

## A Study on the Willingness of Kindergarten Teachers to Continue With Their Educational Work as Well as Relevant Influencing Factors

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### Abstract

Willingness to continue with their educational work represents the extent of attitude and willingness of preschool teachers to accept their occupation and be willing to continue with their work, which is not only concerned with the development of preschool teachers themselves, but also imposes a far-reaching influence on the stability of preschool teachers and the development of rural preschool education. This study explores the extent of rural kindergarten teachers' willingness to continue with their educational work and their willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career, as well as influencing factors in respect thereof by means of literature analysis, questionnaire survey and interview. The research suggests that rural kindergarten teachers hold a relatively strong willingness to continue with their educational work, while their willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career is comparatively weak. Significant dimensional differences are observed in terms of age, teaching age, marital status and incorporation into the official staffing in respect of rural preschool teachers' willingness to be devoted for a lifelong educational work, wherein it turns out that the older they are, the stronger their willingness to be engaged in a lifelong educational work is; the longer their teaching age is, the stronger their willingness to be engaged in a lifelong educational work is; married teachers are more willing to be engaged in a lifelong educational work than those who are merely in love or remain single; teachers unincorporated into the official staffing are more willing

to be engaged in a lifelong educational work than those incorporated thereto. The willingness of preschool teachers to continue to be engaged in the education sector is influenced by their own factors as well as external and objective factors. Finally, some suggestions are brought forward in this paper to address the above-mentioned problems: first of all, pre-service training is to be conducted to enhance professional self-identity; secondly, emphasis should be laid on humanistic care to increase job satisfaction; thirdly, welfare and treatment for teachers are to be elevated to reinforce professional attraction; and finally, more social support is to be given to gain respect and recognition towards preschool teachers.

**Key words:** Rural kindergarten teachers; Willingness to continue with their educational work; Influencing factors

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### INTRODUCTION

Rural preschool education industry plays an integral part to China's cause of preschool education. In recent years, the national government increasingly attaches more importance to the development of preschool education in rural areas. National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) (2010), Several Guidelines from the State Council on the Current Development of Preschool Education (2010), Notice on Increasing Financial Investment to Support the Development of Preschool Education (2011), and Guiding Instructions from the General Office of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of Education

in the Central and Western Regions (2016) as well as other documents enacted during the period of 2010-2016 explicitly proposes the development of rural preschool education, expansion of rural preschool education resources and boosting the popularity of rural preschool education. In 2017, the report of the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China came up with the strategy for rural revitalization, setting the stage for the development of rural kindergartens. The third-phase action plan for preschool education had been implemented from 2017 to 2020 to emphatically address the issue of preschool education development in rural areas. Thus, the reform and development of contemporary education has been focusing on reinforcing the development of rural education, meanwhile, the most urgent need of development of rural preschool education at present is to upgrade the quality of children healthcare and education of kindergartens. As faculties being the primary resources of education, high-quality preschool education is necessarily associated with preschool teachers and a stabilized teaching staff. “Teachers are the key factor that influence the quality of children healthcare and education of kindergartens,” and the stability of the teaching staff is concerned with the development of rural kindergartens. As far as the above mentioned are concerned, the willingness to continue to devote themselves to educational work, as the premise for preschool teachers to adhere to their teaching profession and to strengthen their professional ideals and beliefs, is an important factor affecting the qualification of rural preschool teachers and the stability of teachers’ team. This study investigates the status quo of rural kindergarten teachers’ willingness to continue to be dedicated to educational work through self-made scales and analyzes relevant influencing factors; furthermore, on the basis of empirical investigation and research, this paper brings forward corresponding countermeasures and suggestions, in an attempt to enhance the willingness of rural kindergarten teachers to continue with their educational work, facilitate the stability of rural preschool education faculties and upgrading of the qualification of teachers, and to further boost the development of rural preschool education.

## 1. RESEARCH DESIGN

### 1.1 Research Object

This study mainly investigates teachers in rural kindergartens in Chongqing, including teachers in public kindergartens of the township center as well as private kindergartens. A total of 180 questionnaires were distributed by means of stratified sampling and “Sojump”, and 178 questionnaires were actually recovered, with a recovery rate of 98.89%. The basic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1:

**Table 1**  
**Basic characteristics of respondents**

Characteristic variable	Option	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	7	3.93
	Female	171	96.07
Age	Under 20 Years Old	1	0.56
	20-24 Years Old	55	30.90
	25-29 Years Old	25	14.04
	30-34 Years Old	36	20.22
	Over 34 Years Old	61	34.27
	Less than 1 Year	32	17.98
Teaching Age	2-4 Years	48	26.97
	5-7 Years	14	7.87
	8-10 Years	34	19.10
	Over 10 Years	50	28.09
Home Location	Countryside	39	21.91
	Township	91	51.12
	County-level City	40	22.47
Marital Status	Prefecture-level City and Above	8	4.49
	Married	121	67.98
	In Love	22	12.36
Graduation and Major	Single	35	19.66
	Preschool Education	136	76.40
	Normal University Non-preschool Education	20	11.24
	Non-Normal University	22	12.36
	High School and Below	8	4.49
Education Level	Technical Secondary School	6	3.37
	Junior College (Higher Vocational School)	84	47.19
	Undergraduate	80	44.94
	Master and Above	0	0
Incorporation into the Official Staffing	Incorporated into the Official Staffing	108	60.67
	Unincorporated into the Official Staffing	70	39.33
	Not Rated	116	65.17
Professional Title	Grade III of Primary School	10	5.62
	Grade II of Primary School	19	10.67
	Grade I of Primary School	25	14.04
	Senior and Above of Primary School	8	4.49
	Teacher in Special Position	4	2.25
	Post-transferred Teacher	4	2.25
Teaching Background	Public Recruitment of Institutions	93	52.25
	Appointed by Kindergarten Contract	77	43.26
	Less than 2,000 Yuan	56	31.46
Monthly Average Income	2001 - 3000 Yuan	29	16.29
	3001-4000 Yuan	48	26.97
	4001-5000 Yuan	21	11.80
	5,001 Yuan and Above	24	13.48

## 1.2 Research Methods

### 1.2.1 Questionnaire Survey

Questionnaire survey is taken in this study as the principal research method. With reference to the research of other scholars, the author worked out the questionnaire entitled “Investigation and Research on the Willingness of Rural Kindergarten Teachers to Continue with Their Educational Work” in three parts with a total of 46 questions. The first part is the basic information of the surveyed rural preschool teachers; the second part shows the investigation of the status quo of rural kindergarten teachers’ willingness to continue to devote themselves to educational work; the third part is the investigation of influencing factors of rural kindergarten teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work, which chiefly relates to 8 aspects, namely preschool teachers’ interests and hobbies, self-cognition, professional self-identity, self-worth realization, recognition by others, professional treatment, occupational stress and realization of social value.

### 1.2.2 Interview Method

Interview is taken as an auxiliary research method for this study. With a view to make up for the deficiency of the questionnaire survey and further learn about the status quo of rural kindergarten teachers’ willingness to continue to be engaged in the education sector, the author drew up an outline of the interview on rural kindergarten teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work, and interviewed six rural kindergarten teachers, in respect of the extent of their willingness to continue to devote themselves to educational work, the factors influencing their willingness to continue with their educational work, and ideas and suggestions for enhancing their willingness to do the same.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS

### 2.1 Overall Situation of the Willingness to Continue With Their Educational Work

#### 2.1.1 Extent of Rural Kindergarten Teachers’ Willingness to Continue with Their Educational Work

The researcher investigated the degree of rural kindergarten teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work, and divided the degree of willingness into five levels: “very willing”, “relatively willing”, “uncertain”, “not willing” and “not willing at all”. In light of the questionnaire survey, 52.81% of rural kindergarten teachers are “very willing” to continue with their educational work; teachers who are “more willing” make up 32.02%; teachers who are “uncertain” and “not willing” account for 11.80% and 3.37% respectively; no one said “not willing at all”. The detailed results are presented in Table 2.

As exhibited in Table 2, none of the teachers stated that they were unwilling to continue with their educational

work at all, and more than half (52.81%) of them were very willing to continue to assume educational duties, suggesting that preschool teachers have relatively strong willingness to work in the educational sector, but 32.02% of them were only relatively willing to continue with their educational work, revealing that their willingness awaits to be improved. Through interviews, it was learned that some rural kindergarten teachers stated that there are few training opportunities and too little room for their promotion, while others mentioned that they would be more willing to continue with their teaching work if their salary could be raised. For instance, when asked if she would like to continue with her work in rural kindergartens as well as the reasons in respect thereof, Mrs. W said, “our salary here is low, there are few training opportunities, and the scope of cooperation and exchange is particularly limited. But if the salary can be raised, I will still consider staying in kindergarten.” This suggests that in real life, there are still numerous factors that influence teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work.

**Table 2**  
**Extent of willingness to continue with their educational work**

Extent of willingness to continue with their educational work	Number of people	Percent (%)
Very willing	94	52.81
Relatively willing	57	32.02
Uncertain	21	11.80
Not willing	6	3.37
Not willing at all	0	0

#### 2.1.2 Extent of Rural Kindergarten Teachers’ Willingness to Take Teaching as a Lifelong Career

Based on the time that teachers expect to continue to assume educational duties, this study probes into the extent of teachers’ willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career, and divides the teaching age into five categories: “0-3 years”, “4-6 years”, “7-9 years”, “10-12 years” and “taking teaching as a lifelong career”. The survey results reveal that 37.08% of teachers expressed their willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career; 35.96% of teachers expressed their willingness to continue with their educational work for “0-3 years”; teachers who intended to be engaged in education for “4-6 years”, “7-9 years” and “10-12 years” make up 17.42%, 3.39% and 5.62% respectively. Please refer to Table 3 for details:

**Table 3**  
**Willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career**

Willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career	Frequency	Percent (%)
0-3 Years	64	35.96
4-6 Years	31	17.42
7-9 Years	7	3.93
10-12 Years	10	5.62
Lifetime	66	37.08

As indicated in the table above, less than half of the teachers (37.08%) are willing to take teaching as a lifelong career, and the proportion of teachers who are willing to continue to devote themselves to educational work for “0-3 years” and “take teaching as a lifelong career” is similar, which suggests that the period expected by rural kindergarten teachers to continue to be engaged in educational duties are polarized, and their willingness to be engaged in a lifelong educational work awaits to be enhanced.

## 2.2 Analysis of Demographic Variables of Rural Kindergarten Teachers’ Willingness to Continue to Work in Education

Different variables will result in different extent of rural

kindergarten teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work for life. This part analyzes the rural kindergarten teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career from the dimensions of “gender”, “age”, “teaching age”, “home location”, “marital status”, “graduation major”, “degree”, “incorporation into the official staffing”, “professional title”, “background of educational work” and “average monthly income”, makes correlation analysis between these variables and teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career, and the results are demonstrated in Table 4:

**Table 4**  
Correlation analysis between basic characteristics of samples and willingness to continue with their educational work

		Extent of willingness to continue with their educational work	Willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career
Gender	Pearson correlation	.057	.005
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.451	.943
	N	178	178
Age	Pearson correlation	-.079	.417**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.295	.000
	N	178	178
Teaching age	Pearson correlation	-.002	.356**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.978	.000
	N	178	178
Home location	Pearson correlation	.007	-.064
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.923	.392
	N	178	178
Marital status	Pearson correlation	.125	-.349**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.097	.000
	N	178	178
Graduation and major	Pearson correlation	.109	.120
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.147	.111
	N	178	178
Degree	Pearson correlation	-.020	-.087
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.795	.249
	N	178	178
Incorporation into the official staffing	Pearson correlation	.099	.199**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.190	.008
	N	178	178
Professional title	Pearson correlation	-.105	.075
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.163	.322
	N	178	178
Teaching background	Pearson correlation	.121	.139
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.107	.064
	N	178	178
Monthly income	Pearson correlation	-.068	-.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.366	.225
	N	178	178

Note: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

As can be known from the Table 4, there are no significant differences between the “extent of willingness to continue with their educational work” of preschool teachers and the above-mentioned variables; no differences exist between the variables of “gender”, “home location”, “graduation major”, “degree”, “professional title”, “background of educational work” and “average monthly income” variables and “willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career”; differences are observed in the 4 variables of “age”, “teaching age”, “marital status” and “incorporation into the official staffing”, and Sig. is all less than 0.01, which suggests that these 4 variables are significantly correlated with the extent of willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career. Hence, the variables

with differences will be explained here. In the dimension of “extent of willingness to continue with their educational work”, since no teachers said that they were “not willing to continue with their educational work at all”, this option will not appear in the following result statistics.

### 2.2.1 Differences in Age

With regard to the “extent of willingness to continue with their educational work”, there are no significant differences between age and rural preschool teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work. Teachers of all ages tend to be willing to continue with their educational work. Therein, teachers “over 34 years old” are more willing to continue with their educational work. Please refer to the Table 5 for details:

**Table 5**  
**Cross table of age of rural preschool teachers \* extent of willingness to continue with their educational work**

		Extent of willingness to continue with their educational work				Total	
		Very willing	Relatively willing	Uncertain	Not willing		
Age	Under 20 years old	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Percent	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	20-24 years old	Count	29	14	10	2	55
		Percent	52.7%	25.5%	18.2%	3.6%	100.0%
	25-29 years old	Count	11	10	3	1	25
		Percent	44.0%	40.0%	12.0%	4.0%	100.0%
	30-34 years old	Count	17	15	3	1	36
		Percent	47.2%	41.7%	8.3%	2.8%	100.0%
	Over 34 years old	Count	36	18	5	2	61
		Percent	59.0%	29.5%	8.2%	3.3%	100.0%
	Total	Count	94	57	21	6	178
		Percent	52.8%	32.0%	11.8%	3.4%	100.0%

With respect to the “extent of willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career”, the statistical results reveal that the older they are, the stronger their willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career is. Younger teachers (20-29 years old) are more willing to work in education

for 0-3 years, but less willing to be engaged in education for life, while older teachers are more willing to work in education all their lives, wherein it turns out that teachers “over 34 years old” have the strongest willingness to work in education all their lives. The details are in Table 6:

**Table 6**  
**Cross table of age \* extent of willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career**

		Willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career					Total	
		0-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10-12 years	Lifelong		
Age	Under 20 years old	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1
		Percent	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	20-24 years old	Count	30	13	0	1	11	55
		Percent	54.5%	23.6%	0.0%	1.8%	20.0%	100.0%
	25-29 years old	Count	15	4	1	2	3	25
		Percent	60.0%	16.0%	4.0%	8.0%	12.0%	100.0%
	30-34 years old	Count	11	6	3	0	16	36
		Percent	30.6%	16.7%	8.3%	0.0%	44.4%	100.0%
	Over 34 years old	Count	8	8	3	7	35	61
		Percent	13.1%	13.1%	4.9%	11.5%	57.4%	100.0%
	Total	Count	64	31	7	10	66	178
		Percent	36.0%	17.4%	3.9%	5.6%	37.1%	100.0%

In light of the above statistics, the older teachers are, the more willing they are to continue with their educational work, and the more willing they are to work in education all their lives. This study holds that this phenomenon conforms to the routine, young people prefer challenging life, are

curious about the future and are more willing to explore. Conversely, the older they get, the clearer they are about the job they wish, and the more stable they are about their life status, and thus the more willing and intense they will continue with their educational work.

### 2.2.2 Differences in Teaching Age

With regard to the “extent of willingness to continue with their educational work”, there are no significant differences between teaching age and rural preschool teachers’ willingness to continue to devote themselves to

educational work. Teachers of all teaching ages tend to be willing to continue to devote themselves to educational work, among which teachers with more than 10 years of teaching age are more willing to continue with their educational work. The details are as Table 7.

**Table 7**  
**Cross table of rural preschool teachers’ teaching age \* willingness to continue with their educational work**

		Willingness to continue with their educational work					
		Very willing	Relatively willing	Uncertain	Not willing	Total	
Less than 1 year	Count	17	11	3	1	32	
	Percent	53.1%	34.4%	9.4%	3.1%	100.0%	
2-4 years	Count	24	15	8	1	48	
	Percent	50.0%	31.3%	16.7%	2.1%	100.0%	
Teaching age 5-7 years	Count	9	4	1	0	14	
	Percent	64.3%	28.6%	7.1%	0.0%	100.0%	
8-10 years	Count	16	12	4	2	34	
	Percent	47.1%	35.3%	11.8%	5.9%	100.0%	
Over 10 years	Count	28	15	5	2	50	
	Percent	56.0%	30.0%	10.0%	4.0%	100.0%	
Total	Count	94	57	21	6	178	
	Percent	52.8%	32.0%	11.8%	3.4%	100.0%	

In the dimension of the “extent of their willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career”, the statistical results reveal that the longer the teaching age, the higher their willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career. Teachers with more than 10 years of teaching age have the strongest willingness to be engaged in education for life;

teachers with 2-4 years of teaching age have the weakest willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career, and their willingness to be engaged in a lifelong educational work is 47 percentage points lower than those with more than 10 years of teaching age. Please refer to Table 8 for details:

**Table 8**  
**Cross table of teaching age \* extent of willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career**

		Willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career					
		0-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10-12 years	Lifetime	Total
Less than 1 year	Count	16	6	0	0	10	32
	Percent	50.0%	18.8%	0.0%	0.0%	31.3%	100.0%
2-4 years	Count	23	12	2	3	8	48
	Percent	47.9%	25.0%	4.2%	6.3%	16.7%	100.0%
Teaching age 5-7 years	Count	6	2	0	1	5	14
	Percent	42.9%	14.3%	0.0%	7.1%	35.7%	100.0%
8-10 years	Count	13	5	3	2	11	34
	Percent	38.2%	14.7%	8.8%	5.9%	32.4%	100.0%
Over 10 years	Count	6	6	2	4	32	50
	Percent	12.0%	12.0%	4.0%	8.0%	64.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	64	31	7	10	66	178
	Percent	36.0%	17.4%	3.9%	5.6%	37.1%	100.0%

From the above statistical results, it can be known that the longer teachers’ teaching age, the stronger their desire to continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career. Based on the investigation and interviews, this paper considers that this phenomenon conforms to the routine and similar to the age differences above. Teachers with more than 10 years’ teaching age have been relatively stable in all aspects of work and life, so they have fewer ideas about changing their current jobs. While teachers who have been teaching for one year

or less are relatively willing to be engaged in education for life than those who have been working for two to four years. The reason is that they are still full of novelty and interest in this job and thus are relatively willing to continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career.

### 2.2.3 Differences in Marital Status

With regard to the “extent of willingness to continue with their educational work”, there are no significant differences between marital status and rural preschool teachers’

willingness to continue to devote themselves to educational work. Teachers in different marital status all tend to be

willing to continue with their educational work, among whom married teachers are more willing to do the same.

**Table 9**  
**Cross table of marital status\*willingness to continue with their educational work**

		Willingness to continue with their educational work				Total	
		Relatively willing	Very willing	Uncertain	Not willing		
Marital status	Married	Count	67	40	11	3	121
		Percent	55.4%	33.1%	9.1%	2.5%	100.0%
	In love	Count	11	6	4	1	22
		Percent	50.0%	27.3%	18.2%	4.5%	100.0%
	Single	Count	16	11	6	2	35
		Percent	45.7%	31.4%	17.1%	5.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	94	57	21	6	178	
	Percent	52.8%	32.0%	11.8%	3.4%	100.0%	

As for the “extent of willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career”, married teachers have the strongest willing to be engaged in education for life; teachers who are merely in love have the lowest willingness to take teaching as their career. Teachers who are merely in love or remain single are more willing to continue with their educational work for 0-3 years. Please refer to Table 10 for details:

**Table 10**  
**Cross table of marital status \* extent of willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career**

		Willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career					Total	
		0-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10-12 Years	Lifetime		
Marital status	Married	Count	31	17	7	8	58	121
		Percent	25.6%	14.0%	5.8%	6.6%	47.9%	100.0%
	In love	Count	13	6	0	1	2	22
		Percent	59.1%	27.3%	0.0%	4.5%	9.1%	100.0%
	Single	Count	20	8	0	1	6	35
		Percent	57.1%	22.9%	0.0%	2.9%	17.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	64	31	7	10	66	178	
	Percent	36.0%	17.4%	3.9%			100.0%	

In light of the above statistical results, married teachers’ willingness to continue with their educational work and their lifelong desire to work in education are even stronger. Based on the investigation and interview, this paper considers that this difference conforms to the routine, and married teachers’ family life is relatively stable, especially, teachers with children have a stable life, and their career choice and planning are relatively mature and stable. In comparison with married teachers, teachers who are merely in love or remain single still remains unknown where to form a family in the future, and their living conditions are comparatively unstable, so their willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career is relatively weak.

**2.2.4 Differences in Incorporation Into the Official Staffing**

In the dimension of the “extent of willingness to continue with their educational work”, there are no significant differences between the incorporation into the official staffing and the willingness of rural preschool teachers to continue with their educational work. Teachers unincorporated into the official staffing tend to be willing to continue with their educational work. Therein, teachers who are incorporated into the official staffing are more willing to continue with their educational work than those unincorporated thereinto. The details are as below in Table 11:

**Table 11**  
**Cross table of incorporation into the official staffing\*willingness to continue with their educational work**

		Willingness to continue with their educational work				Total	
		Very willing	Relatively willing	Uncertain	Not willing		
Incorporation into the official staffing	Incorporated into the official staffing	Count	58	38	10	2	108
		Percent	53.7%	35.2%	9.3%	1.9%	100.0%
	Unincorporated into the official staffing	Count	36	19	11	4	70
		Percent	51.4%	27.1%	15.7%	5.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	94	57	21	6	178	
	Percent	52.8%	32.0%	11.8%	3.4%	100.0%	

With respect to the “extent of the willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career”, according to the survey results, teachers unincorporated into the official staffing

are more willing to be engaged in education for life than those incorporated thereinto. Please refer to the table below for details:

**Table 12**  
**Cross table of incorporation into the official staffing\*willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career**

			Willingness to take teaching as a lifelong career					
			0-3 Years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10-12 years	Lifetime	Total
Incorporation into the official staffing	Incorporated into the official staffing	Count	45	22	4	3	34	108
		Percent	41.7%	20.4%	3.7%	2.8%	31.5%	100.0%
	Unincorporated into the official staffing	Count	19	9	3	7	32	70
		Percent	27.1%	12.9%	4.3%	10.0%	45.7%	100.0%
Total	Count		64	31	7	10	66	178
	Percent		36.0%	17.4%	3.9%	5.6%	37.1%	100.0%

With reference to the above two tables in combination, it can be learned that both teachers incorporated into the official staffing and those unincorporated thereinto are relatively willing to continue with their educational work, and teachers unincorporated thereinto are more willing to be engaged in education for life than those incorporated thereinto, and the years that both teachers incorporated into the official staffing and those unincorporated thereinto expect to continue with their educational work for only 0-3 years and for a lifetime. In general, teachers' willingness to be incorporated into the official staffing with great efforts should be stronger than that of those unincorporated thereinto to be engaged in lifelong education, but the results of data analysis are just on the contrary. By combining interviews and consulting relevant materials, the researcher tried to figure out the reasons for this difference. Primarily, in terms of teachers incorporated into the official staffing, the awareness of "life-long job" is getting increasingly weaker. Some new teachers are influenced by the school and parents when they graduate and choose their jobs. They choose to work in kindergarten only after successfully being incorporated into the official staffing. However, after successfully working in the kindergarten, they find that they don't like this profession and have a strong desire to change jobs. Meanwhile, the education and training industry gains strong popularity, and some teachers incorporated into the official staffing with a wealth of experience choose to resign and start their own businesses, and set up training classes and early education institutions. Besides, with respect to teachers unincorporated into the official staffing: currently, the number of places for being incorporated into the official staffing in kindergartens is relatively small, and most kindergartens have hired a large number of external teachers. Those external teachers who are proficient in a particular skill and can serve kindergartens can also be favored by the kindergarten leader. They find their own value in their work and are more confident to continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career. Furthermore, teachers unincorporated into the official staffing choose this profession mostly because of their love for young children, and their interest and enthusiasm inspire teachers to continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career.

However, for realistic reasons of life, some external teachers work and take exams for being incorporated into the official staffing simultaneously, mostly for three years, and if they pass the exams within three years, they will work in education for life, otherwise they will find another job. For instance, Mrs. H said, "the benefits of teachers incorporated into the official staffing are much better than those in our contract system. If they are incorporated into the official staffing within three years, they will stay in kindergarten all the time. If they fail, they will choose to go to a training institution offering higher salary."

### 3. ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING RURAL KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR EDUCATIONAL WORK

Numerous factors influence the willingness of rural kindergarten teachers to continue to assume their educational duties, which can be classified into teachers' personal factors and external factors based on the existing research contents. In this study, it is also summarized into two categories: teachers' own factors (including professional self-identity and job satisfaction) and external objective factors (including teachers' professional environment and social environment).

#### 3.1 Teachers' Own Factors

Willingness represents the extent of a person's intention and attitude, which is embodied in the individual's career choice and development intention", that is, the intention of rural preschool teachers to continue to devote themselves to educational work. Teachers themselves are the primary factor in influencing rural kindergarten teachers' willingness to continue with their educational work.

##### 3.1.1 Professional Self-Identity

Professional self-identity is a positive evaluation of teachers' work. The stronger the professional self-identity of preschool teachers, the more active they will be in learning and working, and the more willing they will continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career. The researcher found through questionnaire survey and interview that some teachers



still do not agree with preschool teachers' profession enough. This is consistent with the research results of Tan Xiulan (2018). When the researcher asked teachers about the motivation of choosing this profession at first, some teachers unincorporated into the official staffing said that rural kindergarten teachers raise lower access conditions and it is easier for them to be admitted to this profession than others. The original motivation of some teachers incorporated into the official staffing in choosing a profession was influenced by school teachers and family and friends around them, so they were admitted to kindergartens, while the original intention of these teachers to be engaged in educational duties was not due to their love for preschool teachers' profession or identity with it. Meanwhile, the social status of preschool teachers at present is relatively low, particularly in relatively backward villages. Hence, when receiving the questionnaire survey, most of the teachers expressed their willingness to continue to devote themselves to educational work, but in real life, there is still a serious problem of turnover in rural kindergartens. Thus, preschool teachers' lack of strong professional self-identity is an obstacle for teachers to continue to do educational work.

### 3.1.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was brought forward for the first time in the book entitled *Job Satisfaction* written by Hoppock in 1935. Job satisfaction represents the extent of mental state of kindergarten teachers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their work in all aspects. Higher job satisfaction will make individuals take a more active part in work and be more willing to continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career. Conversely, lower job satisfaction will make individuals feel disgusted with their job and increase the probability of teachers' turnover. Through the questionnaire survey, it can be learned that the job satisfaction level of rural kindergarten teachers is not high, which is consistent with the survey results of Li Min's research that rural preschool teachers are not satisfied with their current job. According to the literature review, factors such as self-realization, work extent, salary income, relationship between leaders and colleagues will impose an influence on teachers' job satisfaction. In the interview with rural kindergarten teachers about their current job satisfaction, Mrs. Z said: "I am quite satisfied with my work in kindergarten upon graduation, and kindergarten leaders are concerned about our young teachers' work and life, and often encourage us to take part in some teaching competitions. My colleagues are also very kind, and we all help each other at work, especially several teachers in our class. Seeing the progress of the children in our class, I feel particularly fulfilled." Mrs. S said: "I work in a private kindergarten, and a large number of activities will be held in our kindergarten. Overtime work is a commonplace. I work long hours every day despite the low salary, which makes me feel particularly

tired, and sometimes I even want to quit my job." From the interviews, we know that job satisfaction imposes an enormous influence on preschool teachers' willingness to continue with their educational work.

## 3.2 External Objective Factors

### 3.2.1 Teachers' Professional Environment

The investigation showed that the influence of teachers' professional environment on rural preschool teachers' willingness to continue to devote themselves to educational work chiefly lies in the following aspects: low wage income of preschool teachers in rural areas, high occupational pressure, low social status and poor development prospects. In the survey, a considerable proportion of teachers are unwilling to continue to do educational work because of low wage income (47.1%); 44.3% of teachers consider that preschool teachers are under huge occupational stress; 22.4% of the teachers hold that the career development of preschool teachers is not promising. Despite that the national government increasingly attaches more importance to the development of preschool education, the social status of preschool teachers is still not high. In the interview, Mrs. K said: "my relatives all ask me why I wish to become a kindergarten teacher after studying in university, which is just a job of coaxing children. Only junior high school students with poor academic performance will be willing to be kindergarten teachers." Thus, the public still considers a preschool teacher as a "nanny", especially in the relatively backward rural areas. People haven't yet got a correct understanding of the importance of preschool teachers' occupation.

### 3.2.2 Social and Environmental Aspects

Concerning the influence of social environment on the willingness of rural kindergarten teachers to continue to devote themselves to educational work, through the questionnaire survey and interviews, the author learned that besides the factors of national policies, urban effects and the realization of social values will influence the extent of their willingness to continue with their educational work. The interview results are specifically as below:

Question: What are your development goals and plans in the next few years?

Mrs. J: With a view to develop in the county, I will upgrade my professional skills in the next two years, especially my dancing skills. At ordinary times, I will learn professional knowledge by use of network resources.

Question: What do you think are the principal difficulties for rural preschool teachers to develop?

Mrs. S: the rural conditions are poor and the teaching hardware facilities cannot keep up; we are too far away from the county seat here, and there are no favorable learning resources; the quality of students is relatively poor as well, and those with better family conditions have sent their children to school in cities; the national

government has promulgated many policies for preschool education, but it seems that our teaching facilities and workfare in kindergarten have not changed as a result of it, and they are still the same as before. When my children grow older, I will go to the city to find another job, so that they will get better education.

Mrs. Y: The society doesn't understand us or give us support. I used to believe that preschool teachers' profession would enable me to realize my social value, but society misunderstand our preschool teachers' profession, which make me lose my enthusiasm for realizing social value. Particularly, some parents in our class look down upon our teachers very much. After working for a long time, we also slowly begin to think that the true value of this profession is really not high.

It can be learned from the above interviews that the social environment has influenced the preschool teachers' willingness to continue with their educational work to a certain extent. Rural areas are relatively remote in geographical location and poor in conditions, so teachers cannot be retained there. Some teachers will choose to go to the city for development, others will choose other occupations, while still others will hold high expectations towards realizing social values before being engaged in educational work, but their initial expectations and beliefs are constantly obliterated by the real environment. Thus, urban effects and the failure to fulfill their social values are both obstacles for teachers to continue with their educational work.

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## **4. COUNTERMEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS TO ENHANCE RURAL KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO DO EDUCATIONAL WORK**

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### **4.1 Pre-Service Training Is to Be Conducted to Enhance Professional Self-Identity**

Before teachers are employed, it is necessary to give teachers a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of their occupation, so as to enhance the professional self-identity of preschool teachers. From the point of view of subjects, both universities and kindergartens can make a difference in pre-service training.

On the part of colleges and universities, they can offer more educational practice courses for students in school, such as organizing weekly probation or holding activities in kindergartens, so that students in schools can get a more practical understanding of their future careers, rather than being confined to textbooks or the Internet. Moreover, they should also offer corresponding reflection courses to sum up the problems met in the actual teaching activities

in kindergartens. This can prevent students from idealizing and beautifying their careers. Besides, it is also helpful for students not to feel overwhelmed and lose confidence when they come across similar problems after working in kindergartens in the future. As for rural kindergartens involved, they can set up a amicable cooperation and exchange platform, allowing colleges and universities to organize students to observe and study in kindergartens and in-service kindergarten teachers to go to colleges and universities to study, etc.

On the part of kindergartens, as there still exist certain gaps between the theory they have learned and the real practice, preschool teachers who enter kindergarten from school will be confronted with the conflict between ideal and reality in the early stage of their work, so enormous that they even cannot adapt to the kindergarten environment and work well for a period of time, and even more seriously, they will feel strongly excluded from this job. Furthermore, some teachers without a background of pre-school education in kindergartens are less prepared than professional teachers in terms of lessons, one-day activities, grasping the age characteristics of children when they first enter kindergartens. This will not only influence the teaching quality, but also frustrate the confidence of these teachers to continue on the career path of preschool teachers. If kindergartens conduct systematic and targeted induction training to teachers before they start their jobs, then these adverse effects can be well avoided as a result. Two suggestions are proposed in this paper through summary: primarily, a pre-service training system should be built and perfected, covering the understanding of kindergarten culture, related work contents and processes, specialized knowledge training and assessment, corresponding problems and solutions, etc. Moreover, a new system should be set up for experienced seniors to teach green hands. In this way, it will be helpful to well improve the condition that theory is out of step with practice for new teachers. With guidance, new teachers' professional self-identity and confidence in continuing to be engaged in educational work will be boosted accordingly.

### **4.2 Emphasis Should Be Laid on Humanistic Care to Increase Job Satisfaction**

Teachers' working status will influence both their own development, and the teaching quality, children's development and the rise and fall of educational undertakings. Good working status calls for relatively high job satisfaction. As studies show, older contract teachers and teachers with lower income in kindergartens are prone to serious job burnout. Therefore, kindergarten principals should put a high premium on the humanistic care for these teachers and help them get through this sensitive period smoothly, so that they can realize their self-values and social values by continuing to be engaged in educational work. First of all, it is advisable to build

an appropriate reward mechanism, including material and spiritual rewards, in a bid to affirm the achievements of teachers' hard work and arouse their enthusiasm. Besides, kindergartens can also organize group building activities among teachers, which can be in a variety of forms, including mountain climbing and dinner. Last but not least, kindergartens can establish a gratitude system during holidays. On traditional holidays, kindergartens can not only give more material care to preschool teachers, but also organize activities to invite their family members to join in, in order to raise the sense of belonging of preschool teachers, finally enhance preschool teachers' job satisfaction and make them continue with their educational work and take teaching as a lifelong career.

#### **4.3 Welfare and Treatment for Teachers Are to Be Elevated to Reinforce Professional Attraction**

In light of the questionnaire survey, the monthly income of 31.4% of preschool teachers is low (below 2,000 yuan). Currently, there is a shortage of high-quality preschool teachers in rural areas, and the teaching staff is unstable. One of the important reasons is that the salary income of preschool teachers in rural areas is too low, and their contribution is not proportional to their income. Moreover, other welfare benefits of rural kindergartens are not as good as those of other industries. For instance, some villages are remote and far away from county towns; the hardware facilities, accommodation conditions and the quality of students are also comparatively poor, and the quality of teachers' living standards is not high. Hence, the national government should set and perfect corresponding policies to further elevate the wage income as well as other welfare benefits of rural preschool teachers, increase the attraction of rural preschool teachers as a profession, attract more highly qualified teachers to rural kindergartens while retaining in-service teachers, and raise the level of education and teaching of kindergartens, in a bid to boost the booming development of rural preschool education and even preschool education in China.

#### **4.4 More Social Support Is to Be Given to Gain Respect and Recognition Towards Preschool Teachers**

Through interviews, it is known that at present, the public still has misunderstandings about the profession of preschool teachers, particularly in relatively backward rural areas, and preschool teachers are still defined as "nannies" whose job is just to "coax children". In rural areas, few parents are aware of the professionalism and importance of preschool teachers' occupation, and it is rather difficult for preschool teachers to well communicate with children's parents. In the case those preschool teachers' profession and corresponding work are not respected and accepted by the society, it is in no doubt that they will be discouraged from continuing with their education work. Through the network platform, the government can actively guide public opinion, publicize correct educational concepts, spread positive and professional images and features of preschool teachers, help the public to correctly understand and evaluate preschool teachers' occupations, especially parents in rural areas, so as to make them form a sense of respecting teachers and attaching much importance to education, and accept and support the work of preschool teachers. In this way, it will be conducive for preschool teachers to raise the sense of job accomplishment and social status, enhance their professional self-identity and job satisfaction, and inspire their belief and confidence in continuing with their educational work and taking lifelong education work.

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