

A Literature Review on the Development of the Family Education Guidance Service in China

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중국 가정교육지도 서비스에 관한 문헌고찰

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Abstract

The Family Education Guidance Service is a public service developed by the government to give guidance and service to parents on educating their children in China. Recently, the service has attracted increasing attention from scholars, as well as from the Chinese Government. To assess the current status of research on the Family Education Guidance Service, this paper firstly introduces the policy history and clarifies the definition of the Family Education Guidance Service and other relevant terms used in China. It then presents a review of studies on the Family Education Guidance Service published in journals with high-grade ratings and analyzes the characteristics of current research in terms of year of publication, author affiliations, research themes, research methods, and target groups. Based on these, it makes suggestions for future development. Overall, 43 papers are reviewed, the findings of which reveal that related research is at the beginning of an upswing. Most authors belong to education colleges and law colleges of universities. The themes studied most often are the strategy exploration and legal construction of the Family Education Guidance Service. The parents of primary- and middle-school students are the most commonly studied group, followed by schoolteachers. The results indicate that despite the growing number of publications, research in this field is still in its early stages and many aspects require further exploration.

Keywords

Chinese Family Education Guidance Service, parent education, family education, literature review

Introduction

This paper introduces research on the Chinese Family Education Guidance Service (FEGS). It considers the policy history, clarifies definitions and reviews studies on the FEGS published in core Chinese journals. Although the FEGS is a public service proposed by the Chinese Government, it is also an educational process for parents. It aims to guide them in educating their children and promoting their healthy growth.

Family education guidance was not widely studied until the 2010s, even though it was first introduced in the 1990s. Numerous studies were based on personal experiences and lacked empirical evidence (Li & Liu, 2018; Li & Wang, 2021). After 2016, and especially after 2019, the number of studies increased rapidly following the proposition that “China

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should build a family education guidance service system covering urban and rural areas and include this system in the national public governance system” in 2019 by the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Subsequently, in 2021, the Family Education Promotion Law of the People’s Republic of China (The Family Education Promotion Law) was enacted. This marked the first specialized legislation on family education in China. Within this context, research in this area is expanding, from building parent schools, fostering children’s moral education, and supporting migrant and left-behind children or families in rural and poor areas to providing a family education guidance service for everyone, educator training, service evaluation, and facilitating the construction of a national system.

Although numerous studies have been published on the Chinese FECS, current research is still in its infancy. Li and Liu (2018) reviewed research on family education guidance from 2000 to 2017 and analyzed the number of publications, institutions, and primary authors. Li and Wang (2021) reviewed 545 pieces of literature published in CNKI from 2000 to 2020 to assess the number of publications, author affiliations, leading journals, and popular topics. Huang (2022) analyzed the number of publications and funding sources. Together, these studies provide the following insights into the current state of research. Firstly, there is now a rapidly growing trend (Huang, 2022; Li & Liu, 2018; Li & Wang, 2021). Secondly, the number of core journal papers is small (Li & Liu, 2018; Li & Wang, 2021). This means that an insufficient number of papers is being published in journals with rigorous academic requirements. Thirdly, the most popular research topics related to family education guidance are “Promoting Parent–School Cooperation,” “Caring for Rural Left-behind Children,” “School Running and Development of Parent Schools,” “Building a FECS System based on Moral Education,” and “Promoting Family Education under the Guidance of School Teachers.” (Li & Wang, 2021)

Although the existing literature can help illuminate the current state of the FECS, it still has several limitations.

For instance, most literature reviews employ quantitative methods focusing on the number of publications, authors, and journals, which only provide information on study trends and sources. Except for Li and Wang (2021), who explicitly used the Co-Word Visual Analysis Method to find popular topics, none of the studies strictly describes the research method and process. Due to the limited research scope and ambiguity in the methodology of existing reviews, this paper employs the content analysis method to broaden the scope and to capture more specific characteristics of current research in China, including themes, methods, and target groups. Furthermore, because no study has systematically summarized and compared relevant terminologies, this paper introduces relevant terms before reviewing the literature.

In this study, we reviewed journal papers to assess the current status of research on the FECS. This type of approach can provide insights into research trends over time, Chinese scholars’ interests, involved academic fields, important themes and participants, preferred research methods, and current academic level. The literature reviewed for this study was limited to journal papers included in the Peking University Core Journals (PKU Core Journals) and Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI). The literature was selected using screening criteria and analyzed using content analysis in terms of the following categories: ① year of publication, ② author affiliation, ③ research theme, ④ research method, and ⑤ research target group (Durlauf et al., 2007; Jeoung et al., 2012). The results are then discussed and suggestions are presented for future development.

The policy history

After the Reform and Opening Up in 1978, China moved from an agricultural society to an industrial and information society (Fei, 2000). Since then, the economic, cultural and social environment has changed dramatically, as have the relationships, structure, and function of the family. The

mass movement of the population has also given rise to a large number of migrant and left-behind children who face severe difficulties and challenges in their education and growth (Duan & Zhou, 2005; Fan et al., 2009). To address these social issues, the government has begun to pay attention to family education by providing a guidance, service and support for parents.

In the 1980s, no specialized policies existed in this field, although some relevant regulations were scattered across laws and policies designed to protect children's rights and interests. The policies during this period suggested enhancing the duties of parents toward their children, advocated that family education should cooperate with school education and emphasized cultivating children's morality. Nevertheless, there were no specific regulations on how to provide guidance and support for parents.

In 1996, the "National Family Education the Ninth Five-Year Plan" was enacted which was the first specialized policy to be named "family education" after the Reform and Opening Up, being the first five-year plan for family education in China. Subsequently, it became customary for the National Women's Federation to formulate five-year family education plans with other government departments. Through these specialized policies, the government began to emphasize providing parents with "family education guidance" to enhance their knowledge of childcare and increase their responsibility and awareness by establishing parent schools in primary and middle schools and kindergartens.

From 2011 onward, policies on family education have been increasing and are continually being updated. Such policies included the proposed provision of the FECS and the establishment of a FECS System. These policies gradually developed toward standardization and legalization (Kong, 2022). In 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized the importance of family education. With the president's advocacy, policies in this field have begun to develop rapidly. Since 2016, 10 provinces or municipalities nationwide have started exploring and developing local family education laws. In October 2019, the Fourth Plenary Session of the

19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed that China should build a FECS system covering urban and rural areas and incorporate this into the national public governance system.

Furthermore, based on an exploration of local family education legislation, the Family Education Promotion Law was adopted by the 31st Session of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress on October 23, 2021. This was the first specialized legislation on family education in China. The law clarifies the roles and responsibilities of family, government, and also social organizations and groups. Its purpose is to instruct parents in how to educate their children and how the government and society should provide them with support and assistance. The FECS in China has officially entered an era with legal support. With these policies, studies in this field are proliferating and the terminology has changed from the Family Education Guidance to the Family Education Guidance Service and, most recently, the Family Education Guidance Service System.

Relevant terms in China

Before delving into research on the Chinese FECS, it is essential to clarify some of the relevant terms that scholars use.

In contrast to the wide use of the term "Family Life Education" in Western countries, the phrase "Family Education (家庭教育)" is used in China, which refers specifically to parents' educational behavior toward their children. Most studies in China agree with the following definition by Zhao Zhongxin (2017): "Family Education refers to a purposive mutual influence process and results between family members. Family Education does not only refer to the influence of parents (the older generation) on their children (the younger generation). It also includes children's (the younger generation) influence toward their parents (the older generation) or educational influences between brothers and sisters." However, in most studies,

scholars use the definition of educational influence being exerted by parents over children.

To support Family Education, the Chinese Government proposed a series of terms represented by the FECS (家庭教育指导服务) over time. On the one hand, the FECS refers to the guidance and service provided by the government and specialized social organizations for parents; on the other, it refers to the guidance and service offered to enhance the quality of parenting, improve parents' behavior, increase the quality of family education, and ultimately promote the development of minors (China National Children's Center, 2016).

Regarding this activity, the Chinese Government has been improving the terminology that is used. The term FECS was proposed on the basis of the term "Family Education Guidance(家庭教育指导)" which was first used by the Chinese Government. The primary mission of Family Education Guidance is to publicize the importance of family education, popularize family education knowledge and guide parents to solve problems in the family. On this basis, the FECS contributes to enhancing the understanding and satisfaction of parents' needs in family education (China National Children's Center, 2016). The FECS System (家庭教育指导服务体系) is a new term proposed by the government to refer to a system that realizes the function of FECS. It contains not only entity elements such as service content (courses, programs, books, etc.), service target groups, service provider, and service mode, but also mechanism elements (administration, system) to ensure the efficient operation of these entity elements (Bian & Zhang, 2021).

Other relevant terms used by Chinese scholars are "*Jia Zhang Education*"(家长教育), "*Qin Zhi Education*"(亲职教育), "*Fu Mu Education*" (父母教育), and "Parent-Child Education" (亲子教育). *Jia Zhang Education*, *Qin Zhi Education* and *Fu Mu Education* have similar connotations, while several scholars think that they are the same, only with a different calling (Gai & Wang, 2006; Hong, 2017; P. Li, 2021; Sun, 2021). All refer to an adult education implemented by society or schools for those who are or will be parents. The purpose is to ensure that parents understand their responsibilities, guide them to learn the relevant knowledge

and methods and improve their ability to become 'competent parents'. Chinese scholars widely use the term "*Jia Zhang Education* and *Qin Zhi Education*", while the term "*Fu Mu Education*" is seldom used. Parent-child education usually includes parental and affection education (Hu, 2002). It covers the education of parents and children, highlighting their interaction. It emphasizes parents' self-education and is a unique type of early childhood education. Because parent-child education has apparent differences from the other terms mentioned, it will not be discussed any further in this paper.

Compared with the connotations of *Jia Zhang Education* and *Qin Zhi Education*, FECS emphasizes the guidance and service to the family and parents from the perspective of the government, emphasizing not only "what parents should learn to educate children," but also that "the government should build a system to support parent education." Aside from the connotative differences, the usage trends of Family Education Guidance, *Jia Zhang Education* and *Qin Zhi Education* also differ. The authors searched for the three terms according to the Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure(CNKI) as of 2022.12.31 and found that Family Education Guidance, *Jia Zhang Education*, and *Qin Zhi Education* have been used in 268, 254, and 242 articles, respectively. Although the numbers are similar, the usage trend differs. The Family Education Guidance began relatively late in 1993, but has increased rapidly since 2016, while the use of *Jia Zhang Education* and *Qin Zhi Education* started early in 1986, but decreased after 2018. In other words, Family Education Guidance is becoming more widely used than *Jia Zhang Education* and *Qin Zhi Education*. This is due to the family education policies promoted by the government. Since the FECS is more aligned with China's current policies, this paper now reviews studies on FECS.

Method

The selection of literature

The literature was selected in three steps. Firstly, a

Table 1. The Number of Publications by Year of FECS Core Journal Papers

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of publications	1	1	3	0	2	2	2	3	13	16

search of literature was conducted through CNKI – China’s biggest literature search website – using the algorithm: “the Subject Word = FECS.” Based on this, 417 pieces of literature were found. Secondly, using the inclusion criteria, 46 core journal papers were identified. The inclusion criteria were: “Literature should be published till 2022.12.31” and “Literature should be published in journals included by the CSSCI or PKU Core Journals.” CSSCI and PKU core journals are widely recognized and used by Chinese scholars due to their rigorous academic standards. These journals are selected through expert identification and screening processes. Thirdly, the following exclusion criteria were applied: “studies not identified as articles in the journals (e.g., book reviews, books, news, interviews, etc.)” and “literature which mentioned the term FECS, but discusses other topics such as middle-school students’ morals, education or family integration of migrant children.” Authors then read all titles and abstracts to identify whether the studies met these criteria. Through this process, three papers were excluded, leaving 43 articles from the core journals to be discussed.

The analysis of the literature

Content analysis was employed to analyze the 43 pieces of literature with respect to the categories identified: ① The years of publication. Because the earliest core journal paper was published in 2013, the overall time frame was from 2013.1.1 to 2022.12.31. ② Author affiliations through which the main academic fields can be found. ③ Themes. Four themes and 12 subthemes were grouped according to the purposes, methods, and results of the 43 papers. These were demand survey and status analysis, strategy exploration, legal construction, and experience learning, training and evaluation. For each theme, subthemes were described in detail. ④ Methods employed in the 43 pieces of literature were analyzed in order to understand

the current characteristic of research methods. These were classified as non-empirical, qualitative interview, quantitative description, and quantitative explanatory and causal research. ⑤ The target groups. These included parents, grandparents, schoolteachers, community service center instructors, government administrators, and researchers. This paper selected literature strictly according to the selection process and conducted a re-examination. Following the selection, the authors read all the papers in detail and extracted the information relevant to each category. Content analysis was then used to classify and code them according to the categories, the findings of which are summarized in the following section.

Results

The number of publications by year

As indicated in Table 1, the first paper from the core journal was published in 2013. Before 2021, the number of core journal papers was very small – only 14 papers. Nevertheless, in the two most recent years there have been 29 articles, more than twice the number of papers published previously.

The above results reveal that research on the FECS has progressively increased, especially during the past two years. This indicates that such research is at an up-going stage and is influenced by government policies, as supported by the findings of Huang (2022).

Authors’ affiliations and disciplines

Table 2 summarizes the results regarding author affiliations. To prevent duplicate counting of affiliations in papers with multiple authors from the same institution, only the first author was considered. As indicated in Table 2, most authors are from universities, the majority of whom

Table 2. FECS Core Journal Paper Authors' Affiliations and Disciplines

Affiliation	Discipline	Number
Universities	Education College	22
	Law College	3
Educational Institutes		12
Law Institutes		4
Others		2

work in education colleges or law colleges. There are also numerous authors from education research institutes and law research institutes. Only two authors are from other organizations.

Scholars are mainly based in education colleges in Chinese universities because there are no child development and family studies disciplines in China. Furthermore, until now, only a few universities have been initiating the discipline of family education, so most scholars work in the field of preschool education, education policy, or principles of pedagogy. Notably, a significant amount of research comes from the legal field, implying that this is a crucial period for law construction and exploration of the FECS in China.

Themes

Overall, 12 subthemes and four themes are classified and integrated into Table 3. These are Parent Demand Survey &

FECS Usage Status, Strategy & Content Exploration, Policy Analysis & Legal Construction, and Foreign Experience, Training & Evaluation.

Theme One: Parent Demand Survey and FECS Usage Status

There were eight papers in total on this theme, consisting of two subthemes. With respect to the Parent Demand Survey, there are surveys for parents nationally, as well as for those with specific characteristics such as in certain regions or at a certain age. Jiang et al. (2022) analyzed the characteristics of the parents of 3415 primary- and middle-school students who participated in a national survey of 113 counties in nine provinces (autonomous regions or municipalities). Parents with specific characteristics were also studied by Cai and Xie (2017) who studied 114 parents of children aged 0–3 in Wuhan. Li et al. (2014) conducted a needs comparison of “post-80s” and “pre-80s” parent groups. They found that parents have a high demand for the FECS, and according to their characteristics such as age, region, income and educational level the need for the FECS also changes (Li et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2022). However, FECS provision is insufficient compared with demand; hence, there is a mismatch between the provision and parents' needs (Cai & Xie, 2017; Jiang et al., 2022).

Bian et al. (2021), Ju et al. (2022) and Liang and Bian

Table 3. The Four Themes of FECS Core Journal Papers

Themes	Subthemes	Number of studies
Parent Demand Survey & FECS Usage Status	Parent Demand Survey	8
	FECS Usage Status	
Strategy & Content Exploration	General Construction Strategies	16
	Specific Construction Strategies	
	Government Purchasing Ways-One Specific Construction Strategy	
	Education Thoughts	
Policy Analysis & Legal Construction	Legal Construction before the Promotion Law	14
	Effects and Improvements after Implementing the Promotion Law	
	Overviews of Policy Development	
Foreign Experience, Training & Evaluation	Foreign Experience Learning	5
	Training	
	Evaluation	
Total		43

(2022) studied FECS usage status at schools and in communities based on a national survey of 113 counties in nine provinces (autonomous regions or municipalities). Lei and Xiang (2022) studied the interaction between parent education ability and the usage of the FECS. Li and Ren (2013) discussed FECS usage status for migrant and left-behind children families. All these authors emphasize the fact that the FECS System has been established in schools and communities, but a gap remains with respect to meeting parents' needs and policy requirements (Bian et al., 2021; Ju et al., 2022; Liang & Bian, 2022). Various institutions or platforms provide FECS, including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, community centers (stations), social organizations, and mass media. Among these, schools are most preferred by parents for obtaining the FECS, while more than 90% of the schools surveyed have formed special teams responsible for providing the FECS (Bian et al., 2021). The most common service modes for the FECS are individual consultation, lectures, cooperation with other organizations (such as universities, communities, and social institutions), and inviting parents to share experiences. The service content is mainly concerned with children's mental health and moral development, developmental rules, and methods for developing good behavior in children. However, neither the content nor the mode of the FECS provided at school or in the community matches parents' needs (Bian et al., 2021; Ju et al., 2022; Liang & Bian, 2022). In addition, scholars draw attention to other problems with the FECS, including low professional standards among educators, inadequate training and assessment, insufficient funding, and a lack of ability to integrate resources. Moreover, families with migrant and left-behind children lack specific support policies and management systems, and the guidance targets are often not parents, but children (Li & Ren, 2013).

Theme Two: Strategy and Content Exploration

There were 16 papers on this theme, consisting of four subthemes: General Construction Strategies, Specific Construction Strategies, Government Purchasing Ways, and Education Thoughts. Regarding General Construction

Strategies, scholars discuss establishing a national universal system and emphasize collaboration and coordination among multiple parties (government, school, and community) (Gao, 2021; Huang, 2018; Zhu, 2020). They also study ways to promote the FECS System in rural areas, schools, communities, and off-campus public education institutions by identifying difficulties and solutions (Bai & Xia, 2022; Bian, Ju et al., 2022; Gao & Bian, 2022; Ji & Kang, 2022; Wang, 2021; Zhu, 2021). For instance, the government uses "Government Purchasing Ways" which means buying professional social services for parents from professional organizations. However, this approach still has numerous problems, including imperfect systems and immature markets that require further exploration and improvement (Liu & Wu, 2022; Xin & Fan, 2017). For the final subtheme, Education Thoughts, scholars primarily discuss parents' incorrect concepts and emphasize the importance of having correct views on parenting and moral education for their children (Bian, 2021; Cai et al., 2021; Deng, 2015).

When analyzing this theme, the focus is on its mechanisms which include enhancing the responsibilities of government departments, fostering collaboration among multiple parties, and promoting equity. However, most studies focus on macro-level discussions and require a more detailed analysis of departmental responsibility and the development of parent education programs.

Theme Three: Policy Analysis and Legal Construction

Legal research on the FECS is primarily found in Family Education Promotion Law studies. There was a total of 14 papers on this theme which consists of three sub-themes: Legal Construction before the Family Education Promotion Law, Effects and Improvements after Implementing the Family Education Promotion Law, and Overviews of Policy Development. Prior to the Family Education Promotion Law, several studies discuss legislative practice in the local area (Li, 2021), the law's value, and content suggestions (Lao, 2021; Luo, 2018; Yang, 2022; Ye, 2020). Numerous studies focus on the rights and responsibilities of individuals, the country, and society and emphasize the organizational

structure and obligations of the government (Cai & Hu, 2020; Li et al., 2022; Ye, 2021). After implementing the Family Education Promotion Law, studies primarily discuss its effects and suggestions for improvement. Due to the short implementation period of the law, the number of papers in this area is small. Scholars indicate that there are still numerous gaps between reality and regulation and propose building supplementary legal systems or policies (Bian, Tian et al., 2022; Ye & Yang, 2022). With respect to Overviews of Policies Development, scholars suggest that policy development now displays the characteristics of “government leadership” and of “emphasizing the comprehensiveness and integration of the FEES System” (Kong, 2022).

Scholars argue that the purpose of family education legislation should be to improve parents’ capacity for family education (Ye, 2021; Yu & Yao, 2021). Furthermore, the key to achieving this is to identify and adjust the structure and responsibilities of government departments and promote follow-up support systems (Cai & Hu, 2020; Ye & Yang, 2022).

Theme Four: Foreign Experience, Training, and Evaluation

Scholars also explore several other topics in addition to the three main themes mentioned above. Because the number of studies involved is small, all are discussed under this theme. They comprise three papers on Foreign Experience Learning, one paper on Educator Training, and one paper on Evaluation of the current FEES. Three papers examine experiences in the United States and Taiwan and introduce systems, models, and projects from a broad perspective (Luo, 2015; Wang & Lei, 2020). No practical studies on implementing projects in China are available. Regarding educator training, the study reviewed surveyed school teachers and found that they lack professional and systematic training and assessment on the FEES (Zhang et al., 2021). Regarding evaluation, the study under review highlighted the general deficiency, regional differences, fragmented and partial assessment content, and difficulties through a national survey of 113 counties in nine provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) (Liang et al., 2022).

The theme on which scholars focus most is Strategy and

Table 4. The Methods Used in FEES Core Journal Papers

Method	Number of studies
Non-empirical method	32
Qualitative-Interview method	1
Quantitative-Descriptive method	3
Quantitative-Explanatory and causal method	5
Mixed methods	2
Total	43

Content Exploration. These studies mainly discuss the basic characteristics and framework of the system, while lacking detailed analyses of specific programs. The second most common theme is Policy Analysis and Legal Construction. Studies on this theme emphasize the distribution of responsibilities of government departments and the development of supplementary policies. Studies on the Parent Demand Survey and FEES Usage Status emphasize that although the FEES is widely provided in schools and communities, it cannot meet the needs of parents. Studies on other topics are minimal and need future exploration. These show that although the scope of the theme is varied, research on every aspect remains at an exploratory stage.

Methods

As listed in Table 4, only 25.6% of the studies used qualitative-interview, quantitative-descriptive, quantitative-explanatory, causal, and mixed research methods. This means that 74.4% lacked an empirical basis. Moreover, scholars used quantitative methods more frequently than mixed and qualitative methods. Using methods based on empirical evidence enables researchers to obtain reliable and valid data, which can help them obtain more accurate conclusions and trusted solutions. The lack of empirical methods in these papers reveals that FEES research is still in its infancy and requires more support from professional disciplines.

Target groups

The research target group refers to the population investigated in the 11 papers that applied empirical

Table 5. The Research Target Groups of FECS Core Journal Papers

Research target groups	Sub-category	Number of studies
Parents	0-3 years children parent	3
	Kindergarten children's parent	4
	Primary-school, middle-school student's parents	8
	Not mentioned	2
Grandparents	Grandparents	1
School teachers	Principal	6
	Class headteachers	2
	Psychology teacher	2
	Other teachers	1
Community Service Center educator	Community Service Center educator	2
Government administrators	Ministry of Education administrators	3
	Women's Federation administrators	3
	Community administrators	3
Researcher	Researcher	1
Total		41

methods. Table 5 summarizes the results. The research groups in these papers are diverse, including parents, grandparents, schoolteachers, government administrators, community service center instructors, and researchers. This is revealing in several aspects. Firstly, the studies attach the greatest importance to the needs of parents; secondly, school is the prominent place in which to provide the FECS, whereas schoolteachers are the second most studied group; thirdly, the government, as the organizer of the FECS, is also one of the critical research targets. However, there is a dearth of studies on community service center educators and researchers. This is because community service centers have only been initiated in economically developed areas (Bai & Xia, 2022). Furthermore, the discipline of family education has yet to be systematically established in most universities; therefore, the number of researchers in this area is small.

Discussion

This study introduced the policy history and definitions of relevant terms and presented a detailed literature review of the FECS in China. Forty-three papers from core journals

were selected according to the screening criteria and systematically reviewed using content analysis. The results were summarized according to year of publication, author affiliation, theme, method, and target group.

Although coverage of the FECS in core journals has increased rapidly in recent years, research in this field remains embryonic and needs to deepen in many aspects (Li & Wang, 2021). Regarding author affiliation, it is clear that many studies are conducted by scholars in other disciplines in education colleges because no discipline of family education exists in most universities. The development of FECS research and practice is considerably limited by the lack of professional discipline support. Furthermore, there is an insufficient number of authors from parent schools or community service centers that directly provide education service to target groups, which reveals that the research capabilities of front-line educators should be improved.

The current stage is a critical period for the legal construction of family education in China. The study of law is a major focus of current research, which creates a favorable environment for the FECS. Existing studies have focused on discussing Family Education Promotion Law and government responsibilities, but not enough research has

been conducted on developing specific follow-up systems (Ye & Yang, 2022). At the same time, the policy requirements cannot be met when compared with reality (Bian, Tian et al., 2022). It is therefore important to continue making a detailed study of legal construction.

Current research focuses on strategy constructions and legal studies, representing an exploration from a government perspective. These studies emphasize government responsibilities and the establishment of an integrated system (Gao, 2021; Ye, 2021). Most strategy exploration research focuses on macro frameworks, while legal studies mainly consider basic laws. These traits suggest that the research is still at its initial stages. To discover effective strategies, it is necessary to conduct more in-depth practical research.

Numerous scholars have studied the needs of parents and FECS usage status based on national survey research from 113 counties in nine provinces (autonomous regions or municipalities) (Bian et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2022; Ju et al., 2022; Liang & Bian, 2022), which has been immensely significant in illuminating the current situation of the FECS. Based on these results, scholars found that parents have a high demand for the FECS, but the content and modes of existing services cannot meet their needs. The FECS is primarily offered through lectures, counseling, and experience sharing (Bian et al., 2021), but studies on systematic and consistent program development are currently lacking.

Most parents prefer to receive the FECS through their child's school. However, the FECS provided by the school cannot meet their needs (Bian et al., 2021) and the teachers in schools that offer the FECS face numerous difficulties and need more training and support (Zhang et al., 2021). Because school is an important place in which to offer the FECS, scholars should undertake more in-depth studies in this areas.

It is also important to conduct more research on educator training, FECS evaluations, and learning from successful experiences. For instance, scholars should develop programs that meet the needs of Chinese parents or training and

evaluation programs by learning about outstanding programs overseas.

Studies on the FECS still fail to employ methods that generate empirical evidence, which is consistent with the findings of Li and Liu (2018) and Li and Wang (2021). Moreover, when studying parents, researchers often fail to differentiate between parents of elementary and middle-school students or consider other distinguishing features. Research in this field needs to implement a greater number of empirical methods and conduct a more detailed analysis of various groups such as grandparents or parents with different difficulties or features.

The above content reflects the fact that the rapid start and growth of the FECS is due to the promotion by the Chinese Government. Consequently, most research begins from the perspective of the government, focusing on the law, macro system construction, services status, and general parental needs. Although the purpose of family education is to improve parents' abilities, research reveals that the number, content and mode of the FECS often fails to meet their needs, while associated research targets lack specific distinctions and do not generate empirical evidence. Government policies have significantly fostered the growth of the FECS, but the lack of support from professional disciplines and methods has hindered its professional development.

Future Directions

Based on the results, we can make suggestions for future development in China, which may also enlighten Korean scholars.

Firstly, future research should focus on studying the connotation of the concept. There is a lack of clarity in its definition, as few studies have explored the FECS and related concepts. Additionally, the concept of family education in China differs from the concept of family life education. This may confuse international scholars and readers who have an interest in this field. The study and

expansion of the concept's connotation should be a focus of future research. It is also essential to establish and grow the family education discipline in Chinese universities in order to develop the FECS (Li & Liu, 2018; Li & Wang, 2021; Ye & Yang, 2022). Further research is necessary to study follow-up policies, government department responsibilities, and program development, as well as to conduct studies examining different groups.

The findings may be helpful for Korean scholars in the following respects. Firstly, this article gives Korean scholars insights into the development of parent education and its distinctive features in China. The rapid advancement of the FECS in China can be attributed to the government's promotion and policies that play a vital role in its development. Moreover, in China, the FECS is provided mainly by schools, and Chinese parents prefer schools to offer parent education. Conversely, in South Korea, family life education is primarily offered by the Healthy Family Support Center and Multicultural Family Support Center (now renamed as the Family Center) (Lee & Son, 2018). Parents of school-age children in South Korea may benefit more from utilizing schools.

Limitations

This study enhances understanding of the current research status of the FECS through a review of the literature. However, it is essential to acknowledge that this study has several limitations that must be considered. Firstly, it focuses only on the FECS. To understand the full scope of education for parents in China, scholars should conduct a review of studies using other terms such as "Jia Zhang Education" and "Qin Zhi Education." Secondly, this paper only reviewed studies from core journals; master's and doctoral dissertations were not included. Future research should therefore include the latter to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of this field.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest with respect to the authorship or publication of this article.

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