharing behavior predominantly occurs among close peers, and the sharing objects are mostly same-sex partners.

5.2 Motivation and Impact of Sharing Behavior

Secondly, the sharing behavior of young children is primarily driven by internal motivation, characterized by strong initiative and altruism. Through observation and interview methods, the research found that young children often feel happy and satisfied during the sharing process. Sharing behavior plays a significant role in establishing positive peer relationships and promoting the development of social adaptability in young children. However, several issues were observed in the sharing process of young children that warrant attention, such as low sharing frequency and lack of clear feedback from the recipients of sharing. These issues may be related to the cognitive development level of young children, family parenting styles, and the environmental settings of kindergartens.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, the results of this study underscore the importance of addressing gender differences in children’s sharing behavior in educational practice. It is essential to promote the development of children’s sharing behavior by providing an appropriate educational environment and strategies. In response to the observed issues, educators and parents should consider optimizing children’s sharing experiences by increasing the frequency of sharing and encouraging feedback from recipients. Meanwhile, the study highlights the significant role of family education and teacher guidance in the development of children’s sharing behaviors and points out potential directions for future research

and practice.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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