

Article

Occupational Well-being of Rural Preschool Teachers: Practical Dilemmas, Influencing Factors and Promotion Strategies

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Abstract: The occupational well-being of rural preschool teachers affects their mental state and living conditions, determines the development of rural education, and also exerts an impact on the stability of rural preschool teaching staff. On the basis of sorting out and analyzing existing literature on preschool teachers' occupational well-being, this study adopts questionnaire survey and interview methods to investigate the occupational well-being of rural preschool teachers in Chongqing. Firstly, 70 rural preschool teachers are selected as research subjects for sampling investigation from five dimensions: cognition, emotion, physical and mental health, career development and social support, and the survey data are analyzed by SPSS 24.0. Secondly, 5 preschool teachers are chosen via simple random sampling to explore the existing problems and root causes concerning rural preschool teachers' occupational well-being. Based on the research results, targeted improvement strategies are put forward from three perspectives: individual teachers, kindergartens and society. For individual preschool teachers, it is necessary to formulate personal career development plans, continuously improve professional competence, set up reflection schemes and enhance professional identity. For kindergartens, efforts should be made to optimize the material working environment, build a positive spiritual atmosphere, perfect management systems and attach importance to teachers' emotional needs. From the social perspective, governments need to increase financial investment, improve the staffing establishment management, change traditional stereotypes and elevate the social status of preschool teachers.

Keywords: preschool education; occupational well-being; rural teachers; career development; educational management

1. Research Background

The construction of rural teaching staff is a fundamental pillar supporting the high-quality development of rural preschool education [1]. It also serves as a critical measure to promote balanced educational development in the context of comprehensive rural revitalization. Recent policy directives have emphasized the need to strengthen the development of rural teaching teams, optimize the allocation of educational resources between urban and rural areas, and address the gaps in rural education through initiatives such as specialized teacher training programs and targeted recruitment efforts. These measures aim to ensure that rural areas receive the necessary support to foster educational equity and improve the overall quality of preschool education.

Enhancing the quality and efficiency of rural preschool education is closely tied to the occupational well-being of teachers, which is a core factor in maintaining the stability of teaching teams and improving the standards of childcare and education. Teachers who experience a high level of occupational well-being are more likely to exhibit greater enthusiasm and creativity in their teaching practices, thereby contributing to the effectiveness of preschool education [1]. Furthermore, occupational well-being is intricately linked to teachers' professional identity, career progression, and overall physical and mental health. It plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive cycle of stable employment and professional growth, while also serving as a crucial element in

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advancing teacher development initiatives and promoting equity in preschool education. Against the backdrop of rural revitalization and the push for balanced educational development, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses to examine the current state of occupational well-being among rural preschool teachers. It also identifies key influencing factors and proposes targeted strategies to enhance their sense of well-being and belonging, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of educational reform and rural development.

2. Research Design

2.1. Research Subjects

The research subjects for this study consist of teachers employed in rural kindergartens located within the Chongqing municipality. To ensure a representative sample, a stratified random sampling method was utilized, targeting educators from kindergartens across 12 distinct districts and counties in Chongqing. A total of 75 questionnaires were distributed to participants, out of which 70 were completed and deemed valid, resulting in an effective recovery rate of 93%. This high response rate underscores the reliability of the data collection process and reflects the participants' engagement with the study [2].

2.2. Research Tools and Methods

This study primarily employs the questionnaire survey method as a core research tool. Drawing inspiration from the Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-being Scale developed by Tang Dongmei, a customized questionnaire was designed to assess the occupational well-being of rural preschool teachers in Chongqing. The questionnaire is divided into two distinct sections. The first section gathers essential demographic and personal information about the respondents through 12 closed-ended single-choice questions. These questions cover variables such as gender, age, and professional title, providing a foundational understanding of the participants' characteristics [3]. The second section evaluates occupational well-being across five carefully constructed dimensions: cognitive well-being, emotional well-being, physical and mental health well-being, career development well-being, and social support well-being. This section comprises 32 items in total, each scored using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores in each dimension reflect a greater level of occupational well-being in the corresponding area. The detailed correspondence between each dimension and its respective questionnaire items is systematically outlined in Table 1, ensuring clarity and transparency in the measurement framework. This structured approach facilitates a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the occupational well-being of the target population.

Table 1. Questionnaire Items Corresponding to Each Dimension

ResearchContent	Item Numbers
	1,4,6,9,11,19,22,25
Cognitive Well-being	2,8,10,15,17,29,32
Emotional Well-being	12,21,26
Physical and Mental Health Well-being	
Career Development Well-being	7,13,16,23,24,27,30,31
Social Support Well-being	
	3,5,14,18,28

To enhance the representativeness and reliability of the research findings, the semi-structured interview method was also incorporated. This approach involved conducting in-depth interviews with teachers from five rural kindergartens in Chongqing. Participants were randomly selected from the pool of kindergartens that had already participated in the questionnaire survey. Each interview session lasted between 15 and 30

minutes and was conducted in a private meeting room to ensure confidentiality and comfort for the interviewees. A total of five interviews were conducted, focusing on three primary aspects: material remuneration, spiritual experiences, and professional development of the teachers [4]. All interviews were meticulously recorded in their entirety and subsequently transcribed verbatim to maintain the authenticity and accuracy of the data. This method was employed to provide a more comprehensive exploration of the current state and influencing factors of occupational well-being among rural preschool teachers. The basic demographic and professional details of the interviewees are systematically summarized in Table 2, offering additional context to the qualitative data collected.

Table 2. Basic Information of Interviewees

Interviewee Code	Age	Nature of Kindergarten	Educational Background	Professional Title
Teacher Z	24	Private	Bachelor's Degree	None
Teacher S	31	Public	Bachelor's Degree	Primary Title
Teacher T	29	Public	Bachelor's Degree	None
Teacher L	33	Public	Junior College	Intermediate Title
Teacher W	25	Private	Bachelor's Degree	None

3. Current Situation of Rural Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-Being

This study categorizes the occupational well-being of rural preschool teachers into five distinct dimensions: cognition, emotion, physical and mental health, career development, and social support [5]. To analyze these dimensions comprehensively, SPSS software was employed for descriptive statistical analysis, focusing on both the overall occupational well-being and the individual scores of each dimension. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3, which provides a detailed breakdown of the statistical findings. This approach ensures a systematic evaluation of the occupational well-being levels, offering insights into the specific areas where improvements may be necessary. By utilizing statistical tools, the study aims to provide a robust foundation for understanding the multifaceted nature of occupational well-being among rural preschool educators.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Different Dimensions of Rural Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-being

Dimension	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Theoretical Median	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Cognitive Dimension	1	5	3	2.90	0.413
Emotional Dimension	1	5	3	2.83	0.306
Physical and Mental Health Dimension	1	5	3	3.14	0.374
Career Development Dimension	1	5	3	2.99	0.308
Social Support Dimension	1	5	3	2.84	0.390
Overall Occupational Well-being	1	5	3	2.91	0.812

Table 3 reveals that the overall mean score of rural preschool teachers' occupational well-being is 2.91, with a standard deviation of 0.812. This score is slightly below the theoretical median but remains close to it, suggesting that the occupational well-being of rural preschool teachers in Chongqing is at a moderate level. This finding aligns with the results obtained from field surveys, reinforcing the reliability of the data [6]. The mean scores for the five dimensions are as follows: cognition (2.90), emotion (2.83), physical and mental health (3.14), career development (2.99), and social support (2.84). Notably, all

these scores fall below the theoretical median, indicating room for improvement across all dimensions. The data underscores the importance of targeted interventions to enhance the well-being of educators in these areas.

When ranked from lowest to highest, the dimensions of occupational well-being are as follows: emotional well-being, social support well-being, cognitive well-being, career development well-being, and physical and mental health well-being. The lower scores in the cognitive, emotional, and social support dimensions highlight significant deficiencies in these aspects. These findings suggest that rural preschool teachers face challenges in maintaining emotional stability, receiving adequate social support, and fostering cognitive engagement in their professional roles [7]. Addressing these deficiencies is crucial for improving their overall occupational well-being and ensuring a more supportive and fulfilling work environment. The study emphasizes the need for targeted strategies to address these specific areas of concern effectively.

4. Analysis on the Practical Dilemmas of Rural Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-Being

4.1. Cognitive Dimension

Confusion about Personal Career Prospects: The research identifies that preschool teachers aged 20 to 30 exhibit significantly lower scores in overall occupational well-being (3.33) and cognitive well-being (2.62) compared to their older counterparts. This disparity highlights the challenges faced by younger educators in adapting to the demands of their profession [8]. According to the survey, 17.1% of the teachers (12 respondents) expressed a negative outlook on their career prospects, while a substantial 84.3% (59 respondents) reported difficulties in achieving their educational ideals within the constraints of their current roles. Furthermore, 77.2% of respondents questioned their ability to adapt effectively to the career's requirements. These findings underscore the pressing need for targeted interventions to address the concerns of younger teachers, particularly in terms of career development and support mechanisms.

As stated by Teacher Z in the interview: "I feel very confused. Our kindergarten is small in scale with limited promotion opportunities. I have worked here for three years, but my salary has barely increased. Besides, the public recognition for preschool teachers is low. Many people think we only 'take care of kids' and the job requires no professional skills." This statement reflects the broader challenges faced by rural preschool educators, where limited institutional resources and societal undervaluation of their roles contribute to career dissatisfaction. The lack of clear pathways for professional growth, coupled with stagnant wages, exacerbates feelings of frustration and uncertainty. Additionally, the perception that their work lacks complexity or professional merit diminishes their sense of purpose and fulfillment. These factors collectively hinder young teachers' ability to fully engage with their roles, ultimately reducing their occupational well-being and highlighting the need for systemic reforms to enhance career satisfaction and societal recognition for preschool educators [9].

4.2. Emotional Dimension

Monotonous and repetitive work content appears to be a significant challenge for rural preschool teachers. According to the questionnaire data, 20% of teachers (14 respondents) explicitly expressed feelings of irritation due to trivial tasks, while 75.71% (53 respondents) maintained a neutral stance, and only 4.29% (3 respondents) reported that they did not find their work tedious. This data highlights the prevalence of emotional exhaustion among educators in rural preschool settings, which may stem from the repetitive nature of their responsibilities and the lack of variety in daily tasks. Such conditions can lead to diminished enthusiasm and engagement, potentially impacting the overall effectiveness of preschool education delivery. Addressing these issues requires a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to emotional strain and exploring strategies to enhance job satisfaction and motivation.

Qualitative interviews provide further insight into the emotional challenges faced by rural preschool teachers. For instance, Teacher Z shared: "I am occupied with trivial affairs all day long, leaving me no time to interact with children. I just want to finish daily teaching tasks as soon as possible." This statement underscores the impact of a repetitive work structure and limited flexibility in task management, which can adversely affect teachers' emotional well-being. The lack of opportunities for meaningful engagement with students may also hinder the development of a nurturing educational environment. To mitigate these issues, it is essential to explore measures that promote a more dynamic and supportive work atmosphere, such as diversifying responsibilities and fostering collaborative practices, which could enhance both teacher satisfaction and the quality of preschool education.

4.3. Physical and Mental Health Dimension

Excessively long working hours and insufficient rest time are significant challenges faced by rural preschool teachers. Overwork is a widespread issue, with survey data indicating that 88.6% of teachers, equivalent to 62 out of 70 respondents, work more than 8 hours daily. Among these, 82.86% (58 respondents) work between 8 to 10 hours per day, while 5.71% (4 respondents) exceed 10 hours of work daily. Teachers who work over 10 hours a day report notably lower emotional state scores, averaging just 2.37, highlighting the detrimental impact of extended work hours on mental well-being. Furthermore, an alarming 97.1% of teachers (68 respondents) report experiencing health problems, including vocal cord lesions, cervical spondylosis, and sleep disorders [10]. These findings underscore the urgent need for interventions to address the physical and mental health challenges faced by this workforce, as prolonged exposure to such conditions can lead to long-term health deterioration and reduced professional efficacy.

Teacher W provided a detailed account of the demanding nature of their work: "We arrive at the kindergarten at 7:30 a.m. and usually finish at 5:30 p.m., excluding additional responsibilities such as after-school care services [11]. Even after official working hours, we are required to communicate with parents, attend meetings, and complete tasks like environment layout." This description highlights the multifaceted nature of their workload, which extends beyond classroom teaching to include administrative and parental engagement duties. The excessive workload not only negatively affects teachers' emotional well-being but also contributes to widespread occupational health issues. These include physical ailments such as musculoskeletal problems and chronic fatigue, as well as psychological stress. The cumulative impact of these factors underscores the pressing need for systemic reforms to alleviate the burden on rural preschool teachers, ensuring they have adequate time for rest and recovery while maintaining their professional responsibilities.

4.4. Career Dimension

Disproportionate Salary and Welfare Treatment: Teachers' staffing status and salary significantly affect their evaluation of the profession [4]. The average score of professionally established teachers (3.05) is noticeably higher than that of non-established teachers, indicating a disparity in satisfaction levels. Among the 70 surveyed teachers, a substantial 80% report a monthly income below 3,500 RMB, with 40% earning between 1,500-2,500 RMB and another 40% earning 2,500-3,500 RMB. Only a small proportion, 18.6%, earn more than 3,500 RMB per month. Furthermore, an overwhelming 92.9% of teachers express that their income does not align with the demands and efforts of their work. This data highlights the financial challenges faced by educators, particularly in rural areas, where compensation often fails to reflect the intensity and dedication required in their roles.

Teacher T stated: "I am quite dissatisfied with the current salary. We get up early and stay late every day with heavy workloads, but the salary is very low. I only get more than 2,000 RMB per month, which is barely enough to support myself, let alone a family." This statement underscores the significant financial pressures experienced by rural preschool teachers. The dissatisfaction expressed by Teacher T reflects a broader issue of inadequate

compensation in the education sector, particularly in rural regions. Teachers often face long working hours and demanding responsibilities, yet their remuneration remains insufficient to meet basic living expenses. This creates a challenging environment for educators, potentially impacting their morale and long-term commitment to the profession. Addressing these concerns is crucial for improving the overall quality and sustainability of the teaching workforce in such areas.

4.5. Social Support Dimension

Home-kindergarten communication represents a significant challenge for rural preschool teachers, as evidenced by the survey results. Among the respondents, only 18.57% (13 teachers) reported smooth communication with parents, while the majority—81.43%—rated the communication as average or poor. Furthermore, only 28.57% (20 teachers) expressed feeling understood and supported by parents. This lack of effective communication can hinder the development of a collaborative environment essential for fostering children's growth and learning. Teachers often face barriers such as parents' limited understanding of preschool education principles and their reluctance to engage with their children's progress in kindergarten. These challenges highlight the need for targeted interventions, such as parent education programs or structured communication strategies, to bridge the gap between teachers and families and enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.

Teacher Z emphasized the importance of home-kindergarten communication during an interview, stating, "Home-kindergarten communication is important but difficult to carry out. Some parents lack professional knowledge of preschool education. They are unwilling to learn about their children's performance in kindergarten and refuse to cooperate with teachers' work." This sentiment reflects broader trends observed in the study, where terms like "difficulty" and "misunderstanding" appeared frequently in interview records—23 and 17 times, respectively—aligning with the questionnaire findings. Such recurring themes underscore the systemic nature of communication barriers in rural preschool settings. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including fostering parental awareness of early childhood education and implementing structured communication frameworks to facilitate better interaction between teachers and families [12]. These measures could significantly improve collaboration and support for children's educational experiences.

5. Analysis on Influencing Factors of Rural Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-Being

5.1. Individual Factors of Preschool Teachers

5.1.1. Low Professional Identity

Some teachers fail to fully recognize the professional value of preschool education. They regard the work as trivial and think the profession enjoys low social status, resulting in a lack of professional pride. This mindset reduces work enthusiasm and even leads to job burnout. Teacher L shared: "I chose this job because I love kids, but the real work is far different from my imagination [13]. We mainly take care of children's daily life and deal with various demands from parents. Sometimes I feel like a senior nanny rather than a professional teacher." Such negative self-perception not only diminishes their confidence but also creates a sense of professional inadequacy. This can lead to a cycle of dissatisfaction, where teachers feel undervalued and unsupported, further exacerbating their emotional fatigue. Over time, this accelerates the turnover of rural preschool teachers, resulting in a shortage of qualified professionals in rural kindergartens. This shortage ultimately undermines the overall quality and sustainability of preschool education in these areas.

5.1.2. Deficient Professional Competence

Deficiencies in professional competence and outdated educational concepts are significant factors contributing to the lack of occupational well-being among rural

preschool teachers. Many of these educators, influenced by traditional educational practices, prioritize premature primary education in kindergartens. This approach often places excessive emphasis on knowledge acquisition and skill training, neglecting the fundamental principles of children's physical and mental development as well as their individual differences. Such practices not only fail to align with the developmental needs of young children but also undermine the holistic purpose of early childhood education, which should focus on fostering creativity, social skills, and emotional well-being. The persistence of these outdated methods reflects a broader systemic issue within rural education systems, where limited access to updated pedagogical resources and training perpetuates these challenges. Addressing these deficiencies requires a shift in educational priorities and the provision of targeted professional development opportunities for rural preschool teachers [5].

Teacher W shared: "Our kindergarten mainly teaches children Pinyin, arithmetic, and literacy, which are primary school courses. Many parents also expect us to do so, hoping their children can get a head start." This statement highlights the pressure on rural preschool teachers to conform to parental expectations, even when such practices contradict established principles of early childhood education. These teaching methods not only disregard the natural developmental trajectory of young children but also fail to produce meaningful learning outcomes. Furthermore, they increase the workload for teachers, leading to diminished job satisfaction and a reduced sense of professional accomplishment. Compounding this issue is the lack of systematic professional training in preschool education for many rural teachers. Without adequate training, these educators struggle to implement effective teaching strategies that balance academic preparation with the developmental needs of children. This underscores the urgent need for comprehensive training programs to enhance their professional knowledge and teaching efficacy.

5.2. Factors of Kindergartens

5.2.1. Poor Material Environment

Kindergartens serve as the primary workplace for teachers and play a significant role in influencing their occupational well-being [8]. Teacher Z highlighted several challenges, stating that the kindergarten's facilities are rudimentary, with narrow classrooms and an insufficient supply of teaching toys and aids. These limitations hinder the effective execution of diverse teaching activities. Furthermore, the kindergarten's remote location exacerbates these issues, as it not only results in inconvenient transportation but also a lack of adequate daily life facilities. The geographical isolation further restricts access to information, leaving teachers with limited opportunities to engage with external peers or adopt advanced educational concepts and innovative teaching methodologies, thereby impacting their professional growth and satisfaction.

5.2.2. Defective Spiritual Environment

The spiritual environment of rural kindergartens encompasses various elements such as campus culture, interpersonal relationships among colleagues, and the presence of team support systems. A nurturing and positive environment can significantly enhance teachers' sense of belonging, professional identity, and overall job satisfaction. Conversely, a deficient spiritual environment can lead to diminished work satisfaction and a lack of professional fulfillment. This highlights the critical role of fostering a supportive and cohesive atmosphere within educational institutions to ensure the well-being and motivation of educators.

High staff turnover and limited professional development opportunities are prevalent challenges in rural kindergartens, making it difficult to establish a stable and collaborative team dynamic. This instability is a primary factor contributing to teacher retention issues. For instance, one teacher expressed: "Our kindergarten rarely organizes teaching and research activities. I always feel like I am working alone, which over time makes me feel unfulfilled and lonely." Furthermore, many rural kindergartens lack essential support systems, such as regular teaching research initiatives and psychological

counseling services. Without these resources, teachers often struggle to manage work-related stress effectively, which further diminishes their occupational well-being and sense of accomplishment. Addressing these gaps is crucial for creating a more supportive and sustainable working environment for educators in rural areas.

5.3. Social Factors

Inadequate policy support is a significant factor contributing to the low occupational well-being of rural preschool teachers. This issue manifests primarily in two critical areas: economic benefits and institutional guarantees. Addressing these deficiencies is essential for improving the working conditions and overall satisfaction of educators in rural settings [5].

First, the overall investment in preschool education remains insufficient, particularly in rural regions. Limited funding directly impacts the salaries of rural preschool teachers, which are notably lower compared to those of civil servants and primary and secondary school teachers in the same locality [8]. This income disparity poses challenges in attracting and retaining skilled educators, thereby undermining the stability and quality of the teaching workforce. Enhanced financial support is crucial to bridge this gap and ensure a sustainable teaching environment.

Second, the institutional framework governing rural preschool teachers is underdeveloped, placing them in a disadvantaged position. Challenges such as inadequate staffing quotas and restricted promotion opportunities hinder professional growth. Additionally, many temporary teachers lack comprehensive social security coverage, including essential benefits like pensions and medical insurance, which significantly affects their sense of job security [12]. As one teacher expressed, "We hope the government can increase staffing quotas, raise salaries, and improve the social security system. Many of us are temporary staff with low pay and no formal establishment, which makes us feel insecure." Addressing these systemic issues is vital for fostering a more supportive and equitable environment for rural preschool educators.

6. Strategies to Improve Rural Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-Being

6.1. Strategies for Individual Preschool Teachers

6.1.1. Formulate Reflection Plans and Enhance Professional Identity

Teaching reflection enables preschool teachers to continuously examine their educational beliefs, instructional practices, and interactions with children, thereby promoting the acquisition of new knowledge and practical skills. Through systematic reflection, teachers can better recognize their professional value, strengthen their sense of responsibility, and enhance their professional identity, which in turn contributes to higher work enthusiasm and stronger occupational well-being. Teachers with clear self-development motivation are more likely to actively identify and utilize opportunities for professional growth, maintain positive career expectations, and respond constructively to workplace challenges. Therefore, rural preschool teachers should formulate detailed personal reflection and development plans, set phased and achievable goals, regularly evaluate their progress, and gradually build a sustainable pathway for long-term professional development.

6.1.2. Draw up Career Plans and Improve Professional Competence

Rural preschool teachers should formulate practical and individualized career plans that integrate short-term skill enhancement with long-term professional orientation in light of their personal strengths, educational background, and local teaching conditions. They should actively participate in systematic professional development programs to acquire updated educational concepts, refined classroom strategies, and more effective methods of child observation, communication, and assessment, thereby continuously improving teaching quality. At the same time, teachers may engage proactively in kindergarten management, curriculum discussion, and teaching-research activities to display professional capacity and obtain broader opportunities for advancement. Clearly

defined career goals can sustain professional motivation, strengthen reflective practice, and provide consistent direction for daily teaching, classroom decision-making, and long-term competence development.

6.2. Strategies for Kindergartens

Optimize Material Conditions and Build a Positive Institutional Atmosphere: Kindergartens should improve hardware facilities, teaching resources, and working conditions to create a safe, comfortable, and supportive physical environment for teachers. In terms of organizational climate, kindergartens need to foster a positive, cooperative, and respectful campus culture so that teachers can genuinely experience care, recognition, and professional support within the institution. Regular teaching-research activities, peer exchange mechanisms, and accessible psychological counseling services should be provided to help relieve work pressure and strengthen professional resilience. In addition, kindergartens should promote effective home-kindergarten cooperation to create a stable atmosphere for collaborative education, thereby enhancing teachers' occupational well-being, professional identity, and long-term commitment to educational practice.

6.3. Strategies for the Society

6.3.1. Increase Financial Investment and Improve Staffing Management

Sufficient and stable financial support constitutes the material foundation for improving the occupational well-being of rural preschool teachers. Local governments should therefore increase dedicated funding for rural preschool education, optimize budget allocation mechanisms, and establish long-term investment arrangements that ensure continuity rather than short-term supplementation. In practical terms, this includes raising teachers' salaries, improving rural post subsidies, and narrowing compensation gaps between rural and urban preschool educators. At the same time, financial input should also cover teaching resources, professional training, workplace facilities, and living support, because occupational well-being is shaped not only by income level but also by the overall quality of the working environment. A more adequate and predictable funding structure can reduce teachers' economic pressure, strengthen their professional commitment, and create the basic conditions necessary for sustained educational quality improvement in rural preschool settings.

In terms of institutional construction, relevant departments should allocate staffing quotas for public kindergartens in accordance with established standards and further refine personnel management mechanisms suited to rural educational realities. A clearer and more standardized employment system can help reduce instability in teacher appointments and improve the fairness and transparency of recruitment, assessment, and promotion procedures. It is also essential to strengthen the social security system and effectively address pension, medical insurance, and other welfare issues affecting temporary teachers and other non-established staff. In addition, staffing management should take into account regional disparities, teacher workload, class size, and the developmental needs of young children, so that human resource allocation better matches actual educational demand. Sound salary arrangements, secure employment status, and comprehensive institutional guarantees can significantly enhance teachers' professional recognition, sense of security, and long-term willingness to remain in rural preschool education.

6.3.2. Change Traditional Prejudices and Elevate the Social Status of Preschool Teachers

Society as a whole should develop a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of preschool education and accord greater respect to the work of preschool teachers. It is essential to dispel the narrow perception that preschool teachers merely provide basic childcare, and instead fully acknowledge the specialized knowledge, pedagogical skills, emotional labor, and developmental guidance required in early childhood education. Parents, communities, and the broader public should strengthen their understanding of and support for preschool teachers' professional responsibilities. Enhancing social status, public recognition, and occupational respect can significantly

improve the occupational well-being, professional identity, and long-term retention of rural preschool teachers, thereby generating positive outcomes for children, families, educational quality, and society overall.

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