

## Review Article

# OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON TEAM DEVELOPMENT FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

### **Abstract**

Developing teams of teachers in Vietnamese preschools is an important task of Ministry of Education and Training in order to improve the quality of child care and nurturing. To see the need of developing preschool teachers, the author has reviewed domestic and international research works related to how to enhance quality of preschool teachers. The review has synthesized academic documents with focusing on human resource development and preschool teachers development. Findings showed that it needs to developing kindergarten teachers in order to improve their quality, which contributes to the effective implementation of the task of training and education in the current period of preschool teachers innovation.

**Key words:** Overview, development, team of teachers, preschool teachers.

### **1. Introduction**

Developing a contingent of preschool teachers takes a particularly important position in the national education system. In Viet Nam, the upbringing, care and education of kids are involved by parent, teachers and community in which the preschool teachers play an important role. Therefore, it is essential for research concerning the growth of preschool educators to rely on scientifically validated findings regarding teacher development. This approach aims to underscore the importance of investigating the progress of preschool educators in their role of nurturing and educating children, establishing a robust foundation for shaping and nurturing children's personalities.

### **2. Research Method**

Theoretical research method: Researching on the development of preschool teachers at home and abroad has researched on the development of preschool teachers. From there, analyze, synthesize, classify, and systematize theoretical documents related to the topic. Through synthesis and analysis of research works, the author will point out the need to develop preschool teachers in An Giang province.

### **3. Overview of research for preschool teachers**

#### **3.1. Studies related to preschool teachers on a global scale**

Early childhood education is a term that refers to the period of time from a child's birth to when they enter kindergarten, according to Jessica Alvarado (Year??), academic program director for the BA in Early Childhood Development at National University. According to Alvarado, it is an important time in children's lives because it is when they first learn how to

interact with others, including peers, teachers and parents, and also begin to develop interests that will stay with them throughout their lives. But Alvarado says it's a common misperception that early childhood education is only about learning basic skills. "It's so much more than that," she says: "It's a time when children learn critical social and emotional skills and a partnership is formed between the child, their parents and the teacher. When this is done successfully, it lays the groundwork for it to continue throughout the child's education." (National University, 2021).

In terms of the teacher qualification, a number of studies by OECD members (Organization for Economic Cooperation Development) have also shown the following aspects: diverse knowledge of program content and subject content; pedagogical skills, including acquiring a "reservoir of knowledge" about teaching methods and the implementing method competence; have critical thinking before each problem and self-criticism ability, characteristic of teaching profession; respect and commit to respecting the dignity of others; have management capacity, including management responsibilities inside and outside the classroom.

According to author Jacques Delors, former European Council president during the years 1985 and 1995 - International Committee for Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In the new context teachers play a vital role in preparing for the young generation not only belief, but also determination and responsibility for the future.

Research on the development of kindergarten teachers has been mentioned in many in-depth research works, especially on the quality of kindergarten teachers: When talking about professional qualifications and training for the teachers, in the book "Strong foundation early childhood care and education" published by UNESCO in 2007, the Global Monitoring Report on Education for All shows that "Qualifications for preschool teachers vary in many countries. Countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development usually require a university degree and a professional qualification (i.e., short training certificate, diploma). In France, kindergarten teachers must pass the national exam for students with a three-year post-secondary degree. In Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg and Portugal preschool teachers must have completed at least 3 years of post-secondary education. In Spain, the required qualification for kindergarten teachers is master's degree. Recently, Sweden increased the duration of kindergarten teacher training courses from 3 to 3.5 years to be equivalent to primary school teachers." (UNESCO, 2007).

There are 14 states in the United States that require teachers at kindergarten schools to have a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early childhood. Under the US Act of 2009 that states that in order to receive funding, state kindergarten schools must have used a program that is connected with elementary standards, implementing best practices for children; the child/teacher ratio is low - not exceeding 10/1 and operating for the full school year. At the same time, they pay great attention to the training and retraining of teachers. Kindergarten teachers must have at least a degree in kindergarten and obtain a kindergarten bachelor's degree in five years after receiving a grant (Tran Thi Ngoc Tram, 2011).

Regarding the training of preschool teachers in Germany, the Conference of German Culture Ministers issued a Framework Agreement on training kindergarten teachers with the aim

of improving the quality of the German preschool teacher training system. year 2000). The framework agreement clearly outlines the responsibilities of caring for and educating children, the necessary competencies as well as creating conditions for graduated learners to become teachers who can work independently, confidently and responsibly in all social education activities of the school. The entire prescribed period of preschool teacher training for students is 5 years, with a minimum of 4 years including the preparatory period. The time frame table introduced in the Framework Agreement provides the states with flexibility in the training activities of the school because there is no fixation on specific subjects. However, the schools must meet the following basic requirements because they obviously show the characteristics of the profession that is: Information and Social; Theory and practice of social education; Creative organization – Music; Economics and Health; Organization – Rights and Administration; Religion/Ethics.

At the end of the forum, the delegates developed common commitments related to kindergarten education through the Putrajaya Declaration. The Declaration highlights a nine-pronged action plan to support the achievement of SDG 4.2 goals; “By 2030, ensure that all male and female students will study in the quality development of the kindergarten education system, which prepares for children to be willing to primary education.” In addition to the SDG 4.2 purpose, the other also recognize the need “to rapidly increase the number of qualified teachers through international cooperation in teacher training in developing countries, especially in less developed countries and small island developing countries or regions.” (UN, 2015).

According to the Southeast Asian Kindergarten Teacher Competency Framework, kindergarten teachers must ensure the following competencies: Understanding the learning process and comprehensive development of children; Promote children's learning and development; Building a safe and inclusive educational environment; Promote health, nutrition, safety and protection for children; Able to build relationships with parents, families and baby sister teams; Networking and collaborating with the suitable partners to develop Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) (A review of quality assurance initiatives in the field of kindergarten care and development); Ensure professional development and continuous personal development.

Countries around the world are aware of the importance of kindergarten education. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is an international governing body whose mission is to “contribute to peace building, poverty eradication, sustainable development and dialogue between cultures through education”. Here's what the organization has to say about the importance of kindergarten education: “Early childhood education and care (ECCE) is not just about preparing children for primary school. It works towards the holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs to build a strong and broad foundation for lifelong learning and happiness. ECCE has the ability to nurture committed, capable and responsible future citizens.” (National University, 2021).

Given the many meanings and significance of this first level of education, many countries and educational research groups have studied deeply into this level in order to enhance the

effectiveness and quality of teaching to prepare for a better readiness step for the next level of study in the future.

Indeed, there have been many studies in many countries on the factors affecting kindergarten education and professional development programs for kindergarten teachers. A study in the United States on kindergarten education, "Investing for Future" conducted by a research group, suggested that the quality of the teaching workforce is the most important factor determining success in the kindergarten education program. They added that kindergarten teachers teach effectively when they have stimulating teaching methods that support children in interaction activities both cognitively and emotionally, and they can educate the skill needed to develop such as on the literacy, math, and social-emotional skills they need to develop at the same time. (Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M., Espinosa, L., Gormley, W., Zaslow, M., 2013). In his research, Zeichner (2014) said that there are too many challenges and difficulties in recruiting and supporting the profitraining activities, even these support activities are more difficult than K-12 education (Zeichner, 2014). A very valuable and interesting research report on THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT for ECE teachers of "The Early Childhood Workforce Initiative (ECWI)" based in Washington, USA, said that kindergarten teachers have sustainable professional knowledge and experience in teaching activities, as well as early childhood development service providers Early Childhood Development (ECD) Services have training programs and THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS that provide opportunities to communicate core knowledge and skills for kindergarten teachers having a very positive influence on the comprehensive development of children (Mitter, R., Putcha, V., 2018).

Similarly, a global study on kindergarten teacher's professional development conducted in 2017 by a research group of other US scientists showed that when individual teachers are given more opportunities for their ECE activities, will contribute to the cognitive and social development of young children significantly and positively (Manning, M., Garvis, S., Fleming, C., Wong, T. W. G., 2017). This research group also indicated that high levels of kindergarten teachers were strongly related with improvements in supporting children's development, including those related to observing and planning activities, organizing and arranging classrooms, providing various social experiences, and creating a cozy and friendly interactive environment for young children. In addition to the positive influence of the qualifications of kindergarten teachers on the comprehensive development of young children, many other studies also complement to the evidence to prove that the educational program quality or a curriculum well prepares new teachers with the background knowledge for children developments and other academic areas, which is considered an extremely vital factor, even more than teachers' competence relating to positively influence children's development and learning (Hyson, M., Biggar Tomlinson, H., & Morris, C., 2009). Research results by Burchinal and colleagues have shown that the qualification and participation in training courses of kindergarten teachers are a better indicator of the quality of the program affecting the comprehensive development of children compared with other factors such as child-staff ratios or group size (Burchinal, M. R., Cryer, D., Clifford, R. M., & Howes, C. , 2002).

In many research projects on professional development for kindergarten and kindergarten teachers around the world. One of the typical projects that belongs to the group of ALFA and friends has built a training and professional development model for kindergarten teachers. This model has been applied and deployed in many advanced countries in the world such as the UK, USA, Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia (ALFA and Friends, 2021). The design model is divided into 3 training phases with 6 levels: Stage 1 – Training for capable teachers; Stage 2 – Training for confident teachers; Stage 3 – Training teachers to become creative teachers.

### **3.2. Research on capacity of preschool teachers in Viet Nam context**

Particularly in Vietnam, in the book "Organization and management of preschool groups", authors Nguyen Thi My Loc and Nguyen Thi Tuat affirmed the role of preschool teachers: "Preschool teachers - organizers - managers" (Nguyen Thi My Loc - Nguyen Thi Tuat 1996, p.74), along with the role, the preschool teacher has the requirements of competence such as: observation capacity, competence communication, pedagogical capacity, management capacity, conversion and persuasion capacity; basic qualities of preschool teachers in which compassion and kindness are the first prerequisites for preschool teachers" (Nguyen Thi My Loc – Nguyen Thi Tuat 1996, p.76).

The project leader Ho Lam Hong and a group of authors researched the scientific topic "*Research on the theoretical and practical basis of building ECE standards to satisfy the innovative requirements of ECE*" (2006) analyzed theoretical issues about the approach to build up professional standards of ECE teachers, clarify the practical basis in the approach to build up professional standards of ECE teachers in the period of ECE innovation: teaching profession and personality of ECE teachers in the innovation period; renovating the current ECE teachers; analyze the labor activities of ECE teachers as performing tasks in the renovation process of ECE.

The project leader Ho Lam Hong and a group of authors researching a scientific topic: Workshop on building "*Personal model of preschool teachers in the period of international integration*" (held at Hanoi Pedagogical University in 2012) focused on 6 main contents:

- \* Perspectives on personality and personality characteristics of ECE teachers.
- \* Factors affecting the personality of ECE teachers in the current period
- \* Inadequacies in training ECE teachers in pedagogical schools today.
- \* Issues of organization, management and use of ECE teachers at ECE institutions.
- \* The issue of human resource development for education and training in general and ECE in particular to meet the development requirements of the country in the current period.
- \* Proposing personality model of preschool teachers in the period of international integration: potential, ability, skills for professional activities; lifestyle habits and personality qualities... (Hanoi Pedagogical University 2012).

In the article "*Professionalism in the working style of preschool teachers*", author Dao Thanh Am affirmed that the labor characteristics of preschool teachers always show three

functions: care, education and protection of children, mother-child relationship is the decisive factor, so love for children is the first quality in the personality of a true preschool teacher. Besides, the author also raised some suggestions for ECE teachers in today's era, as in addition to inherit the traditional qualities ECE teachers, they need to be trained methodically; having classroom management skills, English and computer skills sufficient to meet job requirements. (Hanoi Pedagogical University 2012).

The author Nguyen Thi Nhu Mai, in *"The awareness of the necessity of creativity in personality and the creative reality in the care and education of children of preschool teachers"*, stated: the current era requires people to be dynamic and creative. To create a class of young people with creative abilities, preschool teachers themselves must be aware of the importance of creative capacity in personality and make creative efforts in the process of caring and educating children. Creativity is the most important factor of the modern worker's personality. Therefore, training ECE teachers with creative capacity is extremely necessary in the current period ... (Hanoi Pedagogical University 2012).

In the scientific research project *"Study on the current situation and solutions to universalize 5-year-old kindergarten education in the Mekong Delta"* (2011), the project leader Tran Thi Ngoc Tram and assistants team researched and proposed 10 solutions, in which the one *"Supporting budget to improve professional qualifications and skills for existing teachers and new training to ensure sufficient quantity and quality to implement ECE for children. children 5 years old"* was 100% agreed by experts (Tran Thi Ngoc Tram 2011, p.101).

The preschool teacher personality model also comes from the professional standards of preschool teachers,. However, for each socio-historical period, there is an adjustment or emphasis on certain specific assessment standards. Stemming from the fact of recruitment and use of labor, not only ECE teachers having just graduated into the profession focus on training skills in the training process but also new vocational teachers need to have a process of "apprenticeship". "in the right sense.

At the preschool level, there are a number of authors who mention to the quality of child care services in preschools, not only research on innovating the contents and methods of child education care, professional management measures, but only not pay attention much to measures to develop ECE teachers. However, in recent years, all levels and sectors have paid much attention to teachers, especially preschool teachers, so there have been a number of research projects on management in kindergartens in general and the fostering preschool teachers in particular by principals of preschools, specifically some research topics as follows:

- Developing teachers for preschools in Hau Giang province by author Cao Thi Mong Nghi, 2019.
- Developing the contingent of preschool teachers to meet the requirements of universalizing ECE for 5-year-old children in the Central Highland provinces, by Nguyen Thi Bach Mai, 2015.
- Developing the contingent of preschool teachers in public schools in Ninh Kieu district, Can Tho City, 2010.

The above studies have mentioned the activities of kindergarten principals, some measures to help them improve school management capacity and professional management skills of preschool principals in financial management, administrative management, child care, fostering professional activities for staff. The scope and extent of implementing measures for building up teaching staffs of the principals still remains at a narrow scale. Some measures have not been applied thoroughly and regularly, so the quality of teachers in preschools is still not high. There is no research topic on the development of kindergarten teachers.

#### **4. Conclusions and discussion**

From the above studies, it is shown that developing teachers is a human resources development in education and training branch and has a decisive influence on improving the quality of teaching in schools. Developing preschool teachers - the first level of education in the national education system- has an even more special role for the development of kids in the first years contributing to the orientation of the kids' personality development in the future. The development of teaching staff includes both quantity, quality and framework of teachers, in which, the quality of teachers is always paid special attention to research. This is also the foundation for the author to conduct research on the development of preschool teachers in An Giang province, Vietnam.

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