

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. Sirent (2019) suggested that quality improvement for preschools related to a deeper understanding of how early childhood education and what can support children's development. 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 study aims to review studies on development of quality of preschool teacher worldwide to suggest aspects, which are considered to develop preschool teacher in contemporary context in Viet Nam.

2. Research Method

Theoretical research method: Researching on the development of preschool teachers 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 important aspects related to improve quality of preschool teachers in the Viet Nam context.

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 -academic program director for the BA in Early Childhood Development at National University. Alvarado argued that 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. However, she debated that it's a common misperception that early childhood education is only about learning basic skills. The kids can learn "so much more than that," when it is a time "children can learn critical social and emotional skills and a partnership is formed between the child, their parents and the teacher." (National University, 2021).

In terms of the teacher qualification, several studies by OECD members (Organization for Economic Cooperation Development) revealed that numerous of factors need to be involved, including: diverse knowledge of program content and subject content, pedagogical skills (teaching methods and the implementing method competence), critical thinking and self-criticism ability, characteristic of teaching profession, respect and commit to respecting the dignity of others, and management capacity (management responsibilities inside and outside the classroom). Research on the development of kindergarten teachers has been mentioned in many in-depth research projects, focusing on the quality of kindergarten teachers. Regarding professional qualifications and training for the teachers, there were a various of qualification requirements for preschool teachers vary in many countries. For example, countries belonging to the OECD often required a university degree and a professional qualification (i.e., short training certificate, diploma). A three-year post-secondary degree is required for kindergarten teachers in France. A preschool teacher must have completed at least three years of post-secondary education in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Portugal. The Swedish government has recently increased kindergarten teacher training from 3 to 3.5 years in order to make it comparable to primary school teacher training. The Swedish government has recently increased kindergarten teacher training from 3 to 3.5 years in order to make it comparable to primary school teacher training (OECD, 2011; UNESCO, 2007). Among 14 states in the U.S., kindergarten teachers are required to have bachelor's degrees and specialized training in early childhood education. According to the 2009 US Act, state-funded kindergarten schools are required to adhere to specific criteria to be eligible for funding. These criteria include using a curriculum aligned with elementary education standards, incorporating best practices for child development, maintaining a low student-to-teacher ratio of no more than 10 to 1, and operating for the entire school year. At the same time, they paid 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, 2011).

The Conference of Culture Ministers in Germany has issued a Framework Agreement concerning the education of preschool teachers in Germany (KMK, 2000). This agreement aims to enhance the quality of the German preschool teacher training system. It clearly delineates the responsibilities related to caring for and educating children, specifies the required competencies, and establishes conditions for graduated learners to develop into teachers capable of working independently, confidently, and responsibly in various social education activities within schools. The entire prescribed duration of preschool teacher training for students spans five years, with a minimum of four years, including the preparatory phase. The timetable introduced in the Framework Agreement offers flexibility to the states regarding the training activities within

schools, as it does not rigidly specify particular subjects. However, schools must meet certain fundamental requirements that are indicative of the teaching profession. These requirements encompass areas such as Information and Social Studies, Theory and Practice of Social Education, Creative Organization (including Music), Economics and Health, and Organization (covering Rights and Administration), as well as Religion/Ethics.

The Putrajaya Declaration (UN, 2015) developed common commitments related to kindergarten education through, highlighting a nine-pronged action plan to support the achievement of SDG 4.2 goals. This is “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.” Additionally, a study by Parmigiani et al. (2022), based on the European perspectives showed that it is need a global competence as a multidimensional concept that includes aspects directly related to the teaching profession such as collaboration, inclusion, social engagement, and multiculturalism.

According to the Southeast Asian Kindergarten Teacher Competency Framework (SEAMEO, 2019), 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.

Nations across the globe recognize the significance of early childhood education, particularly kindergarten education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an international governing body with a mission to promote peace-building, poverty eradication, sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue through education. Here is UNESCO's perspective on the importance of kindergarten education: Early childhood education and care (ECCE) extends beyond mere preparation for primary school. Its purpose is to support the comprehensive development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs, thereby establishing a robust and extensive foundation for lifelong learning and well-being. ECCE has the capacity to nurture dedicated, capable, and socially responsible future citizens (cited from National University, 2021). So, 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 project in the United States, called “Investing for Future” conducted studies on kindergarten education 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 et al., 2013). In the research, Zeicher (2014) showed that there are several challenges and difficulties in recruiting and supporting the profitraining activities, even these support activities are more difficult than K-12 education (Zeichner, 2014). A highly valuable and intriguing research report from "The Early Childhood Workforce Initiative," indicates that kindergarten teachers possess enduring professional expertise and experience in educational activities. Additionally, professionals working in Early Childhood Development (ECD) Services offer training programs and professional development opportunities that facilitate the dissemination of essential knowledge and skills to kindergarten teachers. This positive effect significantly contributes to the holistic development of children (Mitter& Putcha, 2018).

In the same vein, a previous study by Manning et al. (2017) showed that individual teachers who are given more opportunities for their ECE activities, will contribute to the cognitive and social development of young children significantly and positively. 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. Apart from the beneficial impact of kindergarten teachers' qualifications on the overall development of young children, numerous other studies further corroborate the evidence demonstrating that the quality of an educational program or a well-designed curriculum effectively equips new teachers with the foundational knowledge required for children's development and various academic domains. This aspect is regarded as an exceedingly crucial factor, even more so than the competence of teachers, in terms of positively influencing children's growth and learning (Hyson et al., 2009). Research results by Burchinal and colleagues (2002) revealed 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. Many other research projects have also considered 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 & Nguyen, 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”.

The project leader Ho and colleagues 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, leading by Ho with 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 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). A study by Nguyen (2012) found that it is required people to be dynamic and creative in modern era. 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.

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, 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 (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 (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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