Journal of Education and Culture Studies
ISSN 2573-0401 (Print) ISSN 2573-041X (Online)
Vol. 8, No. 4, 2024
www.scholink.org/ojs/index.php/jecs

Original Paper

Investigation and Research on the Demands of Parents of Infants Aged 0-3 for the Teaching Staff in Nursery Care Institutions —Taking District A of Qingdao City as an Example

Huiwen Zheng[1*], Haiyan Chen[1] & Jingru Yan[1]

[1] School of Education, Qingdao Hengxing University, Qingdao, China

[*] Huiwen Zheng, School of Education, Qingdao Hengxing University, Qingdao, China

Received: October 25, 2024 Accepted: November 23, 2024 Online Published: November 28, 2024

doi:10.22158/jecs.v8n4p138 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v8n4p138

Abstract

In recent years, the national attention towards the construction of the teaching contingent for nursery care services has been escalating annually. Families with multiple children are in an acute exigency for high-caliber teaching staff in nursery care services. Nevertheless, the professional proficiency of the teaching staff engaged in infant nursery care services still cries out for enhancement. Hence, this research zeroes in on parents of infants aged 0-3 as the research subjects and deploys the questionnaire survey method and the interview approach to endeavor to dissect the current state of the parental requirements for the teaching staff in nursery care institutions.

This research principally employs the questionnaire method to probe into the parental requisites for the teaching staff in nursery care institutions and the extant circumstances of the teaching staff in five nursery care institutions in Qingdao City, supplemented by interviews. The findings manifest that there exist both overall and individual variances in the parental demands for the teaching staff in nursery care institutions. With respect to the professional echelon of teachers in nursery care institutions, factors such as the length of service, educational attainment, institutional nature, and the monthly age of infants all exert a conspicuous influence on the professional caliber of teachers.

Keywords

infants aged 0-3, nursery care services, parental requirements

1. Introduction

The data gleaned from the seventh national population census reveals that the average annual growth rate of China's population has been on a consecutive downward trajectory, dwindling from 2.09% in

1982 to a mere 0.53% in 2021, concomitantly accompanied by a persistently subdued fertility intention among Chinese residents. Surveys orchestrated by luminaries such as Yin Wenquan have unearthed that the principal impediments to the fertility aspiration of Chinese denizens hinge upon "insufficient time for child rearing", "transformations in parenting paradigms", and "economic duress" (Chen Jingying, Ma, 2022). In accordance with the pertinent survey by the National Health Commission in 2021, there are approximately 30 million infants within the 0-3 age bracket in China, among which one-third of the infant households evince a relatively potent exigency for nursery care amenities. However, the current enrollment rate of infants aged 0-3 in nursery care establishments languishes at merely around 5.5%. In the contemporary era, the number of dual-income families is burgeoning, and a multitude of parents find themselves incapacitated to assume full-time custodial responsibilities for infants under 3 years of age. Moreover, with the prospective promulgation of the policy of deferring retirement, grandparents are progressively advancing in age upon retirement, thereby precipitating a diminution in the care resources they can dispense. Owing to the aforesaid rationales, an escalating number of parents incline towards the option of enlisting their children in nursery care institutions for the procurement of scientific early childcare. Ergo, this study endeavors to conduct an investigative analysis of the parental requisites for nursery care institution services at a microscopic level, thereby augmenting the germane research on nursery care for infants aged 0-3 in China and proffering an efficacious reference for relevant departments and nursery care institutions to astutely apprehend the prevalent demands of parents for entrusting their children to nursery care.

2. Method

This research resorts to the questionnaire survey modality for the acquisition of relevant intelligence regarding parents' demands for nursery care services. The survey respondents comprise the parents of infants aged 0-3 in District B of Qingdao City. The data amassing was effectuated via the random dissemination of questionnaires online. A total of 130 questionnaires were dispensed to the parents of infants, with 120 being retrieved. Subsequently, 12 invalid questionnaires were expunged, culminating in a tally of 108 valid questionnaires and an effective recovery rate of 90%. The questionnaire was adapted from the "Questionnaire on the Demands of Parents of Infants Aged 0-3 for Nursery Care Teaching Staff" compiled by Wang Yingshu. The content is bifurcated into two segments: one pertains to the parents' demands for nursery care modalities apropos infants at disparate age gradations, and the other focuses on the parents' demands for the substance of nursery care services. Both segments espouse the Likert five-point scoring schema, whereby a loftier score betokens a more vehement parental demand for the corresponding item.

3. Analysis of the Current State of the Demands of Parents of Infants Aged 0-3 for the Teaching Staff in Nursery Care Institutions

3.1 The Overall Current Situation of the Demands of Parents of Infants Aged 0-3 for the Teaching Staff in Nursery Care Institutions

In order to comprehensively apprehend the extant circumstances of teachers in nursery care institutions, a data statistical scrutiny will be conducted from four perspectives: firstly, establishing rational allocation benchmarks for nursery care instructors; secondly, probing into diversified allocation modalities of nursery care pedagogues; thirdly, centering on the endowment of professional aptitude elements of nursery care tutors; fourthly, scrutinizing the constancy of the allocation of the teaching corps. These statistical revelations will disclose the fundamental panorama of the teaching staff in nursery care institutions. The particulars are manifested in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Outcomes of the Overall and Each Facet of the Current State of the Teaching Staff in Nursery Care Institutions

Name	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation
Allocation Criterion	1	4.86	3.231	0.575
Model Allocation	1	5	3.058	0.912
Allocation of Professional Competence Elements	1.9	4.4	3.279	0.475
Allocation Stability	1.7	4.7	3.211	0.522

In accordance with the outcomes presented in Table 1, the mean value of the allocation criterion is 3.231, the standard deviation is 0.575, the maximum value is 4.86, and the minimum value is 1, signifying that there exists a substantial internal disparity within the dimension of the allocation criterion. The mean value of the model allocation is 3.058, and the standard deviation is 0.912. The relatively sizeable standard deviation implies a significant internal divergence in the model allocation. The mean value of the allocation of professional competence elements is 3.279, and the standard deviation is 0.475, with a relatively minor internal discrepancy. The mean value of the allocation of professional competence elements is 3.279, the standard deviation is 0.475, the minimum value is 1.9, and the maximum value is 4.4. The mean value of the allocation stability is 3.211, and the standard deviation is 0.522, the maximum value is 4.7, and the minimum value is 1.7. It is discerned that the scores of sundry indicators of the teaching staff situation in nursery care institutions are clustered within the range of 3 to 4 points, which can be construed as lying between mediocre and satisfactory on the evaluation scale. It is worthy of note that the evaluation dimension of professional competence exhibits an exemplary performance, with an average score attaining 3.279.

3.2 Disparity Analysis of the Current State of the Teaching Staff in Nursery Care Institutions

This research has executed a comprehensive scrutiny of the circumstances of the teaching staff in nursery care institutions and performed differential examinations from seven pivotal dimensions, namely institutional genre, teacher's age, educational pedigree, professional domain, operational tenure, and enrollment capacity.

3.2.1 Differential Analysis of Varied Types of Nursery Care Institutions

Table 2. Differential Analysis of Nursery Care Institutions with Regard to Different Institutional Natures

Analysis Items	Items	Mean ± Standard Deviation	F	p
Allocation Standard	Public	3.457 ± 0.430	27.104	0.000*
	Private	3.240 ± 0.578		
	Others	2.630 ± 0.473		
Allocation Mode	Public	3.300 ± 0.938	7.219	0.001*
	Private	3.000 ± 0.874		
	Others	2.556 ± 0.698		
Allocation of Professional Ability Elements	Public	3.461 ± 0.322	36.661	0.000*
	Private	3.327 ± 0.448		
	Others	2.707 ± 0.433		
Allocation Stability	Public	3.373 ± 0.375	32.428	0.000*
	Private	3.304 ± 0.487		
	Others	2.596 ± 0.489		

Upon dissecting the data in Table 2, it can be discerned that in each assessment dimension, the one-way ANOVA for diverse institutional types uncovers conspicuous discrepancies. Specifically, the analytical outcomes of the allocation standard ($F=27.104$, $P < 0.01$) manifest that there exist statistically significant disparities in the allocation standard among different institutions, with the mean value of the allocation standard of public institutions attaining the zenith. Additionally, the assays of model allocation ($F=7.219$, $P < 0.01$), allocation stability ($F=32.428$, $P < 0.01$), and allocation of professional ability elements ($F=36.661$, $P < 0.01$) also denote that the nature of the institution exerts a substantial influence on these aspects. Public institutions display the highest average values in these three indices, namely, the model allocation, allocation of professional ability elements, and allocation stability are all of superior quality.

3.2.2 Differential Analysis of the Ages of Teachers in Different Nursery Care Institutions

Table 3. Differential Analysis of the Teaching Staff in Nursery Care Institutions in Light of Different Ages

Analysis Items	Items	Mean ± Standard Deviation	F	p
Allocation Standard	Under 30 years old	3.273±0.555	0.252	0.908
	Between 30 and 40 years old	3.197±0.603		
	Between 40 and 50 years old	3.180±0.553		
	Between 50 and 60 years old	3.286±0.628		
	Over 60 years old	3.327±0.736		
Allocation Mode	Under 30 years old	3.109±0.975	1.023	0.397
	Between 30 and 40 years old	2.833±0.853		
	Between 40 and 50 years old	3.128±0.801		
	Between 50 and 60 years old	3.300±0.949		
	Over 60 years old	3.286±1.254		
Allocation of Professional Ability Elements	Under 30 years old	3.340±0.429	0.539	0.707
	Between 30 and 40 years old	3.207±0.471		
	Between 40 and 50 years old	3.272±0.511		
	Between 50 and 60 years old	3.330±0.552		
	Over 60 years old	3.200±0.597		
Allocation Stability	Under 30 years old	3.342±0.504	1.707	0.151
	Between 30 and 40 years old	3.093±0.518		
	Between 40 and 50 years old	3.151±0.505		
	Between 50 and 60 years old	3.130±0.598		
	Over 60 years old	3.329±0.579		

According to the data shown in Table 3, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on different age groups at each level to explore possible differences. The results showed that the analyses of the allocation standard (F value=0.252, P value > 0.05), model allocation (F value=1.023, P value > 0.05), allocation of professional ability elements (F value=0.539, P value > 0.05), and allocation stability (F value=1.707, P value > 0.05) did not reach the significance level. This indicates that, in these aspects, the differences among different age groups are not obvious.

3.2.3 Differential Analysis of the Educational Attainments of Teachers in Different Nursery Care Institutions

Table 4. Differential Analysis of the Teaching Staff in Nursery Care Institutions Regarding Different Educational Attainments

Analysis Items	Items	Mean ± Standard Deviation	F	p
Allocation Standard	Junior high school or below	2.935±0.754	1.561	0.201
	Technical secondary school / vocational high school / senior high school / technical school	3.208±0.671		
	Junior college / undergraduate	3.253±0.508		
	Postgraduate and above	3.482±0.596		
Allocation Mode	Junior high school or below	3.364±1.027	1.243	0.296
	Technical secondary school / vocational high school / senior high school / technical school	2.829±0.923		
	Junior college / undergraduate	3.101±0.898		
	Postgraduate and above	3.125±0.835		
Allocation of Professional Ability Elements	Junior high school or below	2.909±0.650	3.294	0.022*
	Technical secondary school / vocational high school / senior high school / technical school	3.211±0.439		
	Junior college / undergraduate	3.331±0.455		
	Postgraduate and above	3.438±0.410		
Allocation Stability	Junior high school or below	2.918±0.688	3.551	0.016*
	Technical secondary school / vocational high school / senior high school / technical school	3.043±0.542		
	Junior college / undergraduate	3.288±0.470		
	Postgraduate and above	3.388±0.572		

According to the data shown in Table 4, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on individuals with different educational levels in each dimension to explore possible differences. The results show that there are no significant differences among respondents with different educational levels in terms of allocation standard (F=1.561, P>0.05) and model allocation (F=1.243, P>0.05). However, significant differences are observed in the allocation of professional ability elements (F=3.294, P<0.05) and allocation stability (F=3.551, P<0.05), indicating that educational background does affect the perception of professional ability and allocation stability. Notably, respondents with postgraduate degrees or above show the highest evaluations in these two aspects.

3.2.4 Differential Analysis of Teachers' Majors in Different Nursery Care Institutions

Table 5. Differential Analysis of Teaching Staff's Majors in Nursery Care Institutions

Analysis Items	Items	Mean ± Standard Deviation	F	p
Allocation Standard	Preschool Education Major	3.416±0.523	16.818	0.000*
	Non-preschool Education Normal Major	3.271±0.495		
	Non-normal Major	2.752±0.575		
Allocation Mode	Preschool Education Major	3.333±0.810	7.589	0.001*
	Non-preschool Education Normal Major	2.983±0.855		
	Non-normal Major	2.600±1.037		
Allocation of Professional Ability Elements	Preschool Education Major	3.474±0.369	18.258	0.000*
	Non-preschool Education Normal Major	3.249±0.434		
	Non-normal Major	2.907±0.532		
Allocation Stability	Preschool Education Major	3.373±0.412	13.107	0.000*
	Non-preschool Education Normal Major	3.225±0.446		
	Non-normal Major	2.827±0.673		

According to the data shown in Tables 6, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on different majors in each dimension to explore possible differences. The results show that there are significant differences in allocation standard (F value is 16.818, P value is less than 0.01), model allocation (F value is 7.589, P value is less than 0.01), allocation of professional ability elements (F value is 18.258, P value is less than 0.01) and allocation stability (F value is 13.107, P value is less than 0.01), indicating that there are obvious differences among different educational backgrounds in these aspects. Notably, respondents with preschool education majors show the highest levels in these four dimensions, namely, allocation standard, model allocation, allocation of professional ability elements, and allocation stability.

3.2.5 Differential Analysis of the Operating Time of Different Nursery Care Institutions

Table 6. Differential Analysis of the Operating Time of Different Nursery Care Institutions

Analysis Items	Items	Mean ± Standard Deviation	F	p
Allocation Standard	Within 1 year	3.024±0.688	3.15	0.027*
	1-5 years	3.124±0.643		
	5-10 years	3.359±0.443		
	Over 10 years	3.405±0.447		
Allocation Mode	Within 1 year	2.778±1.003	1.429	0.237
	1-5 years	3.000±0.992		

	5-10 years	3.102±0.895		
	Over 10 years	3.333±0.565		
Allocation of Professional Ability Elements	Within 1 year	3.117±0.512	2.845	0.040*
	1-5 years	3.194±0.562		
	5-10 years	3.386±0.339		
	Over 10 years	3.404±0.376		
Allocation Stability	Within 1 year	3.167±0.622	2.223	0.088
	1-5 years	3.095±0.592		
	5-10 years	3.300±0.430		
	Over 10 years	3.358±0.354		

According to the data shown in Table 6, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on different startup times in each dimension to explore their potential differences. The results show that there are significant differences in the allocation standard ($F=3.15$, $P < 0.05$) and the allocation of professional ability elements ($F=2.845$, $P < 0.05$), which means that groups with different operating years have obvious differences in these aspects. Especially, groups with longer operating times show higher levels in the allocation standard and professional ability elements. However, for the model allocation ($F=1.429$, $P > 0.05$) and the allocation stability ($F=2.223$, $P > 0.05$), respondents with different educational backgrounds do not show significant differences in a statistical sense, that is, the impact of educational level on professional ability and allocation stability is not obvious.

3.2.6 Differential Analysis of the Enrollment Scale of Different Nursery Care Institutions

Table 7. Differential Analysis of Nursery Care Institutions on Different Enrollment Scales

Analysis Items	Items	Mean ± Standard Deviation	F	p
Allocation Standard	Within 10 people	3.369±0.579	4.838	0.003*
	10-20 people	3.343±0.435		
	20-30 people	3.121±0.629		
	Over 30 people	2.819±0.699		
Allocation Mode	Within 10 people	3.161±0.820	2.699	0.048*
	10-20 people	3.177±0.859		
	20-30 people	3.022±0.892		
	Over 30 people	2.467±1.187		
Allocation of Professional Ability Elements	Within 10 people	3.432±0.354	6.251	0.001*
	10-20 people	3.381±0.428		
	20-30 people	3.144±0.520		
	Over 30 people	2.947±0.513		

Allocation Stability	Within 10 people	3.471±0.478	7.514	0.000*
	10-20 people	3.273±0.446		
	20-30 people	3.076±0.570		
	Over 30 people	2.820±0.439		

It can be discerned from Table 7 that a one-way ANOVA was conducted across different majors in each dimension to scrutinize their disparities. The results manifest that conspicuous differences exist in the allocation standard ($F=4.838$, $P < 0.01$), model allocation ($F=2.699$, $P < 0.05$), allocation of professional ability elements ($F=6.251$, $P < 0.01$), and allocation stability ($F=7.514$, $P < 0.01$). Varying educational levels exhibit pronounced distinctions in respect of setting benchmarks, allocation modalities, distribution of professional proficiency elements, and stability. The fewer the number of individuals, the more elevated the allocation standard, model allocation, allocation of professional ability elements, and allocation stability.

Through the aforesaid research outcomes, it is evident that the educational backgrounds of the teaching corps in contemporary nursery care institutions are heterogeneous, and the professional echelons of teachers are also highly variable. Teachers with an educational attainment of junior high school or below are marginally deficient in professional acumen and stability. Teachers not majoring in preschool education still necessitate enhancements in their performance concerning compliance with standards, application of models, professional aptitudes, and stability. Nursery care institutions with a substantial enrollment scale are beleaguered by issues such as a paucity of teaching staff and complex management. In order to gain a more profound understanding of the requisites of parents of infants aged 0-3 for the teaching staff in nursery care institutions, predicated upon the above research into the current state of nursery care institutions, an inquiry into the demands of parents of infants aged 0-3 for the teaching staff in nursery care institutions was initiated.

4. Factors Influencing the Demands of Parents of Infants Aged 0-3 for Nursery Care Services

4.1 Nursery Care Institutions Conforming to the Prevailing Trend

In accordance with the antecedent questionnaire survey, it can be ascertained that the current operational paradigms of nursery care institutions are rather monotonous, preponderantly institutional nursery care and full-day care. From the interviews, it can be gleaned that the root cause of this phenomenon lies in the fact that nursery care institutions are wont to follow the herd without delving deeply and genuinely into the exigencies of parents. Rather than proffering diversified teaching staff allotments in consonance with the demands of parents, they dispense nursery care services based on the preponderant operational modalities in the market and which nursery care modality is more lucrative.

The following are excerpts from the interviews with certain institutions:

Institution Head B1: When I was inaugurating this institution, the majority of institutions in the market were engaged in full-day care, and thus I also elected to offer full-day care. Moreover, full-day care is

more remunerative.

It is patent that the heads of nursery care institutions are inclined to follow the crowd without formulating correct business precepts and assiduously comprehending the nursery care demands of parents.

4.2 Deficiencies in the Current Access Mechanism and Insufficiencies in Professional Training for Nursery Care Teachers

Notwithstanding the fact that the State Council has enunciated explicit stipulations regarding the professional credentials and health status of teachers in nursery care institutions, when contrasted with the Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers, its binding potency and operational feasibility are comparatively feeble. In numerous instances, on account of the dearth of teaching personnel in nursery care institutions, the requisites imposed by the State Council for teacher recruitment are relatively lax, and there exist no obligatory stipulations concerning teacher training, employment, and educational attainment. Secondly, the training is customarily orchestrated by the institutions themselves sans a fixed timetable, and the professional caliber of the training has yet to be authenticated, with the zeal of teachers for learning remaining lackluster.

4.3 The Professional Proficiency of Nursery Care Teaching Staff Demands Further Augmentation

The caliber of nursery care teachers in the present market is heterogeneous, and the professional erudition level of teachers still cries out for enhancement. The preponderant majority of teachers majoring in preschool education and commencing work in nursery care institutions are either provisional substitute instructors or haphazardly dispatched to nursery classes. Albeit their professional tutelage encompasses childcare theory, it is deficient in practical implementation and pertinence, bereft of systematic hands-on training and evaluation, and frequently merely lingers at the rudimentary care stratum. With respect to the qualifications of nursery care teachers, public kindergartens acknowledge kindergarten teacher qualification certificates, yet this is not entirely germane since such certificates are principally designed for children above the age of three and diverge substantially from the idiosyncratic requisites of infants aged 0-3. At present, teachers in nursery care institutions evince an inadequate comprehension of the developmental epochs of infants aged 0-3 and are incapable of furnishing adaptive care and education, which directly impinges upon the holistic quality of the teaching contingent. Some gravitate towards a care modality reminiscent of baby sitters, while others incline towards the early education paradigm of kindergartens, thereby falling short of fulfilling the expectations of parents of infants aged 0-3.

5. Discussion

5.1 Foster Correct Business Philosophies and Ground on the Genuine Requirements of Parents

The personnel and administrators of nursery care institutions are required to construct a knowledge framework from both theoretical and practical dimensions, continuously enhance their capabilities, and formulate proper concepts regarding child-rearing and management. Based on sound business

principles, it is essential to reevaluate the demands of parents and the child-care services offered by nursery care institutions, constantly attend to the actual needs of parents with infants aged 0-3, categorize these needs systematically, and guarantee a more diversified deployment of nursery education staff.

5.2 Optimize the Access Mechanism for Nursery Care Teachers and Intensify Professional Education and Training

The professional proficiency of the teaching staff in nursery care institutions is of vital significance for the formation of the teaching contingent and the provision of high-quality nursery care services. Firstly, the most significant criterion is the access qualification. Currently, China is still in the process of exploring such access qualifications. Most child-care institutions have acquired relevant credentials, yet there are still cases of operating without licenses. Consequently, it is urgent to define strict professional norms to enhance the service quality of the early-education sector.

Nursery care institutions must also formulate comprehensive training blueprints to facilitate the continuous professional growth of teachers. Training plans encompass induction training and in-service training. The aim of induction training is to ensure that educators are well-versed in the regulatory knowledge related to child-care and augment their practical skills. The training content will be tailored according to the teaching tenure of the teachers. For novice teachers with 1-3 years of teaching experience, the training emphasis is on assisting them to integrate into the role of a teacher and address the challenges in teaching and daily life. For experienced teachers with 5-8 years of teaching experience, who have usually adapted to educational routines but may suffer from job burnout, the training at this stage focuses on alleviating their professional weariness and elevating job satisfaction.

5.3 Offer Diversified Nursery Care Services and Develop a More Flexible Supply of Teaching Resources

Parents anticipate that nursery care institutions for children aged 0-3 possess a rich and varied teaching workforce. However, in practice, various provinces and cities in China generally depend on kindergarten teachers from public kindergartens, educators from early-education centers, and nannies or baby-sitters, which frequently fails to fully meet the expectations of parents. In some developed regions of China, in order to enhance the quality of nursery care, they have adopted mature child-rearing concepts from Taiwan, China and overseas, and implemented more professional and diversified teacher-training plans in accordance with domestic policies, thereby enriching and reinforcing the teaching staff of the nursery care industry.

References

Chen Jingying, & Ma Jianqing. (2022). Causes of the Youth's Low Fertility Phenomenon under the Three-child Policy and Solutions. *China Youth Study*, *2022*(3), 31-36.

Hu Malin, & Cai Yingqi. (2021). A Study on the Value Orientation Changes of China's Infant Care Policies for 0-3-year-old Infants. *Education Research Monthly*, *2021*(10), 40-48.

Liu Jinhua. (2019). How to Make Infant Care Services Standardized and Diversified—On the Development and Promotion of Shanghai Infant Care Service Institutions from the Perspective of Industry Associations. *Educator*, *2019*(35), 64-65.

Zhao Meng, & Li Juan. (2020). The Enlightenment of the Training Mode of Early-childhood Teachers Aged 0-3 of the International Montessori Society on the Training of Early-childhood Education Professionals in China. *Occupation*, *2020*(30), 51-53.