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Educational Philosophy of Maria Montessori and its Influence on Pre-School Education System

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Abstract

Pre-school education constitutes a child's educational journey. It is intended for children aged three to five, prior to their commencement of official primary education. The child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development is crucial during the critical years of brain growth. At this developmental stage, children exhibit inherent curiosity, vigor, and a readiness to acquire knowledge about their environment. Maria Montessori was a key figure in early childhood education. She is primarily recognized for developing the Montessori Method, which transformed global educational practices for children. The aims of the paper are to analyse the educational philosophy and ideas proposed by Maria Montessori and to assess her contributions to preschool education. This study employed a qualitative research approach to examine the influence of Montessori education. The researchers conducted a thorough survey of relevant data sources and have found the core Montessori concepts, such as individual development and the absorbent mind. It is also revealed that Maria Montessori's educational principles have substantially changed.

Keywords: Educational Philosophy; Pre-School Education; Auto Education; Development; Reward

1. Introduction

Pre-school education is the first step in a child's learning process. It is meant for kids between the ages of three and five, before they start formal primary school. It is very important for a child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development during the most important years of brain growth. At this age, kids are naturally interested, active, and ready to learn about the world around them. Good preschool programs use structured play, storytelling, music, art, group activities, and hands-on discovery to turn this curiosity into meaningful learning experiences. Instead of just teaching kids how to read and write, preschool focuses on helping them learn how to read and write, improve their language skills, solve problems, be creative, and use their imagination. It also helps them learn important life skills like sharing, working together, being empathetic, being independent, and having confidence in them. Kids learn how to talk to others, control their feelings, stick to routines, and work together via interactions with their peers and teachers. All of these skills will help them meet the requirements of primary school and do well in school later on. The Montessori Method, the Reggio Emilia approach, and Waldorf education are all important because they stress the need for learning environments that are child-centered, play-based, and holistic, and that respect each child's own pace and interests. In the end, preschool education sets the stage for lifelong learning by encouraging curiosity, resilience, social skills, and a positive attitude toward school. This way, kids start formal school not only with the basic academic skills they need, but also with the confidence and skills they need to do well both in and out of the classroom. Maria Montessori was one of the most important educationists related to preschool education. She is known for creating the Montessori Method, which changed how children learn around the world. She was born in Chiaravalle, Italy, on August 31, 1870, and she was one of the first women in Italy to become a doctor at a period when women had little opportunity to go to college. Her medical experience had a big impact on her interest in child development, especially when she worked with kids

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with special needs in Rome. She learned through close observation that kids learn best when they can do things themselves, explore on their own, and be in a setting that supports independence. In 1907, she opened her first "Casa die Bambini" (Children's House) in Rome, where she used her new teaching methods and got amazing results. Montessori thought that kids naturally want to learn and that teachers should be guides instead of those in charge. Her ideology stressed the need for treating children with respect, using sensory learning tools, having classrooms with kids of different ages, and giving them freedom within limitations. Her method has extended to other countries throughout time and is still having an effect on preschool education systems all around the world. Maria Montessori's life and work continue to serve as a powerful example of dedication to understanding and assisting all children in realizing their full potential.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the principles of education suggested by Maria Montessori.
- To study the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori.
- To evaluate the contribution of Maria Montessori's philosophical and educational thoughts in pre-school education.

2. Research Methodology

This study followed a qualitative research design to investigate the influence of educational philosophy and thoughts of Montessori on pre-school education. The research relies exclusively on authentic books, peer-reviewed academic articles, official publications, and reputable educational websites.

3. Results According to the Objectives of the Study and Discussion

3.1. Principles of Education suggested by Maria Montessori

Montessori was in charge of training mentally challenged kids after she graduated from medical school. She taught a few of these kids to read and write quite well by using her own method and the knowledge she had gained from working in baby schools in Rome. The Montessori system turned into "education by touch." The Montessori method is the name for the ways that Montessori taught and trained the muscles and sense organs of children with mental disabilities.

3.1.1. Individual Development

Montessori said that the source of education of a child is inside him or her. Every youngster has their own unique interests, skills, abilities, and gifts. Education should assist the youngster in revealing his identity from within. She said, "If any educational act is to be effective, it will be only that which helps the child's individuality to fully unfold." The child has a body that grows and a soul that develops. After acknowledging the physical and mental differences between people, the child should be given the right environment to help him grow and reach his full potential (Rusli, 2023).

3.1.2. Absorbent Mind

Doctor Maria Montessori's research determined that the first six years of a child's life are the most crucial for their development. She called this time the "absorbent mind" phase to show how the infant may suck up knowledge from their surroundings like a sponge. During this time, kids learn a lot about their culture and environment very quickly, which helps them become smarter and more interesting people (Rusli, 2023).

3.1.3. Educating the Whole Child

Montessori education focuses on helping each child reach their full potential by giving them learning experiences that help them grow mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially. The Montessori Curriculum doesn't just teach language and math. It also teaches practical life skills, sensory exercises, and cultural studies. Each part of a child's growth and learning is related to the others and is equally important.

3.1.4. Sense Training

Montessori said that the senses are the doors to knowledge. They play a big part in a child's education. Learning depends on how well the senses are trained. She thinks that dull senses are what cause mental inadequacy. So, we should teach the child how to use their senses to learn. She knows that between the ages of 3 and 7, the senses are particularly active and that this is when the most learning happens. Sense training helps kids learn to tell the difference between things

like weight, color, sound, temperature, touch, smell, size, and shape. So, sense training helps the child be smart and is the cornerstone to their intellectual growth (Rusli, 2023).

3.1.5. *Respect for the Child*

Montessori said, "The child is God." Her school is like a temple, and its goal is to assist the child grow and learn. It must change the ways that people learn and teach in order to bring people back to life. So, she gives the child a very important role in the learning process.

3.1.6. *No Material Reward*

Montessori thinks that incentives and Punishments are ways to get people to work harder than they want to. She thinks that the child's growth should not be based on rewards or punishments, but rather happens on its own. So, all rewards and punishments should be avoided so that they don't stop or get in the way of the child's normal growth.

3.2. **Educational Philosophy of Maria Montessori**

3.2.1. *Maria Montessori's Views Towards the Child*

Montessori maintains that "the child is a physical entity that matures and a soul that evolves—these two aspects, corporeal and psychological, possess an everlasting essence, life itself." She desires for each child to cultivate their inner self rather than rely on external influences. Education ought to facilitate the revelation of the child's latent abilities. She stated, "Education is the proactive assistance provided for the natural development of a child's life." She asserts that each child is distinct from others, both physically and psychologically. The child's individuality must be honored and not stifled by collective instruction. Every child should receive personalized care and be permitted to develop at their own rate (Durda's, 2023).

3.2.2. *Aims of Education*

Dr. Maria Montessori came up with Montessori education, which is a child-centered way of teaching based on empirical observation of how kids naturally grow and learn. It stresses freedom within boundaries, respect for children, and learning by doing. The main goal of Montessori education is to help the child grow in all areas: mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and morally. Montessori education doesn't just focus on getting good grades; it also tries to teach kids to be independent, self-disciplined, creative, and love learning for the rest of their lives. Montessori education helps kids reach their full potential and become responsible, confident, and capable members of society by giving them a carefully planned environment and age-appropriate resources (Bhat, 2021).

3.2.3. *Holistic Development*

Maria Montessori supported a comprehensive educational philosophy that emphasizes the overall development of the child instead of solely academic success. Montessori said that education should cover all of a child's nature, including their intellectual, physical, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual sides. Each child is seen as a unique person with their own strengths and a desire to learn. The Montessori approach sets up a space that emphasizes freedom, independence, and learning on your own. Children learn by doing things with scientifically developed materials that engage their senses and help them focus, coordinate, and reason logically. This method helps the brain grow and also makes motor abilities stronger.

3.2.4. *Independence*

Montessori education sees independence as one of the most crucial parts of a child's growth. It means being able to act, think, and make decisions on your own while still being responsible for what you do. Maria Montessori said that kids learn best when they may explore and do things on their own, following their own interests instead than always being told what to do by adults. In this case, independence isn't just about doing things on your own; it's also about building self-confidence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of duty. Montessori classrooms are set up in a way that encourages independence

3.3. **Contribution of Maria Montessori in Pre-school Education**

3.3.1. *Scientific Approach*

Maria Montessori's scientific approach to preschool education is founded on careful observation, experimentation, and respect for how children naturally grow and learn. Montessori regarded education as a science by methodically analyzing children's behavior and creating a prepared environment with organized, self-correcting resources that

encourage autonomous learning. She thought that kids learn best when they can touch, see, hear, and smell things, have some independence within limitations, and do things that are right for their "sensitive periods" of growth. In this method, the instructor is more of a guide and observer than a lecturer. This lets kids learn on their own through focused activity, concentration, and self-control (Ravi, 2011).

3.3.2. *Psychological Approach*

Montessori acknowledges that each child has a unique passion, skill set, abilities, and gifts. So, the child can study at his own pace and in his own way. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the physical and mental variations of each individual and to avoid collective teaching methods or group activities that suppress uniqueness. She supports personalized instruction that is tailored to the child's interests and abilities in this regard. Modern philosophers have acknowledged this idea of Montessori (Ravi, 2011).

3.3.3. *Didactic Approach*

The most important thing that Montessori did is the teaching tool. She employs this mechanical and fake equipment to teach the 3 R's, sensory training, and muscle coordination. Montessori's use of real-life activities to teach children is a big step forward in the field of child education, especially for children with mental disabilities (Durda's, 2023).

3.3.4. *Mixed Age Classroom*

Maria Montessori came up with the idea of the mixed-age classroom, which is a big part of her preschool teaching style, especially for kids ages 3 to 6. In this setting, kids of different ages learn together, which naturally encourages them to work together, learn from each other, and grow socially. Younger kids learn new things and gain confidence by watching and copying older kids. Older kids, on the other hand, reinforce what they already know by aiding and mentoring younger kids. This structure encourages leadership, empathy, independence, and a sense of community, which makes learning more natural and collaborative (Bhat, 2021).

3.3.5. *Self-Education*

Montessori stresses that a child grows from the inside out by working hard. In order to do this, she supports self-education in a setting that is free, happy, and active. There should be no stress or pressure on kids' schooling. The kids are put in a place that is both beautiful and educational so that they can learn by doing things and seeing things. This kind of learning will work better. The child enjoys and becomes happy with learning on their own.

3.3.6. *3.3.6. Free and Compulsory Education*

Montessori stresses the growth of each child's personality. Consequently, the concept of free and mandatory mass education has gained traction. So, it is important to educate disabled and mentally ill children properly for both moral and societal reasons. Montessori is seen as a humanist and a profound thinker whose work in child education will continue forever.

4. **Conclusion**

Maria Montessori's ideas about teaching have had a big and lasting effect on preschool education all across the world. Her child-centered approach, which stresses respecting each child's uniqueness, has changed early learning environments by encouraging independence, self-control, and intrinsic desire. Montessori's focus on hands-on learning with carefully chosen materials lets kids learn at their own speed, which helps them develop both their brains and their everyday abilities. Her approach combines sensory-based and experiential activities, which not only helps kids learn but also helps them be creative, solve problems, and think critically from a young age. The Montessori method also promotes social and emotional growth in addition to academic growth. A mixed-age school helps kids learn how to work together, understand other people's feelings, and be leaders. It also helps them build confidence by letting them make their own decisions. The method emphasizes on freedom within boundaries guarantees that children can safely explore and learn, fostering a lifetime passion for learning and flexibility. In the Montessori system, teachers are more like guides than typical teachers. This creates a setting that respects the child's natural curiosity and potential. This has led to modern preschool curricula putting more emphasis on whole-child development than on memorizing facts, as early experiences have a big impact on how well children do in school later on.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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