

# Study on Private Kindergarten Teachers' Sense of Professional Belonging

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## ABSTRACT

Sense of belonging refers to a person's identification and acceptance of a group or an environment. It is a person's physiological and psychological needs. Teachers' sense of professional belonging is closely related to teaching quality and students' growth, and it is also an important factor to stabilize teachers. With the release of preschool-related policies issued by the state, parents pay more and more attention to preschool education, the enrollment rate of children increases, the number of private kindergartens rises sharply, and the proportion of private kindergarten teachers becomes larger. In this study, 245 teachers from private kindergartens in Chongqing were investigated by questionnaire. It is found that the sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is generally in the upper-middle position, showing significant differences in gender, age, educational background and so on. The sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is mainly affected by salary, professional identity and teacher management. Therefore, in this paper, suggestions to improve the sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing are put forward from three levels of government, private kindergartens and kindergarten teachers.

**Keywords:** private kindergarten teachers, the sense of professional belonging, influencing factors

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this study, 245 questionnaires were collected from private kindergarten teachers in the main urban areas and counties of Chongqing, including 35 invalid and 210 valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of about 85.71%. The reliability of SPSS was 0.958 through reliability analysis of SPSS. The questionnaire mainly includes three parts: the basic information of the respondents, the sense of belonging scale and the influencing factors. The basic information mainly includes gender, age, teaching age, class and monthly income. The sense of belonging scale refers to the sense of belonging scale in Zhou Jingfan's master's thesis at Southwest University. After measurement, the Cronbach's Alpha of the scale is 0.88, which is high. The influencing factors involve school environment, teachers' interpersonal relationships, school management of teachers, teachers' salary and so on. The five-point scoring method was adopted in the questionnaire. The higher the score, the greater the influence.

## 2. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Investigation results

1) The sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is generally in the upper-middle position

**TABLE 1** DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL BELONGING OF PRIVATE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS IN CHONGQING

N	M
210	54.64

Table 1 shows that the average value of the sense of the belonging scale of 210 respondents is 54.86. As the questionnaire is compiled by the five-point scoring method, the median score is 3, the total number of items in the sense of belonging scale is 15, the full score is  $5 \times 15 = 75$ , the median score is  $3 \times 15 = 45$ ,  $54.86 > 45$ , the

sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is in the upper-middle position.

2) The sense of professional belonging of male teachers in private kindergartens in Chongqing is slightly higher than that of female teachers

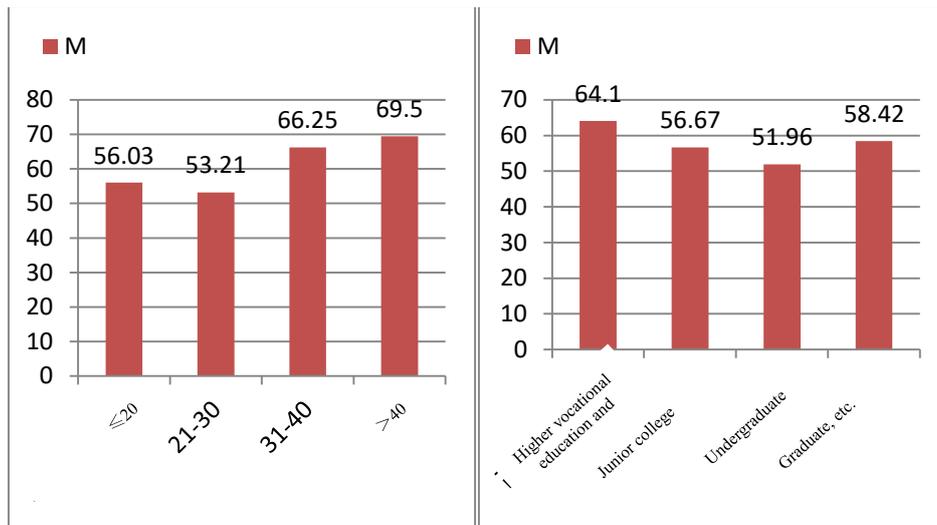
**TABLE 2** DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL BELONGING OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS OF DIFFERENT GENDERS

Gender	N	M
Female	188	54.64

Male	22	57.14
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Table 2 shows that the number of female teachers in private kindergartens in Chongqing far exceeds that of male teachers. However, there are differences between male and female teachers. The average sense of professional belonging of female teachers is 54.64, and that of male teachers in private kindergartens in Chongqing is 57.14. The sense of professional belonging of male teachers is higher than that of female teachers.

3) The sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is closely related to their age and educational background



**FIGURE 1** DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL BELONGING OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS OF DIFFERENT AGES AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS

Figure 1 shows that the age difference of the sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is over 40 > 31-40 > less than or equal to 20 > 21-30 years old, showing a state of polarization. Taking the age of 30 as the boundary, the sense of professional belonging of teachers over 30 is significantly higher than that of teachers under 30. The sense of professional belonging of teachers over 30 increases with the increase of age, while that of teachers over 30 is on the contrary. Among all age groups, the sense of professional belonging of teachers 21-30 years old is the lowest.

Among the teachers with different educational backgrounds, the teachers with bachelor's degrees have the lowest sense of professional belonging.

4) The sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is directly proportional to their teaching ages

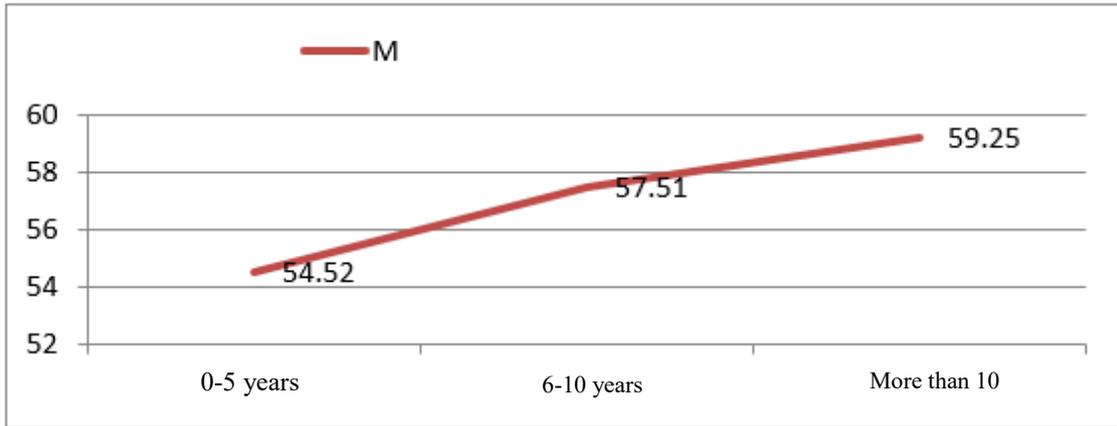


FIGURE 2 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL BELONGING OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS OF DIFFERENT TEACHING AGES

Figure 2 shows that the sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is directly proportional to their teaching years (over 10 years > 5-10 years > less than 5 years). The longer the teaching time, the stronger the sense of professional belonging of teachers, and there is a big gap between the sense of professional belonging of teachers with 0-5 years

of teaching age and that of teachers with 10 years of teaching age.

5) The sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing increases with the increase of monthly income

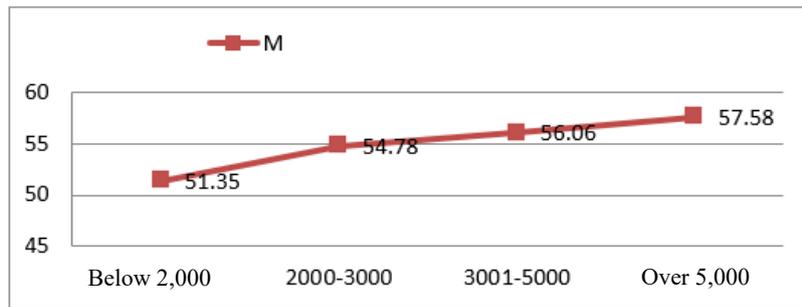


FIGURE 3 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL BELONGING OF TEACHERS WITH DIFFERENT MONTHLY INCOME

Figure 3 shows that the sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing increases with the increase of monthly income (Over RMB 5,000 > RMB 3,001-5,000 > RMB 2,000-3,000 > less than RMB 2,000), and the monthly income is directly proportional to the sense of professional belonging of teachers. There are significant differences in the sense of professional belonging among different ages, genders,

educational backgrounds and teaching ages. In the questionnaire, the overall average value of the question "I am satisfied with the salary of preschool teachers" is 2.95, which is lower than the median score of 3.

2.2 Analysis of influencing factors

TABLE 3 CORRELATION COEFFICIENT TABLE OF SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL BELONGING AND VARIOUS FACTORS

Category	Influence Factor	Coefficient
Pearson Correlation	Sense of Professional Belonging	1
	School Environment	.599
	Teacher Management	.729
	Interpersonal Relationship	.678
	Professional Identity	.739
	Salary	.786
	Other Factors	.495
Sig. (single side)	Sense of Professional Belonging	.000
	School Environment	.000
	Teacher Management	.000
	Interpersonal Relationship	.000

Professional Identity	.000
Salary	.000
Other Factors	.000

Table 3 shows that the sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing is mainly affected by salary, professional identity, teacher management and interpersonal relationship. Among the influencing factors of Chongqing Private Kindergarten Teachers' sense of professional belonging, the correlation coefficient between salary and private kindergarten teachers' sense of professional belonging in Chongqing is the highest (.786), followed by professional identity (.739) and teacher management (.729), the fourth is the interpersonal relationship (.678), while the correlation coefficient between school environment (.599) and other factors (.495) and teachers' sense of professional belonging is smaller. In addition, the Sig. one-sided value of the six influencing factors is 0.000, less than 0.05, indicating that there is a significant difference between them.

1) Salary

The data shows that salary is the most important factor affecting the sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing, and its correlation coefficient with teachers' professional sense is 0.786. In different gender groups of teachers, the recognition of salary is different. Among the respondents, the average recognition of male teachers to salary is 9.68, while that of female teachers is 9.72, female teachers' recognition is higher than male teachers'. Among teachers of different ages and educational background groups, their recognition of salary is also different. In different age groups of teachers, the recognition of salary is 20-30 years old < below 20 years old < 31-40 years old < above 40 years old, and the recognition of salary of different education groups is undergraduate < junior college < graduate and above < higher vocational and below. Among teachers of different teaching ages, the recognition of salary is different. According to the data analysis, it can be ranked as 6-10 years (mean 9.94) < 0-5 years (mean 10.24) < more than 10 years (mean 10.6).

2) Professional identity

The questionnaire reflects teachers' professional identity from the aspects of teachers' personality, professional belief, professional recognition and working ability. In terms of the question "I regard the profession of a teacher as my lifelong career", the recognition is the lowest among the four questions, with an average of 3.4, indicating that some kindergarten teachers' professional belief is not strong; however, the recognition of the question "my work plays an important role in promoting social development" is high, with an average of 3.83, indicating that teachers recognize the value of their own profession.

In different gender groups of teachers, the recognition of professional identity is different. The data shows that the male teachers' sense of professional identity (mean 15.05) is higher than that of female teachers (mean 14.59). Teachers of different ages and educational background groups have a different professional identity. According to the data analysis, the conclusions are as follows: 21-30 years old (mean 14.11) < less than or equal to 20 years old (mean 15.02) < 31-40 years old (mean 18) < more than 4 years old (mean 19.5), undergraduate (mean 13.83) < junior college (mean 14.95) < graduate and above (mean 15.93) < higher vocational and below (mean 17.77). There are also differences in professional identity among teachers with different teaching ages. Generally, the professional identity of teachers increases with the increase of teaching age, 0-5 years (mean 14.59) < 6-10 years (mean 14.86) < 10 years (mean 15.3).

3) Teacher management

The questionnaire mainly measures the major factor of teacher management from the aspects of the situation of managers, teaching philosophy, the degree of concern for teachers and teacher evaluation mechanism. Statistics show that the respondents' recognition of the influencing factor of teacher management is relatively average and the score is high. In different gender groups of teachers, their recognition of teacher management is different. Male teachers' recognition of teacher management (mean 18.19) is higher than that of female teachers (mean 18.06), but the difference is not significant. Among teachers of different ages and teaching ages, their recognition of teacher management is different. The recognition of teacher management is: 21-30 years old (average 17.55) < less than or equal to 20 years old (average 18.46) < more than 40 years old (average 20) < 31-40 years old (average 22); 0-5 years less than 10 years less than 6-10 years of teaching age. Among teachers with different educational backgrounds, there are also differences in the recognition of teacher management. Among teachers with different educational backgrounds, the order of recognition of teacher management is: undergraduate (mean 17.16) < junior college (average 18.45) < higher vocational and below (mean 19.26) < graduate and above (mean 21.54).

4) Interpersonal relationship

The questionnaire mainly measures the interpersonal relationship from the relationship between teachers and colleagues, communication degree, and way. In terms of this influencing factor, the respondents have a higher degree of recognition, but the question "lack of collective activities and communication among colleagues in kindergarten" is a reverse question, but when the score is calculated in a reverse manner, the average is 2.85.

Different gender groups of teachers have different recognition of the interpersonal relationship. Male's recognition of interpersonal relationships is higher than that of female's (18.19 > 18.06). There are also differences in the recognition of interpersonal relationships among teachers of different ages and teaching ages. The order of recognition degree is: 21-30 years old (mean 14.21) < less than or equal to 20 years old (mean 14.7) < 31-40 years old (mean 16.25) < more than 40 years old (mean 17), generally showing 30 years old as the boundary. 0-5 years (mean 14.47) < 6-10 years (mean 14.54) < more than 10 years of teaching age (mean 15.67).

### **3. SUGGESTIONS ON IMPROVING PRIVATE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL BELONGING**

#### ***3.1 For the government***

1) Encourage and support the establishment of excellent private kindergarten teachers

The cultivation of excellent preschool teachers can be implemented from three aspects: education background, professional values and professional quality. Kindergarten teachers should have excellent professional knowledge and quality, correct professional ethics and values, professional training and assessment system. In order to achieve such professional standards, systematic and long-term learning are necessary, therefore, the government should advocate in-service kindergarten teachers to continue learning; improve the graduation requirements of teachers in all aspects, encourage lifelong learning, improve the professional identity and professional quality of kindergarten teachers in continuous learning, so as to enhance the sense of professional belonging of private kindergarten teachers and establish a first-class teaching team.

2) Improve the salary, welfare and social status of private kindergarten teachers

The government should increase the investment in the salary and welfare of private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing, strengthen the supervision of running private kindergartens, protect the legitimate and reasonable rights and interests of private kindergarten teachers, and enhance the happiness of private kindergarten teachers in their posts, the sense of achievement in their career, and the sense of honor in the society, so as to have the private kindergarten teachers become the enviable profession.

#### ***3.2 For kindergartens***

1) Establish a reasonable and fair management system

A fair and reasonable management system must be established for the management of private kindergartens, including the principles of gender equality, reasonable

treatment and fair promotion. Especially in terms of gender differences, managers of private kindergartens should establish correct and scientific gender concepts to avoid occupational gender discrimination. In addition, it is necessary to pay salary and welfare properly, avoid the phenomenon of equal work and different pay, adhere to the people-oriented concept of running a school, and regard teachers as partners to promote the common progress of preschool education instead of "tools to make money".

2) Strengthen the importance and concern for teachers

Strengthening the care and attention of teachers can be carried out from the aspects of shouldering teachers' work, caring about the mental health of teachers and building a harmonious interpersonal relationship. The work of kindergarten teachers should be reasonable and within the scope of teachers' ability to bear, not to arrange repetitive, redundant and meaningless work for teachers, and focus on teaching; more attention should be paid to the mental health problems of teachers, and relevant activities can be held to enhance teachers' attention to mental health and relieve psychological pressure; and schools should create a harmonious working environment, organize group activities, share the happiness and problems of life and work, discuss and learn together, help and support each other, enhance teachers' recognition of the school's humanistic environment, and then enhance the professional identity of private kindergarten teachers.

#### ***3.3 For teachers***

1) Strengthen professional identity and self-learning ability

Private kindergarten teachers should deepen their understanding of preschool education. With a comprehensive understanding, the teachers can choose the way forward and upward more clearly. In the way of rising prospects, there is bound to be constantly learning, so private kindergarten teachers should establish the concept of lifelong learning and can use the Internet to carry out all-round and three-dimensional learning, combine pre-service learning with on-the-job learning, compare life experience with work experience, and apply social interpersonal experience to colleague relationship so that the improvement of private kindergarten teachers' professional identity and self-learning ability will promote the private kindergarten teachers' sense of professional belonging.

2) Focus on self-reflection and summary

Private kindergarten teachers should have a clear understanding of themselves, measure whether they are suitable, competent for kindergarten teacher, and on this basis, constantly carry out self-reflection and summary, constantly improve their professional knowledge and

skills, interpersonal skills, industry familiarity and so on, so as to become an excellent kindergarten teacher.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

A sense of belonging refers to a person's recognition and acceptance of a group or an environment, and is a person's needs in all aspects of physiology and psychology. Teachers' professional sense of belonging is closely related to teaching quality and student growth, and is also an important factor in stabilizing the teaching team. With the promulgation of pre-school related policies issued by the state, parents' emphasis on pre-school education has continued to increase, the rate of children's enrollment has increased, the number of private kindergartens has risen sharply, and the proportion of private kindergarten teachers has increased. This study used a questionnaire survey method to investigate the professional sense of belonging of 245 private kindergarten teachers in Chongqing, and found that the sense of professional belonging of Chongqing private kindergarten teachers is generally in the upper middle position, showing significant differences in gender, age, educational background, etc. , Chongqing's private kindergarten teachers' professional sense of belonging is mainly affected by salary, professional identity, and teacher management factors. Based on this, it is suggested that the government, private kindergartens and kindergarten teachers should jointly improve the professional sense of belonging of Chongqing private kindergarten teachers.

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