

Investigation on the Job Burnout of Kindergarten Teachers

Yingji Li

Jilin Engineering Normal University, Changchun 130052, China

**Corresponding author e-mail: 77047698@qq.com*

ABSTRACT. *Job burnout is very important to the kindergarten teachers and the development of preschool education. This study adopted the MBI-GS general version scale revised by Li and Shi (2003) to investigate 688 Chinese kindergarten teachers in Jilin, Shandong and Beijing. The results as follows : The job burnout total level was not serious. Kindergarten teachers have the highest burnout level when they experience emotional exhaustion, which is followed by reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization, respectively. There were significant differences in job burnout according to kindergarten type, working hours every day and education background.*

KEYWORDS: *kindergarten Teachers, Job Burnout, Investigation*

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of China's social economy, the development of China's preschool education has entered a new critical period. According to the results of "2018 national education development statistical bulletin", there were 266,700 kindergartens, 46,564,200 kindergarten children and 2,581,400 full-time kindergarten teachers in China by 2018 [1]. Since 2016, China has fully implemented the "two child" policy, and the next five years will be a period of rapid growth in the number of children in the kindergarten [2]. In this context, how to improve the comprehensive quality of kindergarten teachers, how to ensure the physical and mental health of kindergarten teachers to provide better services for children, which have become the requirements of development of kindergarten teachers' group and an important topic of concern for many scholars. China's 2001 "Kindergarten Education Guidelines (Trial)" clearly proposed "ensure children's health and emotional stability in kindergarten life [3]." To complete and implement the requirements of the guideline, it is necessary to ensure kindergarten teachers have good emotional and psychological quality.

As a special profession, kindergarten teachers are faced with young children whose physiological, psychological, emotional and social development are not

sound and whose values have not yet formed, which determines the work of kindergarten teachers is more trivial and complicated. Be kind and patient when children make mistakes. Need to show excitement and joy in teaching and solve children's problems calmly. Kindergarten Education Guidelines (Trial) (2011) issued by China requires kindergarten teachers to communicate with children with care, acceptance and respect [3]. The attitude and supervisor mode of kindergarten teachers should help to form safe and warm psychological environment. Kindergarten teachers not only interact closely with children, but also need to communicate with parents of children, colleagues, managers and other groups. In the process of communication with parents of children, kindergarten teachers should show respect and concern to them, and patiently answer all kinds of questions raised by them. Show cooperation, support, sincerity and friendship when working with colleagues. In addition, kindergarten teachers should be positive and optimistic when facing managers. Kindergarten teachers' long-term and frequent contact with children, parents of children, colleagues, managers. The complexity and arduousness of kindergarten teachers' work inevitably leads to job burnout

Since American clinical psychologist Freudenberger first found job burnout in 1974, many western scholars have studied and analyzed the phenomenon of job burnout from different perspectives. It is considered that job burnout is a kind of comprehensive symptom of physical and mental exhaustion when an individual is engaged in the work of dealing with others. These symptoms are not sudden, but the product of long-term job stress. The kindergarten teachers who have job burnout are more negative in terms of emotion and personality, and can't actively coordinate and balance their psychological tendencies and behaviors with the requirements of social reality, indifference to young children, even lead to resignation and accidents. Kindergarten teachers' job burnout can negatively impact both the individual and the education training services. Therefore, no matter from the perspective of caring for children, kindergarten teachers, or promoting the development of preschool education, we should pay enough attention to job burnout of kindergarten teachers. So the objective of this article is to explore the current situation of kindergarten teachers' Job Burnout and whether there are differences in demographic variables of kindergarten teachers' job burnout.

2. Methodology

2.1 Participant

The study selected Chinese kindergarten teachers as the research object. The research group consists of 688 kindergarten teachers in Jilin, Shandong and Beijing selected in accordance with the convenience sampling. The demographic variables used in this study include kindergarten type, education background and working hours every day. The specific information of the kindergarten teachers surveyed is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Demographic variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent (%)
Kindergarten type	Public	371	53.9
	Private	317	46.1
Education background	Technical secondary school	31	4.5
	Associate's degree	305	44.3
	Bachelor's degree	296	43.0
	Master's degree and above	56	8.2
Working hours per day	Less than 10 hours	367	53.3
	10 hours and above	321	46.7

As the Table 1 shows, of all of the participants, 53.9% (n=371) are public kindergarten teachers whereas 46.1% (n=317) are private teachers. 4.5% (31) of the kindergarten teachers are graduates of the technical secondary school, 44.3% (305) have associate's degree, 43% (296) kindergarten teachers have bachelor's degree, 8.2% (56) have master's degree and above. Teachers with master's degree and above and technical secondary school account for relatively low percentage. 53.3%(367)kindergarten teachers work Less than 10 hours every day, 46.7% (321) work 10 hours and above every day.

2.2 Instrument

This study adopted the MBI-GS general version scale revised by Li and Shi (2003) [4]. This scale is composed of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion includes five items (e.g. "I feel burned out from my work."). Depersonalization was measured with four items (e.g. "I doubt the significance of my work."). Personal accomplishment was measured by six items (e.g. "I have accomplished many worthwhile things at this job.") There are six reverse-scored items in this dimension. Responses were scored on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Higher scores indicate higher levels of job burnout. In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .93 for emotional exhaustion, .92 for depersonalization, and .90 for reduced personal accomplishment.

Table 2 General Information of Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey

Dimension	Connotation	Items	Number	Cronbach's Alpha
Emotional exhaustion	Individual feels overwhelmed and has lost their own	1-5	5	.93

	emotional resources due to their job.			
Depersonalization	Individual exhibits mean, cynical indifferent, and behaviors towards others deprived from their senses	6-9	4	.92
Reduced personal accomplishment	Individual is inclined to assess himself in a negative manner.	10-15	6	.90

2.3 Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Independent sample t-test was used for determining the differences in the level of total and dimensions scores of job burnout according to the marital status, kindergarten type and working time every day. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for determining the differences in the level of total and dimensions scores of job burnout according to education background and teaching experiences. The *Scheffé* test was applied to determine the source of differentiation. Significance was set at a minimum of .05, while other significance levels (.01 and .001) were also shown.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Descriptive Statistics of Job Burnout of Kindergarten Teachers

In order to explore the level of kindergarten teachers' job burnout, this study carried out descriptive statistics of job burnout and three dimensions. The kindergarten teachers' job burnout scale used 5-point scoring, and the intermediate critical value is 3. The results are shown in Table 3. The kindergarten teachers' overall level of job burnout ($M = 1.944$, $S=703$) is lower intermediate critical value. It indicates that kindergarten teachers' job burnout is not serious in China. Kindergarten teachers possess the highest burnout level for emotional exhaustion ($M=2.472$, $S=1.004$), which was followed by reduced personal accomplishment ($M=1.695$, $S=.719$) and depersonalization ($M=1.657$, $S=.901$). The burnout level of kindergarten teachers is medium for the emotional exhaustion dimension, and low for reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization dimensions.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics of job burnout

	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Emotional exhaustion	1.00	5.00	2.472	1.004

Depersonalization	1.00	5.00	1.657	.901
Reduced personal Accomplishment	1.00	5.00	1.695	.719
Job burnout	1.00	4.87	1.944	.703

3.2 Analysis of Demographic Variables About Job Burnout of Kindergarten Teachers

(1) Findings on kindergarten type

Kindergarten teachers' job burnout and three dimensions scores differ according to the kindergarten type are analyzed via independent sample t test. Table 4 presents the finding whether there is a significant difference in job burnout scale scores according to the kindergarten type. As shown in Table 4, there shows a significant difference in the emotional exhaustion ($t=4.448$, $p<.001$), depersonalization ($t=2.492$, $p<.01$) and job burnout (total score) ($t=3.701$, $p<.001$). Public kindergarten teachers are higher than private kindergarten teachers. It is seen that reduced personal accomplishment ($t=1.817$, $p>.05$) does not differ significantly according to kindergarten type.

Table 4. Independent sample T-test of Job Burnout in Kindergarten Type

Dependent variable	Kindergarten type	N	M	SD	t
Emotional exhaustion	Public	371	2.626	1.027	4.448***
	Private	317	2.291	.948	
Depersonalization	Public	371	1.737	.910	2.492**
	Private	317	1.566	.882	
Reduced personal accomplishment	Public	371	1.741	.731	1.817
	Private	317	1.641	.702	
Job burnout (total score)	Public	371	2.035	.699	3.701***
	Private	317	1.838	.694	

There are significant differences in the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and job burnout (total scores) according to the kindergarten type. The job burnout level of public kindergarten teachers is higher than that of private kindergarten teachers. This conclusion is in line with Li (2016) [5] and Yu (2017) [6]. Compared with private kindergartens, public kindergartens have more children, larger classes, and a relatively large workload for teachers. Kindergarten teacher in a public kindergarten, they often have to undergo various inspections by the management department, visits from various units, and assessment and evaluation of various professional skills. They have to spend more time to deal with this task. The kindergarten's requirements for teachers in public kindergartens require teachers to constantly learn and improve their skills. As a result, public kindergarten teachers work longer hours, spend less time with their families and children. They are in a state of extreme fatigue for a long time, show numbness and indifference to others.

They do not recognize their work value, and lack personal accomplishment. In this context, the job burnout occurs easier.

(2) Findings on working hours every day

Kindergarten teachers' job burnout and three dimensions scores differ according to the working hours every day are analyzed via independent sample t test. As shown in Table 5, there shows a significant difference in the emotional exhaustion ($t=-3.893$, $p<.001$), depersonalization ($t=-4.591$, $p<.001$) and job burnout (total score) ($t=-4.200$, $p<.001$). Kindergarten teachers with working hours of 10 hours or more have higher levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and job burnout than teachers with working hours of less than 10 hours. It is seen that the reduced personal accomplishment ($t=-1.906$, $p>.05$) does not differ significantly according to working hours every day.

Table 5. Independent sample T-test of job burnout in working hours every day

Dependent variable	Working hours	N	M	SD	t
Emotional exhaustion	Less than 10 hours	367	2.334	.965	-3.893***
	10 hours and above	321	2.629	1.026	
Depersonalization	Less than 10 hours	367	1.510	.787	-4.591***
	10 hours and above	321	1.826	.990	
Reduced personal accomplishment	Less than 10 hours	367	1.646	.692	-1.906
	10 hours and above	321	1.751	.747	
Job burnout (total score)	Less than 10 hours	367	1.839	.650	-4.200***
	10 hours and above	321	2.064	.742	

p< .001

There are significant differences in the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and job burnout according to the working hours every day. Kindergarten teachers with working hours of 10 hours or more have higher levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and job burnout than that of teachers with working hours of less than 10 hours. The reason for this may be that long-term working hours will make kindergarten teachers face more work tasks and heavy workload. They interact with children for long time, prepare lessons, deal with various affairs, which make kindergarten teachers extremely tired physically and mentally. They have no more time to exercise and deal with their own affairs. Therefore, the mood is easy to be low, numb, lose work enthusiasm, and increase the sense of burnout.

(3) Findings on education background

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to investigate the difference of total and dimension scores of kindergarten teachers' job burnout according to the education background. Table 6 shows that there is significant difference in the emotional exhaustion ($F=4.060$, $p<.01$), depersonalization ($F=4.772$, $p<.01$), reduced personal accomplishment ($F=3.922$, $p<.01$) and job burnout (total score) ($F=5.975$, $p<.01$) according to education background of the participants. According to the results of the *Scheffé* test, the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and job burnout scores of those have bachelor's degree and associate's degree are significantly different and higher than those of graduate technical secondary school according to education background of the participants. The reduced personal accomplishment scores of those have bachelor's degree are significantly different and higher than technical secondary school.

Table 6. The ANOVA test results on education background of job burnout

Dependent variable	Education background	N	M	SD	F	Scheffé
Emotional exhaustion	Technical secondary school ①	31	1.92	.685	4.060**	②>① ③>①
	Associate's degree②	305	2.55	1.028		
	Bachelor's degree③	296	2.48	1.009		
	Master's degree and above④	56	2.35	.907		
Depersonalization	Technical secondary school ①	31	1.19	.535	4.772**	②>① ③>①
	Associate's degree②	305	1.70	.916		
	Bachelor's degree③	296	1.71	.930		
	Master's degree and above④	56	1.41	.705		
Reduced personal accomplishment	Technical secondary school ①	31	1.34	.466	3.922**	③>①
	Associate's degree②	305	1.70	.691		
	Bachelor's degree③	296	1.75	.764		
	Master's degree and above④	56	1.56	.681		
Job burnout (total score)	Technical secondary school ①	31	1.49	.431	5.975**	②>① ③>①
	Associate's degree②	305	1.98	.710		
	Bachelor's degree③	296	1.98	.726		
	Master's degree and above④	56	1.78	.549		

** $p < .01$

There are significance differences in the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment and job burnout according to the educational background. Kindergarten teachers with bachelor and associate degree are significantly higher than those with technical secondary school. This is related to the small sample of technical secondary school teachers in this study, but

this situation is in line with the educational background of the kindergarten teachers in China. On the other hand, it may be kindergarten teachers with bachelor and associate degree have higher expectations of themselves and the environment in their work life than teachers of technical secondary school. They can be recognized and accepted by the society and eager to improve their identity and status. However, due to the special nature of kindergarten work, although they have a relatively high educational background, they have to be trapped in trivial affairs every day. Children parents will not support them more because of their high education level, and the society has not given these teachers enough understanding and corresponding policy support. In reality, they are often misunderstood, and their social status is not high. This gap between what they are and what they should make them severely depersonalized and prone to exhaustion of energy and emotion. Moreover, in China, kindergarten teachers with a bachelor 's degree have rich professional knowledge, but they are not as good as teachers with technical secondary school in playing piano, singing, dancing, painting and other professional skills, which reduce the self-confidence of teachers with bachelor degree. Some kindergartens are unable to evaluate teachers objectively and comprehensively due to the imperfect evaluation system, which greatly reduces the personal accomplishment of kindergarten teachers with bachelor degree. They feel that they have not received the attention they deserve. So work enthusiasm is reduced, and job burnout is enhanced.

4. Conclusion

In terms of job burnout, the total level was not serious. Kindergarten teachers have the highest burnout level when they experience emotional exhaustion, which is followed by reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization, respectively. There were significant differences in job burnout according to kindergarten type, working hours every day, education background.

Fund Project

2020 The project of department of education in Jilin province : A Study of the Relationship among Emotional Labor, Job Burnout and Turnover Intention: Focus on Kindergarten Teachers (JKH20200191SK). 2020 The PhD project of Jilin Engineering Normal University : A Study on the Zhongyong Thinking-Style of Kindergarten Teachers and Its Influence on Job Burnout (BSGC202019)

References

- [1] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2018). National education development statistics bulletin. Retrieved from <http://www.moe.gov.cn zhengce/index.htm>.

- [2] Liu, C. Z., & Han, Q. G. (2019). Prediction of preschool education development in Gansu province under the "comprehensive second child" policy. *China Economic and Trade Herald*, (10), 120-122.
- [3] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2001). Guidelines for kindergarten education (Trial). Retrieved from <http://www.gov.cn/jy/zhengce/index.htm>.
- [4] Li, C. P., & Shi, K. (2003). The impact of distribution fairness and procedural fairness on job burnout. *Journal of Psychology*, 35 (05), 677-684.
- [5] Li, J. J. (2016). Occupational burnout and improvement strategy of preschool teachers in western Liaoning province, M.A. Thesis. Jinzhou: Bohai university.
- [6] Yu, X. (2017). Research on the status of preschool teachers' job burnout and its influencing factors in Anshan city, M.A. Thesis. Anshan: Anshan Normal University.