

## Comparative Analysis of Learner-centred Education in Early Childhood Curriculum Policies in England and Hong Kong

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**Abstract :** The curriculum is essential in determining the quality of early childhood education (ECE). Education policy is intricately linked to the effective execution of the preschool education curriculum. The learner-centred education (LCE) approach is a globally common educational concept. However, it is an approach that is applied variably in ECE policy-making and implementation across diverse cultural contexts. Notwithstanding its significance, limited study has investigated the ECE curriculum policies on the articulation and implementation of the LCE concept in England and Hong Kong's non-profit-making kindergartens — two regions with intricate historical and cultural connections. Moreover, both regions have experienced significant transformations in ECE policy since 1997. This research employs a qualitative comparative approach, with discourse analysis of key policy documents and relevant literature as the primary methodology. The study develops a comparison framework grounded in Adamson and Morris' curriculum comparison theory, which evaluates curricula from the perspectives of purpose, focus, and manifestation. The paper is structured around three key elements: (1) educational objectives; (2) implementation guidance, including pedagogical strategies, learning content and assessment mechanism; and (3) influential cultural ideologies. Through this framework, the study explores the similarities and differences in the design and implementation of LCE within ECE policies in England and Hong Kong's non-profit-making kindergartens, while examining the cultural factors that shape these policy variations. The findings indicate that both England and Hong Kong possess child-centered educational objectives focused on enhancing cognitive, skill-based, and physical development; however, Hong Kong's policies notably emphasize alleviating academic pressure in achieving these curriculum aims. England's recommendations advocate for play-based, and exploratory learning to augment children's cognitive development. Conversely, Hong Kong utilizes narrative techniques and indoor instruction to facilitate progressive education. Additionally, both areas encompass cognitive disciplines such as literacy and numeracy; however, England distinctly prioritizes citizenship education with an emphasis on cultural traits. In contrast, Hong Kong amalgamates Western educational ideas with an emphasis on traditional Chinese culture and values, encompassing the study of Chinese characters, etiquette, and moral education rooted in Confucian cultural ideologies. Ultimately, regarding assessment mechanisms, England has transitioned from government-led professional evaluation programs to a hybrid of market and governmental oversight. Conversely, Hong Kong's curriculum evaluation mechanism primarily consists of self-evaluation and public supervision, yet it is evident that the policy could benefit from greater receptiveness to public and expert input. The underlying cultural ideologies significantly influence these policy discrepancies. In England, ECE policies are guided by core concepts that viewing children as individuals, agents, and future citizens. In Hong Kong, the policies reflect Confucian traditions and cultural values, which shape their unique approach to ECE in Hong Kong societies. In conclusion, whereas both locations strive to advocate LCE for the comprehensive development of children, significant differences arise in curriculum focus and implementation policies, shaped by their respective cultural philosophies.

**Keywords :** curriculum policy, cultural contexts, early childhood education, learner-centred education

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