

**Research on the Relationship between Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-being and Willingness to Teach**\*Dai Yu<sup>1</sup>, Zhu Xiaoting<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> School of Education, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, Guangdong, China.<sup>2</sup> Dali University, Dali, Yunnan, China.DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18080341](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18080341)

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**Abstract**

This study focuses on the intrinsic link between preschool teachers' occupational well-being and their willingness to teach, aiming to reveal the reciprocal relationship between the two and its impact on educational practice. By employing standardised scales to conduct a systematic survey of the preschool teacher population, the study found that, in the dimension of individual characteristics, the level of occupational well-being is significantly correlated with the level of teacher qualification held, job position, and professional title. Meanwhile, the willingness to teach shows statistically significant differences across variables including age, marital status, professional background, and teaching tenure. Further correlation analysis demonstrates a significant positive association between preschool teachers' occupational well-being and their willingness to teach; specifically, the enhancement of occupational well-being directly promotes the strengthening of the willingness to teach. This finding supports the theoretical cycle model of "Well-being – Motivation Reinforcement – Sustained Willingness", providing a new perspective for understanding the driving dynamics of teacher professional development. Consequently, the study suggests focusing on the following aspects: encouraging teachers to actively pursue professional development and enhance teaching efficacy through continuous learning; constructing a supportive working environment to promote the elevation of teachers' occupational well-being; and establishing long-term mechanisms to transform the positive interaction between occupational well-being and willingness to teach into a sustained momentum of "willingness to teach, enjoyment in teaching, and excellence in teaching", thereby driving the overall improvement of preschool education quality.

**Keywords:** Occupational Well-being; Willingness to Teach; Preschool Teachers.**1. Problem Statement**

Preschool education is an integral component of China's basic education system. To ensure the high-quality and sustainable development of the preschool teaching workforce, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council promulgated the *Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Standardising the Development of Preschool Education* in November 2018 (CPC Central Committee & State Council, 2018). This document explicitly pointed out the necessity of vigorously strengthening the construction of the kindergarten teacher workforce, emphasising the "strategic significance of a qualified and stable kindergarten teacher workforce for achieving universally accessible and high-quality preschool education". This indicates that the Party and the State place preschool education in a pivotal position regarding national welfare and livelihood, providing top-level design and policy support for preschool education development. As the core implementers of preschool education, teachers play an irreplaceable role in the faculty system. The rationality of their quantitative allocation, the level of their professional literacy, and the quality of their teaching capabilities directly determine the physical and psychological development processes of preschool children, whilst also profoundly influencing the potential for quality improvement in preschool education. Therefore, the fundamental focal point for constructing a high-quality preschool education system lies in building a professionalised workforce that is reasonably structured, excellent in quality, and sustainable. Through systematic training mechanisms

and long-term guarantee measures for preschool teachers, the professional level and stability of the teaching force can be ensured. This not only concerns the educational quality of individual kindergartens but will also have a far-reaching impact on the healthy development of the entire preschool education sector.

Occupational well-being is defined as the positive psychological state and sense of satisfaction experienced by individuals during professional activities. It relates not only to the nature of the work itself but also involves a comprehensive cognition of professional value, development opportunities, interpersonal relationships, and self-actualisation. As psychological and sociological research deepens, the concept of occupational well-being has gradually shifted from singular material satisfaction to multidimensional spiritual and value pursuits. The definition of occupational well-being has undergone a transformation from "instrumentality" to "purposefulness". With the continuous development of occupational well-being prompting modern professionals to re-examine the meaning of work, the concept has evolved from singular to multidimensional and from intrinsic to extrinsic across four stages. In the initial stage, occupational well-being was attributed solely to economic returns and working conditions; Taylor's scientific management theory emphasised efficiency and economic incentives, believing that higher wages and improved environments could enhance employee well-being. As the understanding of education deepened, occupational well-being began to shift from extrinsic factors to intrinsic factors. Following the proposal of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the definition expanded to include intrinsic satisfaction. Maslow believed that besides material needs, employees pursue belonging, respect, and self-actualisation; Herzberg also distinguished occupational well-being into "hygiene factors" and "motivator factors", arguing that intrinsic factors such as a sense of achievement and responsibility have a greater impact on well-being. Current trends in personalised needs indicate a further refinement of the definition, highlighting that individual differences make the definition of occupational well-being more comprehensive, covering work-life balance, career development, and organisational culture. Scholars argue that well-being stems not only from the work itself but is also influenced by personal and organisational management, career development opportunities, and the work environment. For instance, Zhang and Wang (2023) conducted research on kindergarten teachers in Fuyang using questionnaires and field interviews, finding that the level of occupational well-being in the Fuyang region was average, with psychological well-being scoring highest and cognitive well-being scoring lowest. Yang (2024), based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, social support theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory as new research perspectives, identified four main dimensions of preschool teachers' occupational well-being: psychological, emotional, social, and cognitive well-being.

Willingness to teach is defined as the psychological tendency and behavioural drive of an individual to choose and continue engaging in the teaching profession. It reflects the practitioner's identification with and commitment to educational work. The concept of willingness to teach encompasses not only the career choice motivation before entering the profession but also the retention or turnover tendencies after employment, serving as a critical predictor of the stability and professional development of the teacher workforce. Later, with high requirements for teacher professional development, willingness to teach became an important topic in educational psychology and teacher education research, and its definition has evolved alongside educational philosophies. Initial conceptual definitions linked willingness to teach to salary and social status; for example, Human Capital Theory posited that individuals weigh career income against educational remuneration when choosing to teach. However, this theory ignored individual intrinsic will and motivation and could not explain the phenomenon of people persisting in teaching despite low-salary environments. As research on teacher professional development matured, psychological perspectives were introduced, and scholars began to focus on the impact of intrinsic motivation and professional identity on willingness to teach. For instance, Deci and Ryan, through Self-Determination Theory, proposed that willingness to teach requires satisfying the three major psychological needs of "autonomy, competence, and relatedness", suggesting teachers choose the profession because they love education rather than merely for a livelihood. Finally, in the context of globalisation and digitalisation, willingness to teach is not merely a subjective choice by the subject but is determined based on working conditions and professional development circumstances. For example, teachers may re-examine their professional value due to the impact of the pandemic or technology, leading to variability in their willingness to teach. To mitigate issues such as high work pressure, unfair salary treatment, and unclear career development prospects faced by preschool teachers—which affect their willingness to teach—numerous scholars have conducted research analysis. Zhou et al. (2023) showed that various dimensions of professional competence are positively correlated with dimensions of willingness to teach.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Participants

This study employed a questionnaire survey method, collecting data via the 'Wenjuanxing' platform. A total of 990 questionnaires were collected. After rigorous screening, all questionnaires met the research requirements, resulting in an effective recovery rate of 100%. Regarding sample characteristics, the study primarily examined multiple socio-demographic indicators of kindergarten teachers, covering gender distribution, age groups, marital status, fertility status, professional background, educational level, teacher qualification certification, monthly income, teaching tenure, professional title, job position, and the geographical location of the kindergarten. These variables were established to

comprehensively reflect the basic characteristics of the kindergarten teacher population, providing a reliable data foundation for subsequent in-depth analysis. The specific distribution is detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Basic Information of Kindergarten Teachers (n=990)**

Category	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	951	96.06
	Male	39	3.94
Age	Under 25	225	22.73
	26-30	295	29.8
	31-40	335	33.84
	41-50	124	12.53
	51-60	11	1.11
Marital Status	Widowed	2	0.2
	Other	1	0.1
	Married	595	60.1
	Unmarried	379	38.28
	Divorced	13	1.31
Children	None	451	45.56
	One child	258	26.06
	Three or more children	28	2.83
	Two children	253	25.56
Major	Other teacher training majors	39	3.94
	Preschool education	818	82.63
	Art education	30	3.03
	Non-teacher training majors	103	10.4
Education	Secondary vocational/High school	60	6.06
	Junior college (Associate degree)	269	27.17
	Undergraduate	653	65.96
	Master's degree or above	8	0.81
Qualification	Primary/Secondary school qualification	44	4.44
	Kindergarten teacher qualification	769	77.68
	None	173	17.47
	Arts teacher qualification	4	0.4

Monthly Income	3000-5000 RMB	324	32.73
	Below 3000 RMB	154	15.56
	5001-7000 RMB	282	28.48
	7001-9000 RMB	177	17.88
	Above 9000 RMB	53	5.35
Tenure	1-5 years	543	54.85
	11-15 years	108	10.91
	16-20 years	59	5.96
	21-30 years	43	4.34
	Over 30 years	13	1.31
	6-10 years	224	22.63
Title	Senior (Professor level)	3	0.3
	Level 1 (Primary/Kindergarten)	100	10.1
	Level 2 or below	288	29.09
	Senior (Associate level)	9	0.91
	Ungraded	590	59.6
Position	Mid-level cadre	64	6.46
	Lead teacher	350	35.35
	Caregiver/Nursery nurse	163	16.46
	Assistant teacher	381	38.48
	Principal/Vice-principal	32	3.23
Kindergarten Type	Public (Established post/Bianzhi)	217	21.92
	Public (Contract/Non-Bianzhi)	664	67.07
	Private (Inclusive/Affordable)	68	6.87
	Private (Non-inclusive)	41	4.14
Region	East Guangdong	12	1.21
	North Guangdong	13	1.31
	Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area	900	90.91
	West Guangdong	65	6.57

## 2.2 Research Tools

### 2.2.1 Preschool Teacher Occupational Well-being Questionnaire

The design of this questionnaire was based on the professional characteristics of kindergarten teachers and international authoritative research findings. Specifically, the development of the research tool drew upon the theoretical system of the *Teacher Well-being Measurement Framework* released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in early 2020. This questionnaire was introduced and localised by domestic scholars Li Gang and Lv Lijie, who deconstructed teacher occupational well-being into four core dimensions: cognitive, subjective, health, and social well-being. Therefore, combining the Chinese cultural context and the professional characteristics of kindergarten teachers, this study adapted the measurement tool, ultimately constructing an assessment scale containing 28 items. All items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale, where the score is positively correlated with the level of teacher occupational well-being. This construction ensures both theoretical reliability and local applicability, providing a scientific measurement means for subsequent empirical research.

### 2.2.2 Preschool Teacher Willingness to Teach Questionnaire

The study found that the *Preschool Teacher Willingness to Teach* questionnaire possesses good reliability and validity and is suitable for completion by preschool teachers. The questionnaire comprises two items covering subjective and social support dimensions. It employs a 5-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicate a stronger willingness to teach.

## 2.3 Data Analysis

This study selected the statistical software SPSSAU to conduct data analysis.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Descriptive Analysis

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of the Occupational Well-being Scale**

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Median
Social Well-being	990	1.000	5.000	3.031	1.337	3.000
Health Well-being	990	1.000	5.000	2.486	1.250	2.000
Subjective Well-being	990	1.000	5.000	3.017	1.346	3.000
Cognitive Well-being	990	1.000	5.000	3.142	1.283	3.000

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations. The mean represents the measure of central tendency, while the standard deviation represents the dispersion. The results indicate that the mean for Health Well-being is 2.486 ( $SD=1.250$ ), and the mean for Cognitive Well-being is 3.142 ( $SD=1.283$ ). Based on this analysis, it is concluded that many preschool teachers report relatively low levels of health and cognitive well-being.

**Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of the Willingness to Teach Scale**

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Median
1. Willingness to Teach	990	1.000	5.000	2.996	1.522	3.000
2. Willingness to Re-choose	990	1.000	5.000	2.839	1.544	3.000

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations. The results indicate that the mean for Willingness to Teach is 2.996 ( $SD=1.522$ ), and the mean for Willingness to Re-choose is 2.839 ( $SD=1.544$ ). Based on this analysis, it is concluded that the willingness to teach among many preschool teachers is relatively low, suggesting that teachers currently in the profession may not intend to remain in this industry indefinitely.

### 3.2 Difference Analysis

**Table 4: Analysis of Variance for Teacher Qualification and Occupational Well-being**

Teacher Qualification (Mean ± SD)						
	Primary/Secondary (n=44)	Kindergarten (n=769)	None (n=173)	Arts (n=4)	F	p
Social WB	3.07±1.32	2.94±1.32	3.42±1.37	3.00±1.63	6.004	0.000
Subjective WB	2.80±1.42	2.93±1.34	3.47±1.27	3.00±1.63	8.165	0.000
Cognitive WB	2.91±1.29	3.08±1.28	3.45±1.25	4.00±1.15	5.042	0.002
Health WB	2.68±1.31	2.43±1.23	2.72±1.29	1.50±0.58	3.868	0.009

Regarding Teacher Qualification, significant differences were found for Social Well-being ( $F=6.004$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), Subjective Well-being ( $F=8.165$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), Cognitive Well-being ( $F=5.042$ ,  $p=0.002$ ), and Health Well-being ( $F=3.868$ ,  $p=0.009$ ). The table shows that Teacher Qualification presents significance across all four dimensions: Social, Subjective, Cognitive, and Health Well-being ( $p<0.05$ ).

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance for Professional Title and Occupational Well-being**

Title (Mean ± SD)	Social WB	Subjective WB	Cognitive WB	Health WB
Senior (Professor) (n=3)	3.67±1.15	4.33±1.15	4.33±1.15	3.67±1.15
Level 1 (n=100)	3.10±1.28	3.27±1.35	3.46±1.26	2.43±1.27
Level 2 & below (n=288)	3.03±1.31	2.88±1.35	3.02±1.29	2.33±1.21
Senior (Associate) (n=9)	3.00±1.41	3.67±1.00	3.67±1.00	3.00±1.41
Ungraded (n=590)	3.02±1.36	3.03±1.34	3.13±1.28	2.56±1.26
<i>F</i>	0.250	2.917	3.200	2.801
<i>p</i>	0.910	0.020*	0.013*	0.025*

The Professional Title variable shows differences across various dimensions of teacher occupational well-being. Data analysis indicates that in Subjective Well-being ( $F=2.917$ ,  $p=0.020$ ), Cognitive Well-being ( $F=3.200$ ,  $p=0.013$ ), and Health Well-being ( $F=2.801$ ,  $p=0.025$ ), there are statistically significant differences among teacher groups with different titles ( $p<0.05$ ). However, differences between title groups in the Social Well-being dimension did not reach a significance level.

**Table 6: Analysis of Variance for Job Position and Occupational Well-being**

Position (Mean ± SD)							
	Cadre (n=64)	Lead Teacher (n=350)	Caregiver (n=163)	Assistant (n=381)	Principal (n=32)	F	p
Social WB	2.69±1.27	3.04±1.35	3.46±1.34	2.87±1.30	3.34±1.21	7.230	0.000**
Subjective WB	2.84±1.38	2.99±1.38	3.46±1.31	2.85±1.29	3.38±1.29	6.904	0.000**
Cognitive WB	3.02±1.23	3.14±1.32	3.47±1.30	2.99±1.23	3.56±1.16	5.145	0.000**

Health WB	2.13±1.16	2.48±1.31	2.80±1.23	2.40±1.20	2.66±1.18	4.487	0.001**
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Job Position shows differences for Social Well-being ( $F=7.230, p=0.000$ ), Subjective Well-being ( $F=6.904, p=0.000$ ), Cognitive Well-being ( $F=5.145, p=0.000$ ), and Health Well-being ( $F=4.487, p=0.001$ ). Job Position presents significance across all four dimensions ( $p<0.05$ ).

**Table 7: Analysis of Variance for Age, Marital Status, Major, Tenure, and Qualification on Willingness to Teach**

Willingness to Teach (Mean ± SD)							
Option:	1.0 (n=318)	2.0 (n=64)	3.0 (n=320)	4.0 (n=35)	5.0 (n=253)	F	p
1. Age	2.21±0.97	1.88±0.95	2.47±1.04	2.14±0.97	2.69±0.92	14.084	0.000
2. Marital	3.48±0.53	3.69±0.53	3.36±0.53	3.66±0.48	3.25±0.49	15.080	0.000
3. Major	2.17±0.62	2.08±0.48	2.22±0.70	2.03±0.57	2.26±0.74	1.993	0.093
4. Tenure	2.48±2.06	1.92±1.77	2.57±2.06	2.40±2.08	2.76±2.09	2.288	0.058
5. Qualif	2.09±0.42	2.02±0.28	2.15±0.48	1.89±0.32	2.25±0.51	8.004	0.000

Willingness to Teach shows significance at the 0.01 level for Age ( $F=14.084, p=0.000$ ), Marital Status ( $F=15.080, p=0.000$ ), and Teacher Qualification ( $F=8.004, p=0.000$ ). Therefore, the Willingness to Teach sample presents significant differences for Age, Marital Status, and Teacher Qualification (3 items), but does not show significant differences for Major and Teaching Tenure (2 items).

### 3.3 Correlation Analysis

**Table 8: Correlation between Willingness to Teach and Occupational Well-being**

		Social WB	Health WB	Subjective WB	Cognitive WB
<b>Willingness to Re-choose</b>	Correlation Coeff.	0.418**	0.319**	0.492**	0.470**
	p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	990	990	990	990
<b>Willingness to Teach</b>	Correlation Coeff.	0.449**	0.323**	0.540**	0.508**
	p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	990	990	990	990

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The four core dimensions of occupational well-being (Social, Health, Subjective, and Cognitive) are all significantly positively associated with the two dimensions of willingness to teach (i.e., Willingness to Teach and Willingness to Re-choose). Specifically, the correlation coefficients for Social Well-being with Willingness to Re-choose and Willingness to Teach are 0.418 and 0.449 respectively; for Health Well-being, 0.319 and 0.323 respectively; for Subjective Well-being, 0.492 and 0.540 respectively; and for Cognitive Well-being, 0.470 and 0.508 respectively. Therefore, the enhancement of occupational well-being can significantly strengthen teachers' willingness to teach and re-choose, with Subjective Well-being having the most significant impact, while the impacts of Cognitive, Social, and Health Well-being are relatively weaker.

### 3.4 Regression Analysis

**Table 9: Regression Analysis of Occupational Well-being on Willingness to Teach (b1)**

	Unstd. Coeff (B)	Std. Error	Std. Coeff (Beta)	t	p	VIF	Tolerance
Constant	0.519	0.118	-	4.396	0.000**	-	
Health WB	0.093	0.035	0.076	2.633	0.009**	1.271	0.787
Subjective WB	0.338	0.042	0.299	8.092	0.000**	2.065	0.484
Cognitive WB	0.229	0.044	0.193	5.211	0.000**	2.077	0.481
Social WB	0.168	0.037	0.147	4.478	0.000**	1.640	0.610
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.350						
Adj <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.348						
<i>F</i>	132.680		<i>p</i> =0.000				
<i>Durbin-Watson</i>	2.034						

Note: Dependent Variable = b1 (Willingness to Teach); \* *p*<0.05 \*\* *p*<0.01.

This study employed multiple linear regression analysis to explore the impact effects of occupational well-being dimensions on b1. The regression analysis results show that among the four predictor variables, regarding specific regression coefficients, Health Well-being (Beta=0.076, *t*=2.633, *p*=0.009), Subjective Well-being (Beta=0.299, *t*=8.092, *p*<0.001), Cognitive Well-being (Beta=0.193, *t*=5.211, *p*<0.001), and Social Well-being (Beta=0.147, *t*=4.478, *p*<0.001) all have significant positive predictive effects on willingness to teach. Among them, Subjective Well-being has the most significant positive predictive effect on b1, indicating that the enhancement of Subjective Well-being can effectively promote the growth of b1.

**Table 10: Regression Analysis of Occupational Well-being on Willingness to Re-choose (b2)**

	Unstd. Coeff (B)	Std. Error	Std. Coeff (Beta)	t	p	VIF	Tolerance
Constant	0.488	0.124	-	3.925	0.000**	-	
Health WB	0.119	0.037	0.097	3.213	0.001**	1.271	0.787
Subjective WB	0.293	0.044	0.255	6.665	0.000**	2.065	0.484
Cognitive WB	0.220	0.046	0.183	4.757	0.000**	2.077	0.481
Social WB	0.158	0.039	0.137	4.011	0.000**	1.640	0.610
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.300						
Adj <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.297						
<i>F</i>	105.364		<i>p</i> =0.000				
<i>Durbin-Watson</i>	2.045						

Note: Dependent Variable = b2 (Willingness to Re-choose).

This study explored the impact effects of occupational well-being dimensions on b2 through multiple linear regression analysis. The results indicate that among the four predictor variables, the analysis of specific regression coefficients demonstrates that Health Well-being (Beta=0.097, *t*=3.213, *p*=0.001), Subjective Well-being (Beta=0.255, *t*=6.665, *p*<0.001), Cognitive Well-being (Beta=0.183, *t*=4.757, *p*<0.001), and Social Well-being (Beta=0.137, *t*=4.011, *p*<0.001)

all have significant positive predictive effects on willingness to teach (b2). Specifically, the predictive effect of Subjective Well-being is the most prominent, and the enhancement of Subjective Well-being can effectively promote the growth of b2.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 General Analysis of Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-being and Willingness to Teach

#### 4.1.1 Analysis of the Overall Situation of Occupational Well-being

Descriptive statistics for preschool teachers' occupational well-being show that the means for Social, Subjective, and Cognitive Well-being are all higher than the median of 3 (the scale is a 5-point Likert scale). This aligns with the findings of Wang Xuan and Yang Mengting, who posit that the mean scores of the four dimensions, from high to low, are Cognitive, Social, Subjective, and Health Well-being (Wang, 2023). Consequently, preschool teachers perceive relatively high well-being in terms of relationships with principals and colleagues, as well as work purpose, whereas the mean for Health Well-being is lower than the other three dimensions. These results differ from other studies. The lowest score for Health Well-being relates to job characteristics, pressure management, and lack of self-care. Regarding job characteristics, the intensity of preschool teachers' work is high; they must constantly attend to children's safety and emotions, remaining in a state of tension for extended periods, leading to physical fatigue. Additionally, beyond teaching, they must prepare lessons and decorate classrooms, leaving little rest time to recover energy. In terms of pressure management, teachers face various stressors such as teaching outcomes and parental expectations. A lack of self-care is evident as teachers often focus their energy on the children and work, lacking habits of regular exercise and investment in health maintenance, which affects their occupational well-being.

#### 4.1.2 Analysis of the Overall Situation of Willingness to Teach

The mean values for the dimensions of willingness to teach range between 2.839 and 2.996, indicating a low willingness to teach, consistent with studies by Zhou Jing, Zhou Zheng, Han Yue, and Wang Hui (Zhou et al., 2023). This may be due to weak economic compensation and job security reducing willingness. On one hand, preschool teachers' salaries are generally lower than those of teachers at other educational stages; specifically, private kindergarten and non-tenured teachers have meagre incomes. Research finds that monthly salaries for preschool teachers in underdeveloped areas of Guangdong can be less than 3,000 RMB, insufficient to cover living costs. On the other hand, the scarcity of established posts (*Bianzhi*) in public kindergartens and narrow channels for professional title promotion lead to a lack of confidence in long-term career planning and a prevalent "temporary worker" mentality. High-intensity work requires teachers to undertake multiple roles: teaching, caregiving, safety supervision, parental communication, and administration. Working over 10 hours a day has become the norm, and the dilemma of "being both a teacher and a nanny" consumes vast energy. Meanwhile, the high sensitivity of child safety responsibilities keeps teachers in a psychological state of "walking on thin ice"; accidents often lead to parental accountability, public blame, or even legal risks. Heavy non-teaching tasks further squeeze professional dedication; for example, frequent inspections, form-filling, and environmental creation requirements trap teachers in a quagmire of "administrative formalism", causing a continuous loss of professional achievement (Wang, 2024).

## 4.2 Analysis of Demographic Differences

### 4.2.1 Analysis of Differences in Occupational Well-being

Demographic variable analysis reveals significant differences in occupational well-being based on teacher qualification, professional title, and job position.

There is a significant difference in occupational well-being based on the possession of a teacher qualification. One underlying reason may be the influence of educational background, as only students with a junior college degree or above can sit for the qualification exam, suggesting that the level of professional knowledge reserve affects well-being. Furthermore, teachers holding qualifications show the greatest impact on Social and Subjective Well-being; obtaining a qualification may increase self-efficacy, thereby enhancing willingness to teach.

Professional title also shows significant differences. Factors such as education, teaching skills, and work ability are key to title assessment, aiming to boost enthusiasm. Data analysis shows teachers with senior titles score highest across well-being dimensions. In terms of work engagement, senior teachers score highest in all dimensions. This is likely because senior preschool teachers are typically over 40 and may hold leadership positions (principals), indicating recognition of their ability. Thus, they not only earn higher wages but also receive respect and love within the kindergarten, allowing them to feel well-being from all aspects of work. Ungraded teachers score lowest in the cognitive dimension; they are generally new entrants, younger, and with less experience, leading to less realisation of professional value and responsibility, making it harder to focus deeply on work (Wang & Mao, 2024).

Job position shows significant differences. Principals or vice-principals have the highest occupational well-being. This is likely because high positions recognise work ability; they enjoy higher wages and respect, thus feeling well-being across

the board. Conversely, assistant teachers have the lowest well-being across dimensions, possibly because their work is complex, involves more caregiving duties, and offers less agency and slower promotion, leading to reduced well-being.

#### 4.2.2 Analysis of Differences in Willingness to Teach

Willingness to teach varies significantly with age. Teachers under 30 have the lowest willingness. This may be because teachers aged 30 and under have shallow seniority and cannot yet deeply appreciate the meaning of "responsibility". For them, the job may currently just be a tool for making a living, so the sense of value and responsibility derived from work is relatively low. This group includes new teachers who need time and energy to familiarise themselves with workflows and environments and to manage relationships with senior staff; they lack experience and skills in teaching and home-school communication. Teachers aged 51-60 are not only in the rising stage of their careers but also in the golden period of life. Regardless of career or family achievements, or entering a new stage, they retain passion and drive for work. They may still be on the path to realising educational aspirations and can handle difficult issues with ease. For them, work is full of value and meaning, and they can engage deeply.

Willingness to teach varies significantly with marital status. Married teachers score significantly higher than unmarried teachers in willingness to teach and its dimensions. Marriage may provide individuals with a sense of security, offering support and encouragement during difficulties. Married teachers have established families and can confide in family members about work issues, receiving support. particularly, female teachers who have children may better feel the meaning and value of preschool education. They invest the "maternal love" brought by their own children into their work, spreading "maternal radiance" to the class, making them more willing to engage in the industry. However, unmarried teachers must consider their relationships and marriage alongside work. Furthermore, some kindergartens, when assigning tasks or overtime, may prioritise the situation of married teachers with children and reduce their load, while unmarried teachers, unencumbered by family and children, may be assigned more tasks. Additionally, regarding unmarried teachers, kindergarten leaders or senior teachers, acting on the principle of training newcomers, may assign opportunities like open classes and lectures to them, which brings accompanying pressure (Zhou et al., 2023).

#### 4.3 Correlation Analysis of Preschool Teachers' Occupational Well-being and Willingness to Teach

Correlation analysis results show a significant positive correlation between occupational well-being and willingness to teach; the two influence and promote each other, consistent with Huang, Zhang, and Chen (2023). Further regression analysis indicates that the regression coefficient of occupational well-being on willingness to teach is very distinct, and the T-test level is significant, showing the independent variable has a significant impact. This result may be based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where higher self-actualisation needs appear only after basic physiological needs are met, driving advanced needs. The logic is similar for preschool teachers: satisfying factors like physiological needs, safety, belonging, and respect increases well-being, which in turn influences willingness to teach. Eventually, in the self-actualisation phase, willingness to teach grows continuously, and more well-being is experienced (Huang et al., 2023; Zhang, 2024). Because they feel more joy in daily teaching activities, they can obtain positive emotions from the profession, hold their posts more firmly, and the continuous improvement of well-being affects long-term willingness. When negative burnout emotions decrease, it is easier to enhance well-being from organisational, collegial, and self-identity aspects.

Therefore, this relationship not only concerns individual career development but directly affects the stability and improvement of preschool education quality. Data analysis of well-being and willingness suggests that improving well-being influences willingness, forming a virtuous cycle of "Well-being → Motivation Reinforcement → Sustained Willingness". Willingness to teach has a feeding-back effect on well-being; teachers with high willingness actively seek professional growth and improve teaching efficacy, further enhancing well-being. The interaction between well-being and willingness naturally generates the sustained momentum of "willingness to teach, enjoyment in teaching, and excellence in teaching".

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Research Conclusion

Occupational well-being is a core indicator for measuring the satisfaction and sense of achievement individuals gain in the professional environment, whilst willingness to teach reflects teachers' identification with and persistence in educational work. Data analysis shows a significant positive correlation between the two: the stronger the occupational well-being, the more teachers tend to invest in educational work long-term; conversely, insufficient well-being easily triggers occupational burnout and the risk of attrition.

#### 5.2 Educational Recommendations

##### 5.2.1 Principals should change management concepts from "Managers" to "Supporters"

Data research shows a large variance deviation in principals' understanding of teachers' needs and confidence in teachers' professionalism, which affects teachers' well-being and willingness. Preschool teachers' well-being stems from being

respected, supported, and seen. Therefore, principals must shift their management philosophy from "managers" to "supporters". Principals can help teachers achieve self-value while nurturing children through institutional guarantees and emotional care. Only when teachers feel the warmth and meaning of the profession can they pass this happiness to the children, forming a virtuous cycle. On one hand, principals should construct an emotional support system: regularly having one-on-one talks with teachers, listening to needs and confusion, resolving problems promptly, and encouraging the formation of mutual aid groups to share teaching experiences and emotional troubles. On the other hand, principals should create a cultural atmosphere of respect and trust, avoiding "authoritative" management. They should treat teachers as equals, reduce criticism, use more encouraging language, and allow teachers to try new methods in teaching, giving guidance even if they fail. Additionally, administrators should regularly organise educational philosophy sharing sessions and revisit the meaning of the teaching profession to improve kindergarten education quality.

### 5.2.2 Focus on the Professional Identity and Achievement of the Teacher Group

As the backbone of preschool education, teachers' professional identity and sense of achievement directly affect education quality and workforce development. Data analysis shows that preschool teachers with non-normal majors have higher occupational well-being than those with normal or preschool education majors. Based on this, it is necessary to enhance professional identity and achievement to boost well-being. On one hand, clarify professional value recognition: regularly commend teachers' teaching contributions, grant teachers teaching autonomy (e.g., curriculum design, activity planning), and give certain teaching flexibility to improve their professional literacy and ability. On the other hand, establish a career development ladder. The research analysis indicates that preschool teachers face confusion and lack of planning regarding their future career development. Kindergartens should clarify teacher promotion paths (e.g., from assistant teacher to lead teacher to research group leader) (Liu, 2024; Zhou et al., 2023).

### 5.2.3 Effectively Enhance the Occupational Well-being of Public Kindergarten Teachers

To effectively enhance occupational well-being, kindergartens should take measures to reduce the workload of public preschool teachers. Kindergartens should scientifically plan daily educational activities, optimise workflows, and reduce unnecessary tasks to maintain positive work attitudes and enhance teaching willingness. Administrators should strictly abide by working hour regulations, avoid encroaching on teachers' personal time, and ensure reasonable normal working hours and sufficient rest. Furthermore, for any situation requiring overtime, kindergartens should provide corresponding compensation or leave in lieu according to the law, to safeguard teachers' legal rights and reduce the negative impact of excessive working hours on well-being. Secondly, society and parents should hold reasonable professional expectations for public preschool teachers. High-quality kindergartens should play a demonstrative role, but excessive external expectations can bring huge pressure and lower willingness to teach. Therefore, education administrative departments, kindergartens, and parents must establish reasonable professional expectations and requirements for teachers, avoiding negative impacts from high expectations. Administrators must also further clarify the specific content and form of teachers' work (Hu, 2023).

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