

A study on the current situation and factors influencing the professional commitment of private kindergarten teachers

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Abstract: This study investigated the professional commitment of kindergarten teachers in a private kindergarten located in Jinan, Shandong Province, China. The research employed a questionnaire and utilized correlation analysis to examine the factors influencing the professional commitment of private kindergarten teachers. The findings revealed that the overall level of career commitment among private kindergarten teachers was moderately low. Among the three dimensions of professional commitment, namely, continuance commitment, affective commitment, and normative commitment, the affective commitment dimension exhibited a relatively high level, whereas the continuance commitment and normative commitment dimensions showed relatively low levels. Significant differences in professional commitment levels were observed based on teacher age, education level, age of children, salary, and class size. However, no significant differences were found based on teacher specialty, position, and teaching experience.

Keywords: private kindergarten teachers; professional commitment; continuing commitment; affective commitment; normative commitment;

1. Introduction

Occupational commitment is a complex concept that encompasses an individual's emotions, attitudes, and behaviors toward the occupation they are in and is a reflection of an individual's willingness to engage in an occupation without changing their occupational level. Studies have been conducted to define the concept of career commitment mainly from three

perspectives: attitudes, motivations, and actions. These include individuals' willingness and acceptance of the occupation, preferences, attachment, and willingness to stay in the occupation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). There is also a theory of individual motivation for career success based on career orientation (Herachwati & Rachma, 2018; Ekmekcioglu et al., 2020). The individual is conscious of the organization they work for, their level of occupation participation, how reluctant they are to switch to another one in order to absorb societal standards, and their own accountability for future conduct or acts. The individual is conscious of the organization they work for, their level of occupation participation, how reluctant they are to switch to another one in order to absorb societal standards, and their own accountability for future conduct or acts. (Long et al., 2000). According to the scope of application of China's Law on the Promotion of Private Education, private educational institutions are those operated by organizations and individuals besides state-owned educational institutions (Xiangyun, 2019). Private kindergarten teachers in this study are full-time teachers who work in preschool education institutions serving children aged 3 to 6 years, which are established and operated by social organizations other than public institutions according to the law, such as private enterprises, civil society organizations or individuals, through non-public funding, excluding early childhood training institutions and childcare centers for children aged 0-3 years.

As of 2021, there are about 295,000 kindergartens in China, and there are about 167,000 private kindergartens, accounting for about 56.6% of the total number of kindergartens. There are 3,191,000 kindergarten teachers in China, of which about 1,612,500 are private kindergarten teachers, accounting for about 50.5% of kindergarten teachers nationwide. In China, private kindergartens are an important part of kindergarten education, and

private kindergarten teachers are an important force in the early childhood teaching force. However, the phenomenon of private kindergarten teachers leaving frequently and struggling to remain for a long time is becoming more and more significant (Xingru et al., 2021; Huilan et al., 2020; Mingyuan, 2019; Qing & Dong, 2018). Along with the wide application of career commitment in the psychological and educational fields, career commitment has become a valid predictor of teachers' turnover and propensity to leave (Liangzhen, et al., 2023; Gang et al., 2022; Chang'e et al., 2022). Teachers' level of professional commitment is closely related to teachers' professional identity, responsibility, and loyalty (Delima, 2015; Lauermann et al., 2017). Teachers with higher levels of career commitment are more identified with the career they are in, more motivated to commit to that career, and less likely to change careers or leave (Jue & Ha, 2021); career commitment may explain career-related outcomes, such as employability and career success, more comprehensively than traditional forms of commitment (e.g., organizational commitment) (Van der Heijden et al., 2022). This study uses the three-dimensional theory proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) to classify career commitment into affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Through a survey and data analysis of private kindergarten teachers' career commitment in Jinan, Shandong Province, China, we reveal the current status and explore the factors that influence their commitment, in order to better prevent attrition in kindergartens. The survey aimed to uncover the present situation of private kindergarten teachers' professional commitment and to investigate the factors affecting it, with the goal of preventing the loss of valuable educators in the kindergarten workforce.

2. Literature Review

Relatively few studies have been conducted on

the current status of kindergarten teachers' professional commitment, and the conclusions obtained vary and are inconsistent due to different research subjects. Meyer and Allen (1991) considered teachers' professional commitment as the sense of responsibility and professionalism that teachers develop toward their profession and their desire to devote themselves to education without complaint and work for it for the rest of their lives. From the attitudinal and social attributes of the teaching profession, teachers' professional commitment was defined as affirmation, love and persistence, responsibility, and commitment to teaching. Byun and Jeon (2022) found through a survey of 322 kindergarten teachers in Korea that the work environment significantly predicted professional commitment beyond personal stress, and the findings emphasized that teachers' experiences in having a satisfactory work environment and personal stress played important roles. Lestari (2021) used a cross-sectional survey design to assess the effect of occupational commitment on kindergarten teachers' organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and the results showed that occupational commitment had a significant effect on OCB of 70.6%, and all three dimensions of affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment significantly affected kindergarten teachers' OCB. When examining religious affiliation, teachers from religious schools had higher levels of professional commitment compared to teachers from non-religious schools (Mcinerney et al, 2015). Ford, Timothy (2014) studied teacher self-efficacy, professional commitment, and Louisiana's high-risk teacher evaluation policy and found that teacher career commitment is not influenced by the evaluation system as self-efficacy increases. Xiangyun You (2019) found that private kindergarten teachers' professional commitment levels in Chongqing were moderately high, but varied depending on the size and level of the school. Bingli Cui (2018) investigated the career

commitment of male kindergarten teachers in Jiangsu, Shanghai, Chongqing, and Henan, and found that the career commitment level of male teachers basically showed a moderate to high trend, but the pre-service career commitment was significantly higher than the post-service career commitment. In their survey, Yingxue Mou and Yini Fang (2016) found that the career commitment level of kindergarten teachers in Chongqing was basically the same as that in Shanghai, which was at a medium level. Wenjun Li and Xihua Zhou (2020) found that kindergarten teachers' commitment levels in Shaanxi Province were at a medium level and high in normative commitment, while emotional commitment and continuance commitment were low. Some other researchers considered kindergarten teachers' professional commitment level to be at a moderate to low level. Wang Guifen (2018) found that the level of professional commitment of rural private kindergarten teachers was lower than the level of kindergarten teachers in other regions in general. Rural kindergarten teachers have lower social prestige, especially in terms of income and social recognition than other regions, so rural kindergarten teachers have generally lower levels of career commitment.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts the three-dimensional theory proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991), which classifies career commitment into affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Affective commitment implies that employees work diligently for the organization and are loyal to the company solely due to their emotional attachment, rather than being drawn by material benefits. Normative commitment suggests that employees are willing to work for the organization primarily because of behavioral norms' constraints and feel obligated to do so to fulfill these norms' requirements.

Continuance commitment indicates that employees are willing to remain with the organization and maintain their position within it. Commitment, common to all three dimensions, is defined as "tying individuals to a course of action related to one or more goals, thereby reducing turnover" (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). However, these three forms of commitment differ in their accompanying mindsets (Meyer & Allen, 1991): affective commitment involves emotional attachment, identification, and involvement; normative commitment emphasizes behavioral norms' discipline and a sense of obligation; and continuance commitment reflects awareness of the costs associated with leaving an existing organization. Based on existing research findings, this study proposes the following seven research hypotheses:

- (1) There is a correlation between the age and professional commitment of kindergarten teachers;
- (2) There is a correlation between the educational level of kindergarten teachers and their professional commitment;
- (3) There is a correlation between the age class (small, medium, or large) taught and career commitment;
- (4) There is a correlation between the size of the class taught and career commitment;
- (5) There is a correlation between teacher professionalism and professional commitment;
- (6) There is a correlation between job position and career commitment;
- (7) There is a significant correlation between teaching experience and career commitment.

In this study, a survey of private kindergarten

teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, China, was conducted using the questionnaire method. The Professional Commitment Questionnaire for Private Kindergarten Teachers, developed by XianYun You (2019), was piloted and analyzed for reliability before its formal use (Tables 1 and 2). As shown in Table 1, the α -coefficient and split-half reliability coefficients of the entire questionnaire and its dimensions exceeded 0.80, meeting the requirements of psychometrics. The validation factor analysis revealed that when the value of X^2/df was below 5, and the values of NNFI, CFI, and GFI exceeded 0.9, with the RMSEA being under 0.08, the model fit was deemed good. The closer the values of X^2/df , NNFI, CFI, and GFI were to 1, the better the model fit and the more desirable it was; the smaller the RMSEA value, the better the professional commitment of private kindergarten teachers. The questionnaire's indicators had a better fit (Table 2). The questionnaire comprised 20 items, including 7 items for emotional commitment, 7 items for normative commitment, and 6 items for continuing commitment, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale. The convenience sampling method was employed to select 24 private kindergartens in Jinan, Shandong Province, and 297 questionnaires were collected. After carefully reviewing the collected questionnaires, 29 invalid questionnaires with issues such as missing or incorrect answers were excluded, leaving 268 valid questionnaires, resulting in a valid rate of 90.24%.

4. Current status of professional commitment of private kindergarten teachers

Table 1 Reliability analysis of the survey questionnaire

| Factor | Emotional Commitment | Normative Commitment | Continued commitment | Total questionnaire |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Internal consistency | 0.921 | 0.876 | 0.863 | 0.942 |
| Confidence coefficient | | | | |
| Split-half reliability coefficient | 0.901 | 0.833 | 0.845 | 0.857 |

4.1 Current status of professional commitment

To understand the current situation of private kindergarten teachers' professional commitment, statistical analysis was conducted on 268 valid questionnaires. The data in Table 3 shows that the total score of private kindergarten teachers' professional commitment is $2.101 < 3$, which indicates that the level of private kindergarten teachers' professional commitment in Jinan, Shandong Province, is at the middle to bottom level; the three dimensions of emotional commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment are all less than the theoretical mean. This suggests that the private kindergarten teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, demonstrate a poor sense of responsibility, identity, and willingness to remain in their jobs as part of their career commitment.

4.2 Status of emotional commitment

In this study, teachers' affective commitment is defined as kindergarten teachers' attitude toward abandoning their profession based on a certain sense of professional value and responsibility. According to the data (Table 4), the private kindergarten teachers' sense of professional value and emotional attitude

were at a medium level. They focused more on the role and meaning of their work for children's growth and held a positive view about the value of their work itself. However, they had relatively low expectations regarding the idealized outcomes that their career could bring to the development of their own abilities, and their determination to not give up their career was relatively low. In other words, although these kindergarten teachers are clearly aware of the value of their work and have an emotional attachment to it, they are more likely to give up their profession under the influence of various factors. This finding is consistent with the current situation of high mobility among private kindergarten teachers.

4.3 Normative commitment status

In this study, normative commitment regarding teachers is defined as the attitude of kindergarten teachers to discipline themselves in their work attitudes and daily behavioral norms based on their sense of identity and responsibility for their professional values. Comparing the overall status of the three dimensions of private kindergarten teachers' professional commitment, it can be seen that the section on normative commitment has the highest scores. Table 5 shows that the average score of each question item is above 2, which indicates that private

Table 2 Validated factor analysis fitting indicators for the questionnaire

| Contained factors | X ² | df | X ² /df | NNFI | CFI | GFI | RMSEA |
|-------------------|----------------|-----|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 3 | 302.277 | 158 | 1.913 | 0.920 | 0.957 | 0.904 | 0.057 |

Table 3: Analysis scale of the current situation of professional commitment of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan

| Projects | Sample Content | Arithmetic mean | Standard deviation | Inspection |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Continued commitment | 268 | 2.047 | 0.821 | 3 |
| Normative Commitment | 268 | 2.048 | 0.792 | 3 |
| Emotional Commitment | 268 | 2.201 | 0.779 | 3 |
| Total questionnaire | 268 | 2.101 | 0.742 | 3 |

kindergarten teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, require themselves to adhere to professional ethical norms. have more normative professional attitudes and behaviors. They are able to comply with and strictly

Table 4: Status of emotional commitment of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan

| Projects | Title item | Sample size | Average | Project mean |
|----------------------|---|-------------|---------|--------------|
| Emotional Commitment | I never regret choosing a career as a kindergarten teacher | 268 | 2.205 | 2.201 |
| | For me, kindergarten teaching is the best career for me | 268 | 2.272 | |
| | I believe that the kindergarten teaching profession has more room for development and good prospects for growth | 268 | 2.149 | |
| | Even though the work is hard and tiring, it is hard for me to give up my career as a kindergarten teacher. | 268 | 2.172 | |
| | Kindergarten is like another home for me, and it's hard for me to give up this career | 268 | 2.16 | |
| | Even if I mastered a new skill now and could find a better job with it, I would not change my current career | 268 | 2.172 | |
| | Even if I were not limited by my major and had more opportunities to choose a career, I would still choose to pursue a career as a kindergarten teacher | 268 | 2.276 | |

Table 5: Status of private kindergarten teachers' normative commitment in Jinan

| Projects | Title item | Sample size | Average value | Mean value |
|--|---|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Normative Commitment | Whether I work in a private or public school | 268 | 1.914 | 2.048 |
| | what I care most is that I really do well in my | | | |
| | career as a kindergarten teacher | | | |
| | My career as a kindergarten teacher stems from my | 268 | 2.019 | |
| | true love for kindergarten teaching and children | | | |
| | rather than other factors such as stability | | | |
| | Even though there are certain pressures and | 268 | 2.093 | |
| | challenges associated with a career as a kindergarten teacher, I am able to handle these | | | |
| | pressures and challenges | | | |
| | Even though there will be many difficulties and | 268 | 2.075 | |
| | challenges in my work, I am full of enthusiasm | | | |
| | for my current work | | | |
| | Even though there are many negative comments | 268 | 2.146 | |
| | about kindergarten teachers in the society, I still believe that it is a valuable thing to give | | | |
| | children knowledge and happiness | | | |
| | I am very conscious of the impact of my words and | 268 | 2.052 | |
| actions on the children, whether there are others | | | | |
| present or not | | | | |
| At work, even if something is beyond the scope of | 268 | 2.037 | | |
| professional norms, I will choose the right way to deal with it without violating professional | | | | |
| norms, and not to play ball | | | | |

4.4 Continued commitment to the status quo

In this study, "continuing commitment" regarding teachers is defined as kindergarten teachers' willingness to engage in the profession for a long time based on their identification with and adherence to a sense of professional value and responsibility. Comparing the overall status of the three dimensions

of private kindergarten teachers' career commitment, Table 6 shows that although private kindergarten teachers in Jinan have a good sense of professional identity and responsibility and are willing to devote themselves to professional knowledge and daily work, they do not have a high willingness to engage in the profession for a long time and have a significant tendency to leave the profession.

Table 6: Current status of private kindergarten teachers' continuing commitment in Jinan

| Projects | Title item | Sample size | Average | Mean value |
|----------------------|--|-------------|---------|------------|
| Continued Commitment | As an early childhood educator, I believe I have an obligation to continue to work hard for the cause of early childhood education | 268 | 2.134 | 2.047 |
| | Whether I am in a private or public school, I will not be prevented from achieving my career ambition of becoming an excellent kindergarten teacher. | 268 | 2.034 | |
| | I am willing to do my best and work hard to achieve my career goals | 268 | 2.06 | |
| | According to my career development plan, I will continue to work as a kindergarten teacher for a long time in the future and will not change my career | 268 | 2.034 | |
| | Based on the requirements of career development, I think I should learn some professional knowledge and skills after work and attend professional training | 268 | 1.97 | |
| | Based on the professional nature of kindergarten teaching and learning, I think I should devote a lot of time and effort to my teaching and learning work | 268 | 2.049 | |

4.5 Analysis of the factors affecting the professional commitment of private kindergarten teachers

In this study, statistical analyses, including ANOVA and post hoc multiple comparisons, were performed to examine the current situation and each dimension of professional commitment among private kindergarten teachers in Jinan, considering variables such as age, education, and salary and income. To avoid repetition, this section of data analysis will focus on discussing each variable separately, taking into account their unique circumstances.

4.6 The level of professional commitment of private kindergarten teachers decreases with age

The age factor demonstrated a nonlinear, curvilinear relationship with career commitment (Katz et al., 2019). Research has shown that private kindergarten teachers' attitudes and enthusiasm for their careers vary across age groups, and personal attributes (e.g., age) are weak predictors of teachers' career commitment (Zhu et al., 2021). This study found (Table 7) that age exhibited significant differences across three dimensions of career commitment: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. The current status of teachers' career commitment was highest in the 26–30 age group and lowest in the 41–50 age group, with the level of career commitment tending to decrease gradually after the age of 30.

4.7 Bachelor's degree in private kindergarten

Table 7: Analysis of age differences in the career commitment of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan

| A. Under 25 years old (n=145) | | Age: (mean ± standard deviation) | | | | | F | P |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| | | B. 26-30 years old (n=73) | C. 31-35 years old (n=34) | D. 36-40 years old (n=13) | E. 41-50 years old (n=3) | | | |
| Emotional Commitment | | 2.01±0.70 | 2.40±0.86 | 2.26±0.82 | 1.91±0.58 | 1.78±0.10 | 3.975 | 0.004** |
| Normative Commitment | 1.90±0.67 | 2.41±0.92 | 2.17±0.90 | 1.86±0.65 | 1.96±0.07 | 5.737 | 0.000** | |
| Continued Commitment | 1.95±0.62 | 2.35±0.91 | 2.11±0.89 | 2.09±0.56 | 1.86±0.14 | 3.61 | 0.007** | |

Note: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

teachers regulate the minimum commitment

There is some debate about the influence of educational factors on teachers' professional commitment (Hao, 2020; Cheng et al., 2020; Meng, 2022). In this study, we analyzed the relationship between teachers' education levels and the three dimensions of continuance commitment, normative commitment, and affective commitment. We found no significant difference between education levels and continuance commitment or affective commitment, but there was a significant difference with normative commitment. Among the four levels of education:

less than high school, college, bachelor's degree, and graduate degree, teachers with bachelor's degrees had the lowest level of professional commitment, and those with graduate degrees had a higher level of professional commitment. However, in this study, only one kindergarten teacher with a graduate degree participated in the survey, and the sample size was not representative. This is also consistent with the current reality of the low percentage of highly educated kindergarten teachers in China, which increased from 136 (0.02%) in 2001 to 6475 (0.22%) in 20220 (Fan et al., 2023).

Table 8: Analysis of the differences in professional commitment education of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan

| | Education: (mean ± standard deviation) | | | | F | P |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|--------|
| | A. Below high school (n=27) | B. Specialty (n=166) | C. Bachelor's degree (n=74) | D. Graduate students (n=1) | | |
| Continued Commitment | 2.22±0.86 | 2.10±0.80 | 1.97±0.56 | 3.71±null | 2.476 | 0.062 |
| Normative Commitment | 2.39±0.86 | 2.06±0.82 | 1.98±0.69 | 3.50±null | 2.918 | 0.035* |
| Emotional Commitment | 2.28±0.80 | 2.15±0.81 | 2.06±0.64 | 3.33±null | 1.384 | 0.248 |

Note: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

4.8 There is a significant difference between job salary and normative commitment

Studies have shown that kindergarten teachers' salaries are one of the factors that influence teachers' career commitment (Cahapay & Bangoc, 2021; Wei et al., 2021). In this study, we used salary as a variable to examine the relationship between job salary and

the career commitment of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan. As seen in Table 9, there was no significant difference between salary and continuance commitment or affective commitment, but there was a significant difference between salary and normative commitment.

4.9 Kindergarten teachers in large

Table 9: Analysis of the difference between private kindergarten teachers' salary and career commitment in Jinan

| | Monthly salary: (mean \pm standard deviation) | | | | F | P |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------|
| | A. Up to 2000 yuan (n=34) | B. 2000-3000 yuan (n=111) | C. 3000-4000 yuan (n=78) | D. 4000-5000 yuan (n=45) | | |
| Continued commitment | 2.13 \pm 0.67 | 2.02 \pm 0.68 | 2.00 \pm 0.79 | 2.33 \pm 0.91 | 2.137 | 0.096 |
| Normative Commitment | 2.16 \pm 0.71 | 2.01 \pm 0.72 | 1.97 \pm 0.80 | 2.36 \pm 0.98 | 2.751 | 0.043* |
| Emotional Commitment | 2.28 \pm 0.72 | 2.08 \pm 0.72 | 2.04 \pm 0.85 | 2.36 \pm 0.76 | 2.231 | 0.085 |

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

classes have the highest level of professional commitment, while those in small classes have the lowest level of professional commitment

The results of this study, which investigated the relationship between teachers' teaching grades and professional commitment, showed the following (Table 10): there were no significant differences

between different teaching classes and continuance commitment, but there were significant differences between affective commitment and normative commitment. Among the four age classes, teachers teaching small classes had the lowest level of professional commitment, while teachers teaching large classes had the highest level of professional commitment.

Table 10: Analysis of the differences in the classes taught by private kindergarten teachers' career commitment in Jinan

| | Classes you teach: (mean \pm standard deviation) | | | | F | P |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------|--------|
| | A. Nursery class (n=25) | B. Small class (n=101) | C. Middle class (n=79) | D. Large class (n=63) | | |
| Continued Commitment | 2.17 \pm 0.92 | 1.94 \pm 0.62 | 2.10 \pm 0.80 | 2.24 \pm 0.81 | 2.235 | 0.085 |
| Normative Commitment | 2.19 \pm 0.92 | 1.92 \pm 0.62 | 2.06 \pm 0.87 | 2.29 \pm 0.87 | 2.885 | 0.036* |
| Emotional Commitment | 2.23 \pm 1.03 | 1.99 \pm 0.61 | 2.16 \pm 0.81 | 2.32 \pm 0.79 | 2.631 | 0.051 |

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

4.10 Private kindergarten teachers teaching classes of 40 or more students have a high level of professional commitment

The number of children in a teacher's classroom showed significant differences with the normative commitment and affective commitment dimensions of professional commitment, but not with the continuance commitment dimension. Simultaneously, teachers who taught classes with 40 or more children demonstrated higher levels of professional commitment across all three dimensions, including continuance commitment, normative commitment, and affective commitment.

4.11 There is no significant difference between profession, position, years of teaching experience and career commitment

This study also investigated and analyzed the effects of teachers' majors, administrative positions held, and years of teaching on private teachers' career commitment. The results (Tables 12, 13, and 14) revealed no significant differences between the different majors studied, administrative positions held, and years of teaching in relation to career commitment.

Table 11: Analysis of the difference in class size of private kindergarten teachers' career commitment in Jinan

| | Class size: (mean ± standard deviation) | | | | F | P |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------|--------|
| | A. Under 20 people (n=58) | B. 21-30 people (n=109) | C.31-40 people (n=70) | D.41 or more (n=31) | | |
| Continued commitment | 2.08±0.84 | 2.02±0.70 | 2.04±0.66 | 2.38±0.94 | 1.875 | 0.134 |
| Normative Commitment | 2.08±0.82 | 1.99±0.73 | 2.02±0.77 | 2.47±0.96 | 3.065 | 0.029* |
| Emotional Commitment | 2.13±0.77 | 2.03±0.70 | 2.17±0.77 | 2.52±0.92 | 3.378 | 0.019* |

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Table 12: Analysis of differences in the majors studied by private kindergarten teachers' career commitment in Jinan

| | Your major: (mean ± standard deviation) | | | F | P |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|----------------|-------|-------|
| | A. Preschool Pedagogy (n=202) | B. Pedagogy (n=60) | C. Other (n=6) | | |
| Continued Commitment | 2.05±0.77 | 2.15±0.73 | 2.33±0.49 | 0.736 | 0.48 |
| Normative Commitment | 2.06±0.83 | 2.12±0.71 | 2.17±0.42 | 0.201 | 0.818 |
| Emotional Commitment | 2.12±0.80 | 2.20±0.67 | 2.42±0.53 | 0.649 | 0.523 |

Note: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Table 13: Analysis of the differences in professional commitment positions of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan

| | You are currently serving as: (mean ± standard deviation) | | | | F | P |
|----------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| | Classroom teachers (n=75) | Classroom teachers (n=160) | Caretaker (n=20) | Full-time tenured teachers (n=13) | | |
| Emotional Commitment | 2.10±0.86 | 2.15±0.73 | 2.13±0.59 | 2.28±0.97 | 0.233 | 0.874 |
| Normative Commitment | 2.06±0.88 | 2.05±0.77 | 2.13±0.66 | 2.40±0.93 | 0.834 | 0.476 |
| Continued commitment | 2.04±0.90 | 2.08±0.70 | 2.13±0.67 | 2.29±0.77 | 0.421 | 0.738 |

Note: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Table 14: Analysis of the difference in teaching years of career commitment of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan

| | Your teaching experience: (mean ± standard deviation) | | | F | P |
|----------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| | A.1-5 years (n=209) | B.6-10 years (n=47) | C.11-15 years (n=12) | | |
| Continued commitment | 2.07±0.76 | 2.08±0.76 | 2.35±0.67 | 0.763 | 0.467 |
| Normative Commitment | 2.04±0.79 | 2.15±0.83 | 2.39±0.79 | 1.347 | 0.262 |
| Emotional Commitment | 2.12±0.75 | 2.16±0.81 | 2.39±0.95 | 0.689 | 0.503 |

Note: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01

5. Conclusion

The study results revealed that the career commitment level of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan was moderate to low. In terms of each

dimension, the level of emotional commitment was relatively high, normative commitment was in the middle, and continuance commitment was the lowest. Factors such as age, education, salary, age of children, and class size were significantly related to career

commitment, while profession, position, and teaching experience were not. The career commitment level of private kindergarten teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, was lower than that of China overall, particularly in social recognition and economic income. Misconceptions and misunderstandings about private kindergarten teachers' orientation, as well as a lack of understanding of professional values, have contributed to a severe deficiency in their professional identity. Consequently, the lack of social awareness and appreciation for kindergarten teachers may be a key factor in the long-term instability of their professional commitment. Private kindergarten teachers face pressure from society, families, and kindergartens. Longitudinal and cross-sectional comparisons found no correlation between salary and

work intensity, leading teachers to consider leaving or changing their current kindergarten positions. These factors significantly and negatively impacted private kindergarten teachers' career commitment levels. Enhancing the career commitment of private kindergarten teachers is essential for the teachers themselves, the kindergarten management model, society, families, and parents. In the future, this study will continue to investigate aspects related to kindergarten teachers' professional commitment, expand the survey respondents' scope, and employ additional research methods to analyze factors influencing professional commitment and compare the current status of public and private kindergarten teachers' professional commitment.

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