

# HUMAN WELFARE ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR: A PERSPECTIVE FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

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## Abstract

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Early childhood care and education (ECCE) have received increased attention in recent years, as this formative period has a significant impact on children's development (Kim, 2021). Effective human welfare organisational behaviour can improve the organisation's reputation, and contribute to the community's overall social and economic development (Veltmeyer & Rushton, 2011). This study explains human welfare organisational behaviour in the early childhood education service. A qualitative approach was employed, and a documentary method was used. In-depth interviews were conducted with ten early childhood development experts and academics in Thailand. The data were analysed using content analysis. The findings indicate that human welfare organisational behaviour in early childhood education services in Asia encompasses the attitudes and practices of organisations involved in providing education and care to children. This perspective focuses on fostering supportive environments that promote the well-being of children, families, and educators, while also ensuring the quality of educational services. Key elements of this viewpoint include prioritising the child's needs, promoting positive relationships, creating a safe and inclusive environment, and valuing the contributions of all stakeholders. Effective human welfare organisational behaviour in the early childhood education sector has the potential to enhance children's outcomes and contribute to the long-term development of Asia.

**Keywords:** Human Welfare, Organisational Behaviour, Early Childhood, Education, Services

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, academics, policymakers, governments, and parents have increasingly recognised early childhood care and education (ECCE) as a crucial foundation for children's development. This recognition is owing to the scientific discoveries of neuroscientists, which demonstrate the significance

of experiences in the first five years of a child's life, particularly interactions with other people and their surroundings (Center on the Developing Child, 2007). At birth, the average infant's brain is approximately one-fourth the size of the average adult's brain. In the first year, it doubles in size. It reaches around 80% of adult size by age 3 years old and 90%, or approaching maturity, by age 5 years old, and it

continues to develop thereafter (First Things First [FTF], n.d.). During this phase of fast brain development, the brain is most susceptible to both positive and negative environmental impacts. The likelihood of being exposed to negative environmental effects or experiences is considerable (Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2015). In particular, the pre-primary years (ages 3–6 years old) are a period of accelerated cognitive, social, and emotional development with potentially permanent impacts when exposed to environmental stresses, such as those associated with economic and health disadvantages. It is of the highest significance to target this high-potential era with quality ECCE in order to provide a solid foundation for learning (Kim, 2021).

Organisational behaviour describes how people interact with one another within a company or organisation. These interactions then have an impact on how the organisation behaves and performs. Organisational behaviour is used to increase efficiency, productivity, and innovation in order to give companies a competitive advantage (Kopp, 2023). Human welfare organisational behaviour refers to attitudes and practices within an organisation that prioritise and support the well-being and safety of its employees, customers, and other stakeholders. This viewpoint aims to foster a positive and supportive work environment that fosters healthy relationships, recognizes and values the contributions of all individuals, and provides opportunities for personal and professional development. Effective human welfare organisational behaviour can boost employee satisfaction and productivity, improve the organisation's reputation, and contribute to the community's overall social and economic development (Veltmeyer & Rushton, 2011; University of Canberra, 2021). Furthermore, the findings of the study by Ismail and El Nakkache (2014) are consistent with the conclusions reached from a socioeconomic standpoint. It explains why there is a stronger relationship between extrinsic job factors and job satisfaction in poorer countries and countries with weak social security systems, where survival issues become more important. For such workers, the extrinsic aspects of their jobs become more important. Individuals in these countries are more stimulated by extrinsic factors, which are typically unsatisfied needs at the bottom of the hierarchy. Extrinsic job characteristics such as pay, job security, and working conditions are more closely linked to job satisfaction in less developed countries.

According to the World Population Review (n.d.), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a global initiative in which around 600,000 15-year-old students from various nations take a two-hour exam measuring their abilities and knowledge, mostly in science, reading, and mathematics. PISA questions do not assess students' ability to memorise facts, but rather their ability to apply real-world problem-solving abilities and knowledge. Due to the correlation between a high PISA ranking and economic performance, academics have determined that PISA is one of the markers of whether education systems are educating pupils for the global information economy of the 21st century. The most current PISA results are the 2018 PISA results, which reveal that China is in first place,

Singapore is in second place, and South Korea is in fifth place. Moreover, Thailand was chosen as early childhood education plays a critical role in Thailand. The Thai early childhood education curriculum places a premium on desirable preschool child characteristics (Pinyoanuntapong, 2013).

Several studies investigate organisational behaviour, such as green human resource management for organisational citizenship behaviour (Anwar et al., 2020; Mousa & Othman, 2020) and organisational behaviour in housing (Jacobs & Manzi, 2020). Few studies investigate human welfare organisational behaviour in the context of early childhood education services. Therefore, this study aims to explain human welfare organisational behaviour in the context of early childhood education services in Asia nations: China, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand. The three Asian nations were chosen because of their high 2018 PISA scores mentioned earlier. The research question guiding this study is:

*RQ1: What are the key elements of effective human welfare organisational behaviour in early childhood education services in Asia, and how do they contribute to improving outcomes for children and fostering long-term development in the region?*

This study may aid the administration and government to enhance human welfare organisational behaviour in early childhood education services as human welfare organisational behaviour that is effective in the early childhood education sector can help to improve child outcomes while also contributing to Asia's long-term development.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review. Section 3 presents the research methodology. The study's results and discussions are reported in Section 4. In the final Section 5, the study's conclusion is presented.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human welfare refers to the distribution of resources to ensure the well-being of individuals. To maintain a high standard of living, it is necessary to find a balance between environmental concerns and economic growth. In a natural capital system, the improvement of desired services delivered, rather than solely focusing on increasing monetary flow, is essential for enhancing human welfare. The effectiveness of managing ecosystems and utilising natural resources depends heavily on integrated assessment tools that combine environmental models, monitoring data, and ecological economic valuation methods (Sundseth et al., 2009). Moreover, organisational behaviour pertains to the interactions among individuals within a company or organisation. These interactions influence the behaviour and performance of the organisation. In a business context, organisational behaviour is employed to enhance efficiency, productivity, and innovation, thereby providing a competitive advantage. The four components of organisational behaviour are people, structure, technology, and the external environment. Understanding the interplay between these elements facilitates improvements. While certain factors, such as organisational structure and employee selection, can be controlled by the organisation, it must also be responsive to external factors and changes in

the economic landscape. Additionally, organisational behaviour can be classified into three levels. The individual level encompasses organisational psychology and the comprehension of human behaviour and incentives. Social psychology and sociological insights into human interaction and group dynamics comprise the second level. Finally, the highest level is the organisational level, where organisation theory and sociology are utilised to conduct systems-level analyses and study how firms interact with each other in the marketplace (Lee et al., 2020; Kopp, 2023).

The effects of globalisation must be anticipated and accounted for in education, particularly in the teaching and learning processes (Siripipatthanakul et al., 2023). In Thailand, administration of early childhood education is optional. It is based on the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards et al. (2017) and emphasises child development, including physical development, emotional development, mental development, social development, reasoning, and problem-solving. There are other alternative preschool education programmes, such as Montessori, Waldorf, and HighScope, that have been implemented by certain childcare centres. The teaching and learning paradigm of Thai preschool is often a whole day, beginning at 07.30 and ending at 16.00. ECCE in Thailand have a policy level, a practical level, and a local-level encouragement mechanism. It is specified in the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board and the Office of the Prime Minister (n.d.). Four ministries, including the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), have collaborated to implement the programme's objectives and principles (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board & Office of the Prime Minister, n.d.). The majority of children ages 0 to 3 years old are under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Health. When children enter school between the ages of 4 and 6 years old, the MOE is primarily responsible for delivering primary education through a school system. The disability living allowance (DLA), which maintains a state-wide network of childcare centres, provides care for children ages 2.6 to 5 years old on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior. The MSDHS assists disadvantaged children and mothers. In addition, it provides regulations, procedures, and conditions for seeking a licence to establish a nursery, specifies the requirements of the applicant's licensee, and promotes the education of children. The MOE caters to children in kindergarten between the ages of 4 and 6 years old through remuneration for teachers, teaching and learning equipment, and other means. Together with the MSDHS, the childcare facilities under the DLA and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) will receive meal budgets, teaching and learning equipment, instructor compensation, and teacher training programmes (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2006).

The government finances the operation of public childcare facilities; for example, they are supported with public cash. These contributions often pay wages and operating expenses, and the facility is typically erected on public land or located in a public building. In rural regions,

the Sub-district Administrative Organisation (SAO) is responsible for allocating and distributing funding to childcare centres. Parents make a tiny monthly donation (ranging from \$0.20 to \$1), with the amount altering based on the resources of both the community and the parents. In rural areas and certain urban disadvantaged neighbourhoods where community engagement in ECCE programmes is effectively organised, village committees are actively involved in the management of the childcare centre. In addition to receiving gifts from private foundations, individuals, and corporations, public childcare facilities may also accept such contributions. In Bangkok and other big cities, where there are a greater number of private kindergartens catering to middle- and upper-income families that can afford the tuition and other expenses, children are often enrolled for three years. The office of the Private Education Commission regulates these private kindergartens (UNESCO, 2006).

During the past three decades, China's ECCE has undergone extraordinary and speedy changes; consequently, the development and ECCE of children have vastly improved. However, this development is imbalanced and unequal among China's rural and urban regions because of the uneven regional budget allocation. This has led to the privatisation of ECCE (Zhang et al., 2021). Urban-rural inequalities drive the evolution of ECCE in terms of the quality of the service, programme, teacher training, and parental participation (Rao et al., 2022). In recent decades, China's rapid socioeconomic progress has led to a rise in urbanisation. This expansion is uneven, with many rural regions still living below the poverty line (Guan et al., 2018). This has presented significant societal difficulties. The migration of rural labourers to urban centres is the most significant problem. This has resulted in a large number of children (34.3 million) migrating to metropolitan areas and living in poor conditions, with unstable housing, or being left behind (68.0 million) with elders or carers. These children are the most disadvantaged because they have trouble attending ECCE and gaining access to other public services. If migrant children get access to ECCE, it is often of substandard or unlawful quality (Bullough & Palaiologou, 2019). Another significant concern is the lack of ECCE services for children under the age of 3 years old, such as inadequate budget and a shortage of competent instructors with age-appropriate abilities (Bullough & Palaiologou, 2019).

So far, there have been several accomplishments in boosting child development and education and safeguarding children's rights. State Council of the People's Republic of China (2010) established goals for near-universal access to ECCE by 2020. The number of children accessing ECCE has risen significantly in recent years. Research suggests that the quality of China's ECCE has improved over the past two decades, as policy-level interest in ECCE has increased. However, this approach is not without hurdles, and a patchwork of services has developed. First, despite the increase in ECCE, the allotted resources were inadequate and unequally distributed between the rural and urban sectors, resulting in a gap in the development of such services. There are now a significant number of children ages 3 to 6 years old who do not have access to ECCE or who have access to substandard ECCE.

ECCE in urban regions are also better than those in rural areas in terms of the quality and quantity of kindergartens, the enrolment rate, and the number and educational level of certified teachers. In addition, the development of ECCE in rural areas has been handed over to private organisations, whereas the quality of publicly supported ECCE programmes in metropolitan areas is higher. In addition, the curriculum was decentralised. Although there are standard-setting principles, actual day-to-day practice is left to the discretion of each ECCE setting, resulting in a variety of practices (Bullough & Palaiologou, 2019).

The ECCE curriculum in China is a mixture of Western, Soviet, and Chinese customs and cultures (Yang & Li, 2019). Although a play-based strategy and play-based pedagogy are popular and research is emerging demonstrating the advantages of such an approach in the Chinese environment, this method has not yet been completely implemented. With a few notable exceptions, therefore, the predominant practises in ECCE are whole-class instruction, teacher-directed activities, and modelling of primary school activities. This is due to the fact that teachers' training and qualifications are still underdeveloped, and there are still practices that contradict traditional values. Thus, research calls for culturally sensitive and acceptable techniques (Fleer & Li, 2023). China is now pushing excellence in education and has invested in campaigns to promote several ideas, such as the concept of autonomous and independent learners who are respected, have a voice, and can engage in all sectors of society. However, the pursuit of excellence is hampered by urban-rural contrasts; Chinese beliefs and traditions of discipline, obedience, and reverence for older adults; and a mixed curriculum that instructors cannot always support. ECCE growth in the country is also hindered by the lack of culturally relevant measuring tools and moral and ideological problems that make it hard to apply children's rights to improve ECCE's overall quality (Bullough & Palaiologou, 2019).

In Singapore, preschool education consists primarily of the childcare and kindergarten sectors. The Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports-licensed childcare institutions provide care and education for children ages 2 months to 6 years old. Kindergartens, on the other hand, are registered with the MOE and educate children ages 4 to 6 years old (Sum et al., 2018). Childcare facilities are governed by the Child Care Centres Act 1988, whilst kindergartens are governed by the Education Act 1957. Singapore has a high preschool enrolment rate. Over 95% of 4-6-year-olds in Singapore are enrolled in one of the country's 488 kindergartens or 721 childcare services. Children attending international preschools, special education schools, playgroups, or other enrichment centres are not included (Tan, 2007). In Singapore, kindergartens and childcare centres offer a formalised three-year preschool education programme consisting of nursery classes for children aged 4 years old, Kindergarten One (K1) classes for children aged 5 years old, and Kindergarten Two (K2) classes for children aged 6 years old. All preschools are operated by the private sector, which consists of community foundations, religious bodies, social groups, and commercial organisations (Hairon, 2022). In 2006, 77% of 4-6-year-old students were enrolled

in kindergartens registered with the MOE. Approximately 62% of these toddlers had attended kindergartens run by the People's Action Party Community Foundation (PCF), which is a group of community-based kindergartens offering inexpensive tuition and serving a significant percentage of children from low-income households (Tan, 2007). Kindergartens in Singapore are required to register with the MOE in accordance with the Education Act 1957. The MOE will register a kindergarten if it meets the following criteria: First, it must be certified for use as a kindergarten and comply with all health and safety regulations imposed by the competent authorities. Second, a programme evaluated by the MOE must be suitable for young children. Thirdly, the MOE stipulates that principals and instructors must possess the minimum academic and professional credentials. Next, a well-established management committee must efficiently govern and manage the kindergarten. All registered kindergartens provide a two-hour curriculum for nursery courses and a three- to four-hour programme for kindergarten students (Child Care Centres Act 1988; Education Act 1957).

In recent years, Singapore has paid more attention to preschool education. Public awareness of the value of effective early childhood education for children's learning and development has increased, resulting in a heightened focus recently. There is also a growing realisation that a long-term strategy for combating socioeconomic inequalities is to provide children of disadvantaged parents with a solid foundation for lifelong learning and a strong chance of achieving success in life through high-quality preschool education. In 1999, the MOE developed a policy framework to improve the quality of preschool education in Singapore through judicious and measured involvement in high-leverage areas that will have a significant impact on future learning outcomes, while leaving provision to the private sector. In line with the policy framework, the MOE has taken a number of steps since 2000 to define desired outcomes, develop a curriculum framework, set up systems and structures for teacher training, introduce self-assessment to improve quality, and get disadvantaged children ready for school (Tan, 2017).

In South Korea, ECCE operations and administration are overseen by two separate bodies. The Ministry of Health and Welfare is responsible for children up to the age of 5 years old, while the MOE is responsible for children in kindergarten between the age of 3 and the beginning of primary school (starting at 6 years old). The Korea Childcare Promotion Institute, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, oversees childcare facilities for children aged 0-5 years old, while regional and local education offices, under the auspices of the MOE, oversee kindergartens. Service and staff quality are monitored in all ECCE settings in South Korea, but child development is seldom measured, despite the fact that kindergartens are required by law to keep an official record of each child, equivalent to official school records. ECCE services may be asked to participate in training to increase their level of quality in order to solve deficiencies. Based on monitoring findings, ECCE settings may also receive additional funding or follow-up consultation (Seo, 2018).

South Korea has had difficulties in monitoring ECCE. Despite the nation's attempts to oversee quality in ECCE, several obstacles persist. First, the country has not yet extensively monitored the opinions of children. Since this approach may give valuable information on quality, it may provide policymakers, ECCE management, and personnel with greater insight into enhancing ECCE's quality. Second, the nation lacks a centralised monitoring mechanism. In the absence of an integrated monitoring system, there may be varying quality standards for various providers, less uniform quality levels, and less unity in ECCE. Therefore, this difficulty may be solved by standardising monitoring technologies and building a single monitoring architecture. Third, the government must guarantee that monitoring informs plans and that monitoring data contributes to the development of better policies. Greater attempts to collect data and information on ECCE can contribute to the development of policies and practices that are grounded in evidence (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2015).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objectives of qualitative research involve exploring various contexts in which individuals or groups make decisions and take action, as well as providing explanations for the observed phenomena. The qualitative research process consists of four main steps: designing research questions, collecting data, analysing data, and writing a report (Limna et al., 2022; Sonsuphap, 2022). In-depth interviews are conducted to obtain detailed responses on specific topics, ensuring accurate information for meeting research objectives (Limsakul & Kraiwanit, 2020). The saturation of data in qualitative research is typically achieved with a minimum of six interviews, as suggested by Jangjarat et al. (2023). This particular study adopted a qualitative approach, utilising purposive sampling to conduct in-depth interviews with ten experts and academics in the field of early childhood development in Thailand. Before they participated in interviews or any other research activities, the participants were informed about the study's objectives, obtaining their informed consent in accordance with ethical research practices, as recommended by Limna et al. (2023b). The interview focused on three main areas:

- 1) the overall operations of childcare centres and factors contributing to effective early childhood education management;
- 2) challenges in early childhood education management;
- 3) recommendations for improving early childhood education management.

Additionally, the researcher employed a documentary analysis method. In the context of early childhood education services in China, Singapore, and South Korea, data related to organisational behaviour for human welfare were examined and evaluated through document analysis. Pertinent documents and resources discussing concepts, theories, contexts, and issues in ECCE in these Asian countries were reviewed. Content analysis, a qualitative method used to systematically and objectively describe specific phenomena based on verbal, visual, or written data, was applied. It is

a versatile data analysis technique commonly employed in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to adapt or modify content analysis methods to accommodate structured and contextualised data, which by nature are highly organised (Limna et al., 2023a). Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data obtained in the study, as recommended by Namraksa and Kraiwanit (2023).

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1. Childcare services in Thailand

Early childhood education administration is optional in Thailand. The curriculum emphasises child development, such as physical growth, psychological maturity, cerebral development, social development, reasoning, and problem-solving (Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards et al., 2017). The MOE, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Public Health, and MSDHS have worked to implement the programme's aims and principles (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board & Office of the Prime Minister, n.d.). Government, private sectors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), communities, parents, and other external sources provide funding for ECCE. The government is the primary funder of childcare centres under the SAO and kindergartens/preschool institutes. In publicly funded ECCE programmes, government funding covers infrastructure and equipment, teacher and staff wages, food, utilities, and basic operating costs. Numerous childcare centres charge parents monthly fees, which vary by centre, to fund supplemental expenditures, such as meals, materials, and sometimes partial salaries for caregivers. All kindergarten and preschool classrooms in the public school system get free services (UNESCO, 2006).

According to the interviews, issues surrounding early childhood care services fall into two categories: financial allocation and operational policy. The primary problem is budget allocation, such as teacher or caretaker remuneration, lunch assistance budget, milk budget, or operations budget. Due to the fact that each childcare facility is managed by a distinct agency or organisation or is unaffiliated, money allocation differs between centres. Some nurseries may give wages for caregivers remuneration; however, this budget does not include welfare support for them. Moreover, childcare centres base their operational costs on the ratio of instructors to young children in the nursery. This may restrict the appropriate number of childcare workers. Commonly, there should be at least two caregivers working together to assist each other in a classroom, unless the ratio of children to caregivers requires only one sitter. In addition, the lunch allowance per child is quite low, at roughly 21 THB (or 0.60 USD) per person. In addition, local childcare institutions in small communities may be unable to receive accreditation owing to concerns with the requirements. Therefore, these nurseries cannot acquire funding and support from any organisation, preventing them from providing high-quality childcare services. Additionally, operational policy is an issue. For instance, the formation of early childcare services under the BMA must be certified by a community committee of the neighbourhood where a daycare

facility is located. The members of a community committee reside in the community; however, if there are conflicts between the committee and the childcare centre, such as location issues, uncertainty of the land, and inconsistency in establishing criteria, this nursery may be unable to be approved by the committee and may not receive support or even be unable to open.

The following are the recommendations given by the interviewees. First, relevant sectors should promote childcare centres based within a community, regardless of their affiliations, because these nurseries may facilitate childcare and early childhood education within the community. When such childcare facilities have enough assistance, they will maximise the quality of their services. Next, because there are restrictions on the financial allocation of departments affiliated with childcare centres, the childcare centres must establish local cooperation, such as parent networks and local civil society networks, to aid in operation. Therefore, they do not require financial support from their associations. In addition, government authorities and related sectors should encourage registration among providers of childcare services so that nurseries are affiliated and get enough assistance. However, the government should also provide additional types of assistance for childcare facilities that cannot be officially registered so that they may enter the system and comply with requirements.

#### **4.2. The key problems and operations in China, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand**

In China, access to quality childcare is a major issue, particularly for rural families. There is a scarcity of trained and qualified caregivers, and childcare costs are frequently prohibitively expensive. In order to address these issues, the government has implemented a variety of policies, including low-income family subsidies, increased investment in early childhood education, and efforts to improve the quality of childcare facilities.

South Korea's low birth rate and an ageing population have resulted in a scarcity of childcare facilities and caregivers. Childcare is also expensive, making it difficult for many families to afford it. In order to address these issues, the government has implemented a variety of policies, including subsidies for families with young children, incentives for businesses to provide childcare services for their employees, and efforts to increase the number of childcare facilities and trained caregivers.

Singapore faces similar challenges to Korea in terms of a low birth rate and an ageing population. There is also a scarcity of trained and qualified caregivers, and childcare is expensive. To address these issues, the government has implemented a variety of policies, including subsidies for low-income families, tax breaks for employers who provide childcare services, and efforts to increase the number of childcare facilities and trained caregivers. Singapore has also encouraged more men to work in childcare in order to increase the number of caregivers available. There are also efforts to improve the quality of childcare facilities and services, such as stricter regulations and training requirements for caregivers.

In Thailand, access to high-quality childcare is a major issue, particularly for rural families. There is a shortage of trained and qualified caregivers, and childcare costs are frequently prohibitively expensive. Furthermore, there have been reports of child abuse and neglect in some childcare facilities, raising concerns about the safety and well-being of the children in their care. To address these issues, the government has implemented a number of policies, including low-income family subsidies, increased investment in early childhood education, and efforts to improve the quality of childcare facilities. Some programs provide childcare providers with training and certification in order to improve the quality of care they provide to children. Stricter regulations and monitoring have been implemented to ensure that childcare facilities meet safety and quality standards. In addition, the government has encouraged public-private partnerships to increase the availability of high-quality childcare services in rural areas. Finally, there are child abuse prevention awareness campaigns to educate parents and caregivers on the importance of child safety and protection.

#### **4.3. A comparison of childcare services in China, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand**

Document analysis reveals that China, Singapore, and South Korea separate the ECCE programme structure into two programmes: childcare facilities and kindergartens. However, there are disparities between nations. In China, children aged 3 to 6 years old attended full-day kindergarten programmes, while infants and toddlers (children 0-3 years old) attended nursery schools (Li et al., 2019). In Singapore, childcare centres and kindergartens are the two predominant forms of ECCE systems. Childcare centres in Singapore provide two services: care for infants ages 2 to 18 months and care for children ages 18 months to 6 years old. In addition to their instructional role, childcare facilities meet the needs of working parents whose children require adult support outside of school hours. Kindergartens in Singapore educate children between the ages of 4 and 6 years old. In contrast, the services only serve an instructive purpose. In addition to childcare facilities and kindergartens, there are playgroups with a less formal curriculum that enable children to learn and socialise via organised and unstructured play (Pascal et al., 2018). Early childhood education and care in South Korea is a two-tiered system that includes both daycare and kindergarten services. The childcare facilities mostly served children ages 0 to 5 years old from low-income families with working mothers, whereas the kindergarten facilities served children ages 3 to 5 years old from middle- and upper-income households (Yun, 2009). The introduced *Nuri Curriculum* (World Education Forum, 2015) unified curriculum offerings across childcare and kindergarten facilities, therefore introducing a substantial educational component into childcare facilities (Tan, 2016).

In terms of governance structure, in China, financial allocations for ECCE are allocated by the regional governments and tend to go to public kindergartens in urban areas within the province, whereas rural areas are severely neglected (Li et al., 2016). Funding for the sector as a whole

tended to be low, accounting for just 1.24-1.44% of the country's overall education budget and 0.05-0.07% of the country's gross domestic product (Tan, 2016). In Singapore, the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) acts as the regulatory and development authority for the ECCE sector. The MOE and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) supervise the ECDA, which is hosted by the MSF (ECDA, n.d.). The preschool education division of the MOE provides curriculum direction through the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Curriculum (Ministry of Education, n.d.). Government authorities oversee the quality of ECCE through licensing regimes and ad hoc inspections. The 2011 Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework (SPARK) encourages ECCE providers to voluntarily participate in order to improve their market status (ECDA, 2019). In South Korea, kindergartens are administered by the Ministry for Education and Science, while childcare facilities come under the Ministry for Health, Welfare and Family Affairs (OECD, 2016). The ministries are supported by government research institutes like the Korea Institute of Childcare and Education (KICCE) and the Seoul Early Childhood Education and Development Institute (SECEDI) (Tan, 2016). Furthermore, Thailand's childcare governance structure is primarily overseen by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The Ministry is in charge of developing childcare policies and regulations, as well as coordinating their implementation with other government agencies and non-governmental organisations. The Department of Social Development and Welfare is in charge of implementing childcare policies and regulations at the local level. This includes child protection, foster care, and adoption services, as well as ensuring that childcare centres and facilities meet safety and quality standards. In Thailand, childcare centres are divided into two types: government-run and privately owned. The Department of Social Development and Welfare oversees government-run centres, while the MOE oversees privately-owned centres. Aside from government oversight, Thailand has a number of non-governmental organisations that work to promote children's welfare. These organisations offer a variety of services, including education, healthcare, and assistance to low-income families. Overall, Thailand's childcare governance structure consists of a collaboration of government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and community-based organisations working together to ensure children's well-being.

#### 4.4. Human welfare organisational behaviour in early childhood education services

In the context of early childhood education services in Asia, human welfare organisational behaviour is a crucial perspective to consider. This approach focuses on creating a positive and supportive environment for children, families, and educators, to improve the quality of education and care provided. Key elements of this perspective include promoting the physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being of children, fostering positive relationships among all stakeholders, ensuring a safe and inclusive environment, and valuing the contributions of all individuals involved. By prioritising human welfare,

organisations can create better outcomes for children, support the growth and development of families and communities, and contribute to the sustainable development of the early childhood education sector in Asia. The situation of early childhood education services in Asia varies across different countries and regions. However, in many parts of Asia, there is growing recognition of the importance of early childhood education for the future development and well-being of children. There has been a significant increase in investment and initiatives aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of early childhood education services. However, there are still many challenges to be addressed, such as a lack of trained teachers and resources, limited government support, and cultural attitudes that prioritise formal education over early childhood development. Despite these challenges, the situation of early childhood education services in Asia is improving, and there is increasing recognition of the need for high-quality, accessible, and inclusive early childhood education to support the future success and well-being of children and communities.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significance of human welfare organisational behaviour in early childhood education services in Asia. The research findings demonstrate that this behaviour encompasses the attitudes and practices of organisations involved in providing education and care to children. By fostering supportive environments that prioritise the well-being of children, families, and educators, while also ensuring the quality of educational services, positive outcomes can be achieved. Key elements of effective human welfare organisational behaviour include placing the child's needs at the forefront, promoting positive relationships, establishing safe and inclusive environments, and recognizing the contributions of all stakeholders.

Thailand's ECCE is overseen by the Ministries of Education, Interior, Public Health, and Social Development and Human Security, whereas China's ECCE is administered by provincial sectors under the MOE. The Singapore ECDA is regulated by the MOE and the MSF, and the preschool education division of the MOE provides curricular guidance through the NEL. The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for kindergartens in South Korea, while the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Family Affairs is responsible for childcare facilities. The former emphasises babies and toddlers with informal educational programmes and activities, whilst the latter emphasises toddlers' preparedness for formal education. In Thailand, kindergartens or preschool programmes, both public and private, usually receive funds from the government, their affiliations, tuition fees, or other relevant sectors, while local childcare centres are usually contributed by a community committee in their locations. This sometimes makes local childcare centres lack financial support, causing poor quality of childcare services. Furthermore, human welfare organisational behaviour is the attitudes and practices of organisations involved in providing education and care to young children in the context of early childhood education services in Asia. This point of

view looks at how organisations can create supportive environments that promote the well-being of children, families, and educators while also ensuring the quality of educational services provided. Furthermore, this viewpoint emphasises the importance of focusing on the needs of the child, promoting positive relationships, creating a safe and inclusive environment, and valuing the contributions of all stakeholders. In the early childhood education sector, effective human welfare organisational behaviour can help to improve outcomes for children while also contributing to Asia's long-term development.

The implications of effective human welfare organisational behaviour in the early childhood education sector are substantial. By prioritising children's well-being and creating conducive learning environments, their outcomes can be improved. Furthermore, such behaviour contributes to the long-term development of Asia as a whole, recognizing the importance of nurturing the future generation. This study highlights the significance of incorporating these elements into educational practices and policies to enhance the overall quality and impact of early childhood education services in Asia. By understanding the essential components of human welfare organisational behaviour, policymakers, administrators, and educators can work collaboratively to create an environment that supports and promotes the well-being of children and all those involved in early childhood education. Through

the implementation of effective practices, Asia can continue to strengthen its educational systems, ultimately fostering the growth and development of its societies.

This research contributes to the understanding of human welfare organisational behaviour in the early childhood education sector and provides practical implications for improving the quality of services and enhancing children's outcomes. It lays the groundwork for further research in this area, addressing potential gaps and expanding the knowledge base on effective organisational behaviour in early childhood education. However, it is important to note that this study focuses specifically on the early childhood education service in Asia, more specifically in Thailand. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or regions may be limited. Additionally, the study's small sample size, consisting of only ten participants, may raise concerns about the representativeness and breadth of perspectives captured. Further research could expand the scope of the investigation to include a larger and more diverse sample of participants from different countries or cultural backgrounds. Comparative studies could also explore the variations in human welfare organisational behaviour in early childhood education services across different regions and contexts. Additionally, quantitative research methods could be employed to complement the qualitative findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

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