





Investigation of factors affecting preschool teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

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The attitudes of preschool teachers toward the teaching profession are crucial because they have a direct influence on their job satisfaction, motivation, classroom dynamics, and overall efficacy in providing quality education and fostering the development of young children. The main aim of this study was to examine the elements that preschool teachers in Vietnam view as having the most significant impact on their perspective of the teaching profession. Preschool teachers were given a survey questionnaire containing questions about subjective and objective factors that influenced their perceptions of the profession, and then given instructions on how to complete it. A sample of 347 early childhood educators from the Central Highlands of Vietnam participated in the study. The most significant finding was that a majority of preschool teachers' perceptions for their work were significantly influenced by a variety of subjective and objective factors. Possessing a positive attitude toward the teaching profession was one of the most important factors influencing the level of professional success and the quality of teaching activities. A significant number of preschool employees began their careers without enthusiasm or passion for the field, as well as without a comprehensive comprehension of the humanistic and moral principles that guide the field.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes by identifying subjective and objective factors that influence the attitudes of Vietnam's preschool teachers. It emphasizes the significance of a positive attitude for professional achievement and instructional excellence. The findings emphasize the need for interventions to improve early childhood education's passion, moral principles, and overall quality.

1. INTRODUCTION

The perspective that one takes on one's professional life is one of the most important factors that determines the caliber of one's professional activities and the degree of success that one achieves in their career. The level of success one has in their chosen sector is directly proportional to the amount of enthusiasm and enthusiasm one has for their chosen career. If individuals have a positive attitude towards work that they perform in their profession, they will be more driven to put in long hours and make valuable contributions to the field they are in. For instance, people who

have an accurate and positive perception of a profession are more likely to have positive feelings regarding the profession, be interested in the profession and feel passionate about it, work hard to overcome any difficulties and challenges, and continually investigate and create for the profession. On the other hand, they will have feelings of lethargy, despair, and functioning at a level of coping but lacking a sense of duty. These sentiments will continue until they are treated for their condition. As a direct consequence of this, they will bring about substantial damage to human, spiritual, and material aspects.

The field of psychology places a significant emphasis on the study of attitudes. Since the beginning of the 20th century, psychologists have taken an interest in and investigated the attitude seriously and scientifically, focusing on the subject's theoretical and practical facets. According to Allport (1935) the concept of attitude may cover a lot of scopes. He believed that attitude was the one most essential factor in the field of social psychology. In the subject of psychology, attitudes are researched by a wide variety of schools using a variety of different methodologies (Allport, 1935). Allport (1935) research and explanation of what comprises an individual's attitude may be considered among the earliest and most influential studies. According to his reasoning, an individual's attitude is a state of psychological and neurological readiness that directs or motivates the individual's response to pertinent objects or events. Individual attitudes were studied by Feldman (2005) as personal emotions that were relatively stable in social relationships with parents, friends, or through experience. Attitude is directly related to, among other aspects of life, a person's perception, action, belief, faith, and evaluation of others.

Gerrig, Zimbardo, Campbell, Cumming, and Wilkes (2015) defined attitude as a person's positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, and concepts. They are particularly interested in the relationship between a person's attitudes and behavior, as well as prejudice and the shift of bias when a person's circumstances change and their knowledge is expanded. Hayes (2000) examined attitude as a mental and neurological readiness condition that may direct or motivate a person's response. In his research, he determined the difference between attitudes and values, as well as the relationship between attitudes and human behavior. Some researchers are interested in attitudes as fundamental components of an individual's personality. Thuy and Uan (2000) examined attitudes as structures of human personality that might be articulated in four ways: attitude toward collective and society, attitude toward labor, attitude toward others, and attitude toward oneself.

Preschool is the initial stage of instruction within the context of the national education system. The strategy for human development places a strong emphasis on the importance of education at this level. Academics working in the subject of early childhood education have argued over whether or not the work of early childhood teachers should be considered professional (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2001; Spodek & Saracho, 1990). Preschool teachers direct their instructional efforts at children as young as three months old and as elderly as six years old. This age range covers the preschool years. These infants and toddlers are in an age when their physical and mental growth is accelerating at a breakneck pace. As a result of this, the obligations of a teacher of young children are seen as being broad, and their bounds are not well defined. The educator is liable for a variety of obligations, ranging from fundamental care requirements to educational requirements, supporting the child's well-being as well as the organization's needs in terms of hygiene, safety, and other requirements. In addition to teaching, a teacher's duties also include organization, supervision, and management. Teachers play an essential part in the development of a safe, responsive, and supportive learning environment for young children in early childhood care settings, as well as in the educational and social development of these children. Even though many of the functions traditionally associated with early childhood educators are also applicable to teachers at later levels, teachers of younger children typically have a wider variety of responsibilities than teachers of older children. This is the case despite the fact that many of the functions traditionally associated with early childhood educators are also applicable to teachers at later levels.

Teachers' professional backgrounds, such as educational achievement, academic qualifications, and specialist training in Early Childhood Education (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn, 2010; Early et al., 2007) or classroom process improvements, which account for teachers' classroom management strategies, teaching materials,

sensitivity, responsiveness, and interactions with young children that generate developmentally appropriate a Burchinal et al. (2010) and Early et al. (2007) have generally been used in the research on child care to evaluate the quality of Mashburn et al. (2008). The efficiency of those quality indicators has been demonstrated by the fact that these two components have been connected to increased cognitive and social-emotional development in children (Burchinal et al., 2010; Mashburn et al., 2008). Cornelius (2000) conducted an investigation and revealed that the knowledge, attitude toward teaching, and academic success of prospective teachers all had an impact on their level of competency. In the research dealing with young children, it is becoming more common to accept that teachers' professional attitudes are essential indicators of teacher quality (Hall-Kenyon, Bullough, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014; Thomason & La Paro, 2013). According to Desimone (2009) teaching professionals should develop through scientific research that provides a more in-depth understanding of the factors that contribute to effective teacher professional development and effective education. Some examples of this type of research include the following: I am studying teachers' knowledge of, skills in, and attitudes towards formal and informal collaborative, inquiry-based, and contextualized education; (i) studying the development and evaluation of programs, interventions, and tools that contribute to effective education; and (ii) studying the relationship between effective education.

The perspective of the teaching profession assists teachers in attaining meaning and understanding the various characteristics, experiences, roles, and responsibilities of their professional work. This is accomplished because the perspective of the teaching profession is a process through which people connect value to experience (Kauchak & Eggen, 2001). According to Shaheen (2014) it is presumed that a teacher who has a positive attitude toward his or her profession would educate successfully the appropriate kind of youth. On the other hand, a teacher's negative attitude toward teaching, regardless of his or her subject knowledge and professional training, may negatively affect students' performance (Passos, 2009). The outcomes of a study that was carried out by Kauchak and Eggen (2001) indicate that positive attitudes and perspectives held by teachers are crucial for an effective teaching process. In addition, the ideas, opinions, and attitudes that teachers have an effect on the way they do their jobs and have a bearing on how well their students do in school (Kauchak & Eggen, 2001). There is a correlation between the level of burnout that teachers experience and the attitudes that teachers have toward the profession. These attitudes have an impact on both the teachers' performance in the classroom as well as the instructional strategies that they use (Ispir, 2010).

Conducted a study to determine whether or not there was a substantial positive association between teacher applicants' views toward the teaching profession and factors connected to personal values. They found that there was such a relationship. In particular, the authors stated that "Responsibility" and "Sharing and Respect" played a significant role in elucidating the perspective that teachers have on their chosen line of work. On the other hand, the viewpoints of 58 teacher trainees who had only recently begun their teaching careers were investigated in a separate study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the viewpoints of those who are currently doing teacher training in Turkey and to report the findings. The study indicated that prospective teachers experienced feelings of inadequacy, particularly in regards to their knowledge of curriculum and materials, and that teaching practice and school experience courses did not effectively contribute to their professional growth (Kildan et al., 2013). According to Goddard and O'Brien (2003) during the first eight months of professional practice, there was a significant drop in the overall perception of the work that teachers showed (Goddard & O'Brien, 2003).

Despite the fact that primary teachers have generally good attitudes concerning their job and the setting in which they operate, this is nevertheless the case. The perspectives that teachers have towards the settings in which they do their jobs and the experiences they have had on a mental level could put them in a state of stress, which would, in turn, cause them to be less effective in the teaching tasks that they are responsible for (Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009). Even though they have a set of beliefs and positive emotional experiences towards the teaching profession, and therefore they recognize the values associated with a teaching attitude, future teachers do not show an equivalent intention to execute the related actions. This is despite the fact that they are aware of the values associated with a teaching attitude. Notable in this context is the requirement for specific instructions

to be included in the training of teachers in order to facilitate the transition from the declarative level to the action level. As a result, the shift from the generalization of the cognitive dimension to its integration with the emotional and behavioral dimensions becomes an extremely important step. Because of this, the goals that are sought after by the initial and ongoing training programs for teachers need to take into account the cyclical and spiral process that is involved in the creation of attitudes (Andronache, Bocoş, Bocoş, & Macri, 2014).

The current mentality that preschool teachers have regarding the work that they do is cause for concern. The unfavorable characteristics of globalization and the market economy gradually crept in, became more pervasive, and began to have an effect on the working life of preschool teachers as they gained widespread acceptance. There were a lot of people who went into teaching preschoolers who didn't have a passion or enthusiasm for the job, and they also didn't have a thorough understanding of the humanistic and moral concepts that guide the profession. In addition to examples of preschool instructors who have a positive attitude toward the job, many preschool teachers have negative expressions that are in opposition to professional ethical norms and involve child abuse. Some preschool teachers have a positive attitude toward the job. Public indignation has been triggered by the fact that nearly all cases of child abuse committed by preschool teachers have resulted in long-term mental and physical damage to the abused children. This information has prompted outrage among the general public. It's possible that some preschool teachers have a pessimistic outlook on their work, which could be one of the factors contributing to the unfortunate situations that were discussed before. Along with the rest of the country, the Central Highlands is currently engaged in fundamental and comprehensive education reform, and reforms have been undertaken in every field. Specifically, the team of preschool instructors is gradually becoming revived, energetic, and driven with a sense of duty in the care and education of children. This can be seen in their progression toward a revitalized, energetic, and motivated state. On the other hand, in comparison to the rest of the country, the Central Highlands have a number of challenging socioeconomic conditions. These conditions include an underdeveloped infrastructure, the interaction of several ethnic groups in a small region, a lack of quality human resources, and a low average standard of living. All of these characteristics have a significant impact on the perspectives of preschool teachers, particularly in towns that are geographically isolated and hilly, as well as those that are home to ethnic minority groups.

The assessment of objective career success has been conducted by considering factors such as the number of hours worked per week (Abele, 2011) and the nature of employment, whether it is temporary or permanent (Fuchs-Rechlin, 2007). Furthermore, the concept of objective career success is defined in relation to observable attributes. Typically, among diverse professional fields, the primary measures of objective career achievement encompass remuneration, hierarchical rank, frequency of advancements, and occupational standing. Subjective job success pertains to the individual's subjective perception and self-defined standards (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). The primary criteria that are commonly observed are work satisfaction, which pertains to an individual's contentment with various aspects of their present professional engagement, and career satisfaction, which is contingent upon an individual's pleasure with their chosen career trajectory and may encompass several occupational roles (Heslin, 2005). In addition, subjective professional success has been defined by utilizing characteristics such as felt stress (Abele, 2011; Fuchs-Rechlin, 2007), tiredness, and organizational commitment (Wang, Bowling, & Eschleman, 2010). According to a study conducted by Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton (2001), there exists a moderate association between subjective and objective indicators of professional performance.

In recent years, various psychologists have devoted a significant amount of attention to the attitudes of workers toward their occupation. On the other hand, research has been undertaken in Vietnam on the attitudes of preschool instructors toward their work and the factors that influence their attitudes (Vu, Vu, Mai, & Lam, 2022). Despite severe socioeconomic situations, they discovered that the majority of preschool instructors in Vietnam's Central Highlands provinces maintain a positive attitude toward their work. A review of the relevant literature reveals that few studies have been conducted on the factors that preschool instructors in Vietnam consider having the greatest influence on their perspective of the teaching profession. Therefore, it seems essential to investigate what Vietnamese preschool

teachers consider having the greatest influence on their perceptions of the teaching profession. For these reasons, we are conducting this research to evaluate the attitudes of preschool teachers in the Central Highlands provinces toward their profession and, more specifically, the factors that influence their attitudes.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participant

In Vietnam's Central Highlands, 347 preschool teachers were surveyed for the study. After explaining the purpose of the study to each participant, the researchers obtained informed consent. The questionnaire was distributed and explained to preschool teachers, none of whom were eliminated after being returned and examined. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the participants in the investigation. Participants were recruited from three areas in the Central Highlands: areas with favorable socioeconomic conditions (23.6%), areas with difficult socioeconomic conditions (54.2%), and areas with exceedingly difficult socioeconomic conditions (22.2%).

2.2. Measurement

The survey questionnaire for preschool teachers consisted of three scales: Perspective of profession (20 items), Feelings towards profession (24 items), and Actions in profession (24 items). In addition, a survey questionnaire concerning subjective and objective factors influencing preschool teachers' attitudes toward their profession is distributed to and explained to preschool teachers. Participation was ensured using an informed consent procedure. It was a completely voluntary contribution.

Table 1. The characteristics of study participants.

The characteristics of preschool teachers	N	Percentage
• Academic level	347	100
College degree	173	49.9
The degree of associate	39	11.2
Intermediate degree	135	38.9
• Working area	347	100
Areas with favorable socio-economic conditions	82	23.6
Areas with difficult socio-economic conditions	188	54.2
Areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions	77	22.2
• Career seniority	347	100
1-5 years	93	26.8
6-15 years	98	12.1
16-25 years	84	5.2
Above 25 years	72	2.0
• Ethnic groups	347	100
Vietnamese	242	69.7
Minority ethnic groups	105	30.3
• Career achievements	347	100
Excellent teacher at provincial level	26	7.5
Excellent teacher at district level	65	18.7
Excellent teacher at school level	102	29.4
Teachers do not achieve the title of excellent teachers	154	44.4

3. RESULT

3.1. Correlation

Table 2 showed the correlation between perspective, feeling and action of preschool teachers. The results were significant, with a highly positive correlation between perspective and feeling ($r = 0.663, p < 0.01$); perspective and action ($r = 0.753, p < 0.01$); feeling and action ($r = 0.676, p < 0.01$). These achieved findings revealed that preschool

teachers with higher perspective of profession would have more positive feelings and actions toward profession. Besides, preschool teachers with more positive feelings towards profession would have more positive actions.

Table 2. The correlation between perspective, feeling and action.

Factors	Perspective	Feeling	Action	P
Perspective	1.000	0.663	0.753	0.000
Feeling	0.663	1.000	0.676	0.000
Action	0.753	0.676	1.000	0.000

3.2. Descriptive Analysis

The mean score of the effects of four subjective factors on preschool teachers' attitudes toward profession in the Central Highlands provinces are presented in Table 3. The mean score for all four subjective factors was 3.76 (Standard Deviation (SD) = 0.72). Among the four subjective factors about preschool teachers' attitudes toward profession, the indicator which has the highest score is Professional responsibilities of preschool teachers ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.70$) and the indicator which has the lowest score is Preschool teachers' qualifications ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.75$).

The mean score of the effects of five objective factors on preschool teachers' attitudes toward profession in the Central Highlands provinces are presented in Table 4.

Table 3. The effects of subjective factors on preschool teachers' attitudes toward profession in the Central Highlands provinces.

No.	The subjective factors	Mean	SD	The percentage of levels				
				1	2	3	4	5
1	Professional responsibilities of preschool teachers	4.50	0.70	0.0	0.0	18.1	48.7	33.1
2	The age and seniority of preschool teachers	4.00	0.73	0.0	3.2	38.9	44.6	13.2
3	Preschool teachers' qualifications	3.20	0.75	0.0	0.9	42.6	38.9	17.6
4	Preschool teachers' achievements	3.35	0.69	0.0	1.7	49.8	38.3	10.1
Total		3.76	0.72					

Table 4. The effects of objective factors on preschool teachers' attitudes toward profession in the Central Highlands provinces.

No.	The objective factors	Mean	SD	The percentage of levels				
				1	2	3	4	5
1	Workplace	4.07	0.71	0.0	3.2	23.9	62.8	10.1
2	National culture	3.49	0.72	0.0	4.6	36.3	50.1	8.9
3	Salary and policies of government for preschool teachers	4.34	0.97	0.0	9.5	28.2	34.6	27.6
4	The evaluation, acknowledgment and respect of institute and students' families for preschool teachers	4.5	0.81	0.3	0.9	36.6	30.2	32.0
5	The relationship with colleagues	3.70	0.62	0.0	0.9	36.3	44.6	18.1
Total		4.07	0.77					

The mean score for all five objective factors was 4.07 (SD = 0.77). Among the five objective factors about preschool teachers' attitudes toward profession, the top three indicators that have the highest average points are as below: The evaluation, acknowledgment and respect of institute and students' families for preschool teachers ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.81$), Salary and policies of Government for preschool teachers ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.97$), and Workplace ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.71$). The indicator that has the lowest average points is National Culture ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.72$).

4. DISCUSSION

How to improve both the quality of teaching and the way primary school teachers teach was one of the goals of this research. It was also aimed to find out what elements potentially influenced preschool teachers' feelings and perception towards their jobs. The most important thing that was evident from this research was that the majority of teachers' attitudes regarding the preschool teaching profession in the regions of Vietnam's Central Highlands were influenced by a variety of subjective and objective factors.

In the research dealing with young children, it is becoming more common to accept that teachers' professional attitudes are essential indicators of teacher quality (Al Harthy, Jamaluddin, & Abedalaziz, 2013; Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014; Thomason & La Paro, 2013). The examination of the data showed that the attitude of Vietnamese preschool teachers toward the profession was influenced by a number of subjective elements. These elements included their professional obligations, successes, age, and seniority. The results were immediately compared to the findings that were previously reported on the candidates for the position of teacher. After the data analysis was completed, the personal values of the candidates for the teaching positions, such as responsibility and sharing and respect, could be used to forecast their attitudes regarding the teaching profession. Therefore, it is essential to have a solid grasp of the significance of value-based education, particularly for those who are seeking to bring up and educate individuals. It is considered that a teacher with a positive attitude toward the profession would educate successfully the right type of youth (Shaheen, 2014). On the other hand, a teacher's negative attitude toward teaching, regardless of his or her subject knowledge and professional training, may negatively affect the students they teach. Preschool teachers need to be fully aware of their responsibilities and significant role in the strategy for human development to maintain their positive attitudes toward the profession (Passos, 2009).

The findings that were obtained revealed that attitudes toward the profession of preschool teachers in the Central Highlands were also affected by objective factors such as the workplace, salary, and policies of the Government, as well as the evaluation, acknowledgment, and respect that institutes and students' families have for preschool teachers. In a separate piece of research, Gerrig et al. (2015) investigated the concept of attitude as an individual's positive or negative evaluation of other people, things, or ideas. Scholars are particularly interested in the link between an individual's attitudes and behavior, as well as prejudice and the shift of bias when an individual's circumstances change, and knowledge is supplemented. Other topics of interest include, during teaching activities, a reduction in teachers' generally positive sentiments toward their profession could be caused by a combination of factors, including the working environment, the compensation, and the policies of the government. The perspectives that teachers have towards the settings in which they do their jobs and the experiences they have had on a mental level could put them in a state of stress, which would, in turn, cause them to be less effective in the tasks that they are responsible for teaching (Ransford et al., 2009). Goddard and O'Brien (2003) found that even though teachers have positive attitudes toward the profession and the work environment, the increasing level of burnout during teaching could still strongly impact their professional attitudes (Goddard & O'Brien, 2003). In addition, other scientific researchers found that even though teachers have positive attitudes toward the profession and the work environment, the increasing level of burnout This suggested that factors leading to burnout, in addition to working environment, salary, and policies, would have the potential to cause a decline in preschool teachers' positive attitudes of their profession, which might affect their practice, and have an impact on the performance of their students. This could have an impact on the performance of their students (Kauchak & Eggen, 2001).

It is essential for efficient teaching, as well as the learning process and the professional development of teachers themselves, for instructors to have a positive attitude toward their work. Therefore, in order to enhance the attitude of preschool teachers toward the teaching profession, teachers should be involved in the decision-making process connected to the teaching-learning process. This would allow teachers to have a greater sense of ownership over the teaching and learning process. The goals that are set for initial and ongoing training programs for teachers need to take into account the recursive and iterative nature of the process that is involved in the development of attitudes (Andronache et al., 2014). In order to be fully aware of the obligations that come with being a teacher of young children, educators working in preschools ought to take part in seminars or training programs that are relevant to school education in child development. In addition, the administration should take steps to cultivate an environment that is conducive to work in order to lessen the impact of stress on teachers and to foster an attitude that is more positive toward their work. Job satisfaction is one of the most important aspects that plays a role in determining a

teacher's demeanor, thus there should be plenty of opportunities for all teachers to demonstrate their skills and inventiveness. This will help improve teachers' attitudes toward their jobs.

5. CONCLUSION

Attitude toward one's profession is one of the most important factors that determine the character of one's professional activities and level of success at work. A teacher with a positive attitude toward his or her profession would effectively educate the right type of youth, whereas a teacher with a negative attitude toward teaching, regardless of his or her subject knowledge and professional training, may negatively impact the performance of students. In this recent study, the authors investigate the factors that influence the attitudes of preschool teachers in Vietnam's Central Highlands provinces. Multiple subjective and objective factors significantly influence the attitudes of the majority of preschool teachers toward their profession. Future research could investigate (i) other factors influencing the attitude of preschool teachers toward their profession, (ii) factors mediating or moderating the relationship between working environment, salary, and policy and positive attitude toward the teaching profession, and (iii) models or educational programs that could enhance preschool teachers' competencies and sustain their positive attitudes.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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