



Early Childhood Education Teacher Training Effectiveness Study

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Abstract: Since 2019, China has endorsed a series of initiatives supporting the training of early childhood education teachers. With numerous higher vocational institutions introducing early childhood education programs, there is a growing interest in assessing the effectiveness of short-term training. This study investigates the efficacy of early childhood education training methods by conducting a satisfaction survey among students. It examines the interconnections between effectiveness and political, economic, and cultural factors. Employing a questionnaire survey approach, participants include undergraduate students majoring in early childhood education, interns, teachers in early childhood education institutions, and university faculty members.

Keywords: Early childhood education, training methods, effectiveness, student satisfaction, questionnaire survey.

1. Introduction

In 2019, the National Development and Reform Commission of China, in collaboration with 17 other departments, issued a document titled "Action Plan to Intensify Efforts to Promote the Shoring Up of Shortcomings, Strengthen Weaknesses, Improve Quality, and Promote the Formation of a Strong Domestic Market in Social Areas Public Service." The document proposed to "increase the effective supply of early childhood education services," with specific measures including "strengthening the organizational support and guidance of industry supervisory departments, accelerating the construction of a team of early childhood education service personnel characterized by high professional ethics, a love for children, excellent skills, and a reasonable structure." [1]

The development and education of educators working with young children (ages 0-3) have assumed a crucial role in an evolving educational landscape. So, what roles do national policies, economic factors, and political factors play? The central goal of this study is to investigate the training methods utilized for early education teachers specializing in the 0-3 age group at specific vocational colleges in Yongzhou, China. It strives to identify and evaluate the internal and external factors impacting the professional growth of these educators. The outcomes of this research will lay the groundwork for the development of enhanced training approaches and strategies [2].

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, collecting quantitative data from students majoring in early childhood education at vocational colleges, university teachers, and teachers in early childhood education institutions. It includes demographic questions, Likert scale items to measure the level of satisfaction with training methods and the perceived impact of various factors on training, as well as questions related to the respondents' personal information.

The research objective is:

- (1) What is the profile of the survey participants in terms of age, sex, previous qualifications, and experience?
- (2) To what extent do internal and external factors influence the training of early education teachers, specifically in terms of historical influences, economic considerations, national policies, and current conditions?
- (3) What is the level of satisfaction of teacher trainees and training faculty with the current training methodologies and resources?
- (4) Is there a significant difference in the perceived impact of internal and external factors on the training of early education teachers between teacher trainees and training faculty, when grouped according to their profiles?
- (5) Is there a significant relationship between the satisfaction with current training methodologies and the perceived impact of internal and external factors on the training among teacher trainees and training faculty?

2. Literature Review

In order to better analyze the effectiveness of early childhood education teacher training, we conducted literature searches in two main areas: first, the impact of historical factors, economic factors, national policies, infrastructure, and available social resources on the training of early childhood education teachers; second, the current training status of early childhood education teachers.

2.1 Historical and present factors influencing early childhood education teachers

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China has had a 40-year-long family planning policy, commonly known as the "one couple, one child" policy. So, the demand for early childhood education teachers is not high. However, due to the impact of low birth rates on the country and future economic development[3], the nation introduced the two-child policy in 2016 and the three-child policy in 2021. The country is in increasing need of early childhood education teachers.

2.1.2 National Policies and Initiatives

Zuo Kuan(2021) emphasized the implementation of several policies in China to support childbirth[4]. In 2021, the Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Optimizing Fertility Policies to Promote Long-Term Balanced Population Development introduced the Three Child Fertility Policy and associated measures. These measures aimed to create an inclusive early education service system, reduce the costs of childbirth, parenting, and education, and alleviate concerns among the population regarding childbirth[5].

2.1.3 Economic Investment and Goals

The quantity and quality of early education professionals are areas that have limited the growth of early education services. Increasing the supply of early education professionals involves not only intensifying vocational skill training efforts but also enabling more individuals to acquire the requisite skills[6].

The 14th Five-Year Plan has set a clear target: by the end of this plan, the number of childcare facilities per thousand people in China should increase to 4.5. The government is encouraging social forces to actively participate in achieving this goal, that means China still faces a shortage of 4 million early childhood education teachers.

To enhance the public service system for early education and family care, several measures are being taken. These include providing guidance for childcare, offering community-based care services, expanding early education offerings in kindergartens, establishing dedicated early education centers, encouraging employers to provide on-site early education facilities for their employees, and implementing flexible work arrangements to alleviate workplace pressures faced by women due to childbirth[8]. These combined efforts are intended to promote a more supportive environment for childbirth and early education in China.

2.2 Current Status of Early Education Teachers

2.2.1 Parental Expectations for Early Education Teacher Quality

The quality expectations of parents can vary based on their backgrounds and family structures. Regarding family structure, single-child families prioritize environmental equipment and healthcare, while families with two or more children place greater emphasis on the quality of teaching staff. In terms of parental education levels, those with a junior high school degree or below tend to have lower expectations, whereas parents with a college or undergraduate degree express higher demands. Interestingly, as education levels rise, there is an overall trend of increasing demand for early education service quality, followed by a subsequent decrease[7].

2.2.2 Certification of Early Childhood Education Teachers

Of those surveyed, 73.82% held a certified teacher designation, while 66.98% possessed nursery teacher certificates. Moreover, 95% of respondents held various certificates related to early childhood education institutions, including Montessori Certified teacher, Or music teacher certificates, and home education instructor certificates. Notably, the early education instructors for children aged 0-3 in hospital-affiliated early education centers are primarily staffed by child care doctors from maternal and child health care hospitals and community health centers in each district.

2.2.3 Management of Early Education Teachers in Institutions

Early education programs are subject to review by the Health Commission and certification by the Administration for Industry and Commerce, as they fall under market supervision. There are five key areas of independence: legal entity independence, financial independence, childcare and education independence, curriculum independence, and dietary independence[7]. Childcare personnel, primarily consisting of childcare teachers and caregivers, operate independently. Kindergartens primarily focus on preschool education, while early education centers provide early education and care, featuring intellectual education, aesthetic education, moral education, sports, labor education, and group education. These programs are designed to cater to early education needs[9].

Additionally, dietary independence involves distinct provisions for infant formula, complementary foods, and meals for older children. Environmental facilities, such as benches, cushions, and age-appropriate toys, are set up based on class requirements. These modifications are specifically designed to address the distinct requirements of babies and children across varying age brackets[8].

2.2.4 Societal expectations for the quality of early childhood education teachers

Different early education institutions often have varying philosophies, management practices, and requirements, which means that frontline staff may only be well-versed in their own institution's operations and may not possess a broad understanding of other institutions. This lack of universal teaching content applicability can be a drawback. Moreover, since there is often insufficient training targeting teaching skills for vocational students, many external teachers may lack adequate pedagogical training[10].

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3. Research Methods and Questionnaire Design

3.1 Research Methods

This survey employed a questionnaire survey method, which was divided into 4 sections with a total of 23 questions.

3.2 Questionnaire Design

Section 1: Demographic Information

Identity : Vocational College Enrolled Students
 Vocational College External Internship Students
 Early Childhood Education Institution Teacher
 Vocational College Teacher

Age : Aged 18-22 Aged 23-30
 Aged 31-40 Aged 41 and above

Sex: Male Female

Area of Expertise: Kindergarten Teacher Qualification Certificate
 Childcare Worker Certificate
 Other Teaching Qualification Certificate
 Childcare Specialist Certificate
 Montessori Teacher Certification

Experiences(in years): 0 Years
 More Than 0 Year but Less Than 1 Years
 More Than 1 Year but Less Than 3 Years
 More Than 3 Years but Less Than 5 Years
 5 Years and Above

Please rate the following indicators by put a check (/)mark inside the appropriate boxes below using the following arbitrary scale of values.

score	Means
4	Strongly disagree/Very unsatisfied/highly ineffective
3	Disagree/Unsatisfied/ ineffective
2	Agree/Satisfied/ effective
1	Strongly agree/very Satisfied/ highly effective

Section 2: Internal and External Factors (Rate your agreement with its influence on training)

Internal and External Factors (Rate your agreement with its influence on training)	1	2	3	4
6.Perceived impact of historical influences				
7.Perceived impact of economic considerations				
8.Perceived impact of national policies				
9.Perceived impact of current conditions				
10.Perceived impact of infrastructure and resources available				
11.Perceived impact of societal values and cultural influences				

Section 3: Satisfaction Level (Rate your satisfaction)

Satisfaction Level (Rate your satisfaction)	1	2	3	4
12.Satisfaction with current training methodologies				
13.Satisfaction with current training resources				
14.Satisfaction with training duration and schedule				
15.Satisfaction with training content relevancy				
16.Satisfaction with training facilities and environment				
17.Satisfaction with feedback and evaluation processes				

Section 4: Relationship between Satisfaction /Impact(Rate your agreement on the relationship between the two factors)

Relationship between Satisfaction /Impact(Rate your agreement on the relationship between the two factors)	1	2	3	4
18.Relationship between training satisfaction and perceived impact of historical influences				
19.Relationship between training satisfaction and perceived impact of economic considerations				
20. Relationship between training satisfaction and perceived impact of national policies				
21. Relationship between training satisfaction and perceived impact of current conditions				
22. Relationship between training satisfaction and perceived impact of infrastructure and resources				
23.Relationship between training satisfaction and perceived impact of societal values and cultural influences				

4.Description of the Study Area

This research will utilize quantitative data (extent of impact of factors, relationships, and differences) to provide a holistic perspective on the problem.

The study aims to understand the impact of external factors (including history, economy, and national policies) and internal factors (such as infrastructure, available resources, social values, and cultural elements) on early education development models. A questionnaire survey approach was employed, involving a total of 233 current early childhood education majors in universities and 125 teachers from early education institutions and universities.

The basic information of the questionnaire participants is as follows:

PROFILE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGE: 18 – 22 years	233	100
SEX: Female	233	100

Table 1 Student-Respondents’ Profile in Terms of Age and Sex

SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	59	47
Female	66	53
TOTAL	125	100

Table 2 the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of sex

5.Result Analysis

The nearly identical weighted mean scores observed in relation to economic considerations, national policies, current conditions, and infrastructure. This implies a shared acknowledgment of the interconnected impact of these factors. Upon further examination of the existing literature, one is able to identify the concrete expressions of these measurements. In the context of China, a notable dichotomy arises, wherein there is a significant emphasis placed on the significance of infrastructure and resources. The data brings attention to a noticeable absence of uniformity in curriculum and assessments, suggesting that although resources may be accessible, their efficient implementation poses a significant obstacle.

the complex interplay among historical factors, policy decisions, economic considerations, and societal values remains influential in shaping the field of early childhood educator training. While the study of history offers valuable contextual information, the current challenges we face require us to develop novel and inventive solutions. In the pursuit of educational excellence on a global scale, it is imperative to prioritize the cultivation of a robust professional identity among educators, the effective utilization of resources, and the promotion of standardization. Under these conditions,

genuine acknowledgment of the significance of early childhood education in molding the future members of society can solely be attained.

INDICATOR	WEIGHTED MEAN	RANK	INTERPRETATION
1. Perceived impact of historical influences	1.56	1	Very High
2. Perceived impact of economic considerations	1.54	3.5	Very High
3. Perceived impact of national policies	1.54	3.5	Very High
4. Perceived impact of current conditions	1.54	3.5	Very High
5. Perceived impact of infrastructure and resources available	1.54	3.5	Very High
6. Perceived impact of societal values and cultural influences	1.51	6	Very High
COMPOSITE MEAN	1.54		Very High

Legend: 2 – Very High ; 1 – High; 0 – No Impact

Table 3 Mean and Rank Distributions of Responses of Student-Respondents on the Extent of Internal and External Factors that Influence the Training of Early Education Teachers

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Profile of Teacher Trainees

The wide range of ages among trainees, especially among the younger individuals, is indicative of a persistent influx of new individuals into the field. The gender gap validates prevailing tendencies in the academic sphere, which may be indicative of broader societal norms and preferences. The lack of early education concentrations at vocational universities is indicative of a broader issue: the importance of filling the educational void that this lack creates.

5.2 Profile of the Training Faculty

The faculty, which is skewed toward mid-career professionals, brings a unique blend of practical experience and cutting-edge research to the classroom. This gender imbalance highlights the sexism inherent in the workplace. When properly exploited, the faculty's varied areas of expertise can provide students with a well-rounded education.

5.3 Influence of Internal and External Factors

Early education training is profoundly impacted by historical, economic, and political factors, highlighting the importance of adaptable and responsive training programs. Training methods need to be flexible in order to keep up with China's ever-evolving social and political climate.

5.4 Satisfaction Levels with Current Training Methodologies

While the practical elements of current training methods may be well-received, there is a clear need to strengthen the theoretical foundation, as evidenced by the aforementioned mixed responses. There may be a need for creative, interesting, and interactive teaching methods because passive learning is so prevalent.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Diversified Academic Offerings

A Wide Variety of Courses Due to the dearth of early childhood education bachelor's degrees, more institutions of higher learning should offer and promote such concentrations. This will ensure that those learning to teach preschoolers get the specialized education they need.

6.2 Gender Inclusivity Initiatives

Colleges should launch initiatives to increase male participation in early education training in order to correct the gender imbalance in the teaching profession, which is reflected in the profile of the training faculty.

6.3 CPD (Continuing Education and Development)

Given that most faculty members are in the middle of their careers, they need regular chances to update and refresh their knowledge, so that they can continue to teach using the most effective and up-to-date methods and pedagogical innovations.

6.4 Dynamic Curriculum Development

Influence of Internal and External Factors Changes in the historical, economic, and political contexts necessitate periodic reviews and revisions to educational programs. The impact of these elements and their bearing on instruction can be tracked through the implementation of a feedback mechanism.

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