

Inspection on Reality of Kindergarten Teachers' Educational Behaviors

—A Case Study in China

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Abstract

The research selects 20 kindergarten teachers in urban and rural areas in Chongqing as the samples and adopts time sampling observation method to investigate into kindergarten teachers' educational behaviors from seven perspectives, *i.e.* education & teaching, participation into children's activities, daily behavioral management, observation& monitoring, custody and emotional expression, teachers' daily activities and teachers' personal activities. Research results show that kindergarten teachers' educational behaviors have improved better than before and become more and more reasonable. However, there are still some problems, such as excessive teaching and requirements, inadequate listening to children's ideas and stimulation of their initiatives, low effectiveness of evaluation on children's behaviors, excessive orders and interventions in daily management, inadequate emotional exchanges between teachers and children, insufficient care for children's individual demands, etc.

Keywords

Kindergarten Teachers, Educational Behaviors, Professional Qualities

1. Introduction

Educational behaviors refer to the activities or actions that teachers demonstrate in actual education. They are the total sum of teachers' educational methodologies, actions and approaches as well as external manifestations of teachers' educational concepts [1]. Teachers' educational behaviors directly interact with children and exert extremely important effects on children's development. At the same time, "it can not only provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their own educational practices but also stimulate teachers to contemplate on their own educational concepts so as to improve their qualities through analyzing teachers' educational behaviors in details"

[2]. In this sense, teachers' educational behaviors are an important cutting point to investigate into the status quo of teachers' professional qualities and educational quality. Based on this, the research selects 20 teachers in 5 kindergartens in urban and rural areas in Chongqing as the targets, explores into the kindergarten teachers' educational behaviors, and tries to provide certain basis for improving kindergarten teachers' professional qualities and kindergarten's educational quality.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Targets

The research selects 20 main teachers in the kindergarten classes. Among them, 10 teachers are in rural areas and 10 teachers are in urban areas and in every region, there are 5 novice teachers and 5 veteran teachers.

2.2. Research Tool

The research adopts "Manual of Evaluation on Kindergarten's Educational Quality (Tool V: "Observations on Teachers' Behaviors") [3] compiled by former Central Pre-schooling Teaching & Research Office as the research tool. It classifies teachers' educational behaviors into seven dimensions of education & teaching, participation into children's activities, daily behavioral management, observation & monitoring, custody and emotional expression, teachers' daily activities and teachers' personal activities, as well as 49 variables (refer to **Table 1** for details).

2.3. Data Collection

The research mainly adopts 30-second-interval time sampling observation method. On each observation day, the research carries out two observations, with each lasting for 10 minutes, totaling up to 20 minutes. For each research target, two consecutive observations days' observations are conducted. In total, four times' observations are executed for each target. The total time is 40 minutes. Therefore, 80 observation records are obtained. There are altogether 20 research targets. Thus, there are 40 observation days. The accumulated observation time is 800 minutes. More than 1600 observation records are gained. Among them, there are 1582 valid records.

2.4. Data Processing

The research applies SPSS 11.5 statistics software to carry out descriptive statistics of the distribution of each behavior. In addition, the paper conducts X^2 test on the total variations of educational behaviors among urban and rural kindergartens.

3. Research Results

3.1. Overall Situation of Educational Behaviors

Among teachers' seven types of educational behaviors, education & teaching behaviors appear the most frequently, reaching 23.5 times per person per day. It accounts for 30.1% of all the behaviors. Second, teacher's daily management behaviors appear 15.6 times per person per day. It accounts for 19.9%, ranking No. 2.

In the comparison between urban and rural areas, teachers' education & teaching behaviors in urban areas are 6.3 times per person per day more than those in rural areas. There are significant differences ($P < 0.01$). Teachers' daily management behaviors in urban areas are 2.4 times per person per day less than those in rural areas. There are also significant differences ($P < 0.05$). They demonstrate no significant differences in other educational behaviors.

In addition, teachers' educational behaviors of participation into children's activities, observation & monitoring and daily activities account for a large percentage in all the behaviors, respectively 16.6%, 15.3% and 13.0%. Among all educational behaviors, custody & emotional expression and personal activities are the least, only occupying 2.8% and 2.3% (refer to **Table 2**).

Compared with the results of the research conducted by Xiang Zongping and Liao Yi (1995) [4] (education & teaching behaviors occur 15.7 times per person per day and personal activities appear 8.7 times per person per day), teachers' education & teaching behaviors increase obviously and personal activities obviously reduce in

Table 1. Observation scale of teachers' educational behaviors.

First variables	Secondary variables	Tertiary variables
Education & Teaching	Teaching	Explain: Explain knowledge Present: Presentation and clarification Enlighten: Enlighten on children's thoughts Listen to Qs: Listen to children's questions about relevant knowledge Listen to As: Listen to children's answers about relevant knowledge Listen to expressions: Listen to children's expression of their ideas Listen to requests: Listen to children's requests of relevant presentations
	Instruct/Require for practices	Encourage: Encourage children to continue when encountering difficulties Help/Explain/Suggest: Help children, explain what they do not understand, propose suggestions for improvement Listen to statements: Listen to children's statements of difficulties in activities and put forward requests Instruct/Require practices: Instruct children to answer Qs with operations and continue activities as required Provide activity choices: Provide more than two activity choices for children
	Evaluation/ Feedback on results of activities	General praise: Make good judgment only on the results Specific praise: Point out the details worth praising General disapproval: Make negative judgment on the results Specific disapproval: Point out the negative details
Participation into children's activities	No participation Observation and monitoring Temporary intervention General instructions and teaching Complete participation	
	Give Instructions Require for silence Propose rules Solve individual's questions Evaluation and feedback on behaviors	Give instructions Listen to children's response to instructions Require children keep quiet Pay attention to and intervene or prevent children's some behaviors Propose rules Listen to children's sayings about relevant behavioral rules Listen to children's Approve the requests Refuse the requests Solve disputes Listen to children's statement about relevant disputes General positive feedback Specific positive feedback General negative feedback Specific negative feedback Listen to children's saying about relevant behavioral evaluation
Observation & Monitoring	Observations with records: Record children's behaviors over observations Accompanying monitoring: Same with children's activities without any exchanges General inspection: No participation into Activities after giving the instructions but only observe children's operational behaviors	
Custody & Emotional Expression	Expression of friendly emotions Comfort & protection Expression of negative emotions	
Teachers' daily activities	Transitional behaviors Prepare teaching lessons Arrange and tidy the environment Hand out materials Take care of children's life	
Personal activities: Activities irrelevant to children		

Table 2. Overall situation of kindergarten teachers' educational behaviors in urban and rural areas in Chongqing (times per person per day).

Category	General		Urban And Rural Differences				X^2 test
			Urban Areas		Rural Areas		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Education & teaching	23.5	30.1	26.6	33.5	20.3	26.3	$P < 0.01$
Daily management	15.6	19.9	14.4	18.1	16.8	21.8	$P < 0.05$
Participation into children's activities	13.0	16.6	13.4	16.9	12.6	16.3	$P > 0.05$
Observation & monitoring	12.0	15.3	11.8	14.9	12.2	15.8	$P > 0.05$
Daily activities	10.2	13.0	9.3	11.7	11.2	14.5	$P > 0.05$
Custody & emotional expression	2.2	2.8	2.5	3.1	1.8	2.3	$P > 0.05$
Personal activities	1.8	2.3	1.4	1.8	2.2	3.0	$P > 0.05$
Total	78.3	100	79.4	100	77.1	100	

the research. Compared to the results of the research carried out by Liu Zhanlan *et al.* (2008) [5] (teachers' personal activities rank No. 6, reaching 3.0 times per person per day), personal activities also reduce obviously in the research. Although custody & emotional expression behaviors increase compared to the situation in 2008, a lack of emotional communications between teachers and children still occurs.

3.2. Status of Each Educational Behavior

3.2.1. Education & Teaching Behaviors

Among education and teaching behaviors, teaching behaviors account for 58.3%, reaching 13.7 times per person per day and ranking top one among all the behaviors. Instruct/Require for practices behaviors rank the second, reaching 8.5 times per person per day. Evaluation & feedback behaviors are the least, only 1.3 times per person per day, taking up 5.5%. In particular, teaching behaviors in urban areas are subtly more than those in rural areas. Instruct/require for practices behaviors in rural areas are more than those in urban areas (refer to [Table 3](#)).

1) Teaching Behaviors

Among teaching behaviors, direct explanations or presentations account for 31.4%, reaching 4.3 times per person per day and ranking top one. Instilling knowledge ranks the second, reaching 3.0 times per person per day (refer to [Table 3](#)). The results are remarkably different from the results in the research conducted by Liu Zhanlan *et al.* (2008) that instilling knowledge behaviors reach 4.0 times per person per day, ranking top one, while direct presentations reach 3.7 times per person per day, ranking the second [5].

Teacher's listening to children's answers to and expressions of their own ideas, children's questions about relevant knowledge, and children's requests for relevant requests are less than 10% and even none (refer to [Table 4](#)).

2) Instruct/Require for Practices

Among instruct/require for practices behaviors, help/suggest/explain behaviors are the most, accounting for 58.8%. Instruct/require for practices rank the second, reaching 2.1 times per person per day, accounting for 24.7%. Encourage children to continue activities behaviors reach one time per person per day, accounting for 11.9%. However, listen to children's statement of difficulties and provide activity choices behaviors only reach 0.2 times per person per day, accounting for 2.4% respectively (refer to [Table 4](#)).

3) Evaluation & Feedback Behaviors

Among the evaluation/feedback on children's activity results behaviors, teachers mainly show praises for children. The praising behaviors take up for 76.9% of such behaviors (general praise account for 46.1% and specific praise account for about 30.8%). From this, we can see that general praise occur the most frequently. Specific praises are less comparatively. Moreover, there is no listening to relevant sayings about behavioral evaluation (refer to [Table 4](#)).

Table 3. Detailed situation of several major types of educational behaviors among kindergarten teachers in Chongqing (times per person per day).

Category	Item	General		Urban areas		Rural areas	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Education & Teaching	Teaching	13.7	58.3	17.1	64.5	10.3	50.7
	Instruct/require for practices	8.5	36.2	7.9	29.8	9.0	44.3
	Evaluation/feedback on activity results	1.3	5.5	1.6	5.7	1.0	5.0
	Sub-total	23.5	100	26.6	100	20.3	100
Daily Behavior Management	Give instructions	7.4	47.4	6.0	41.7	8.8	52.4
	Require for silence	4.1	26.3	3.1	21.5	5.2	30.9
	Propose rules	2.5	16.0	3.6	24.9	1.4	8.3
	Solve individuals' questions	2.5	16.0	0.5	3.5	0.4	2.4
	Evaluation/feedback on behaviors	1.1	7.1	1.2	8.4	1.0	6.0
	Sub-total	15.6	100	14.4	100	16.8	100
Observation & Monitoring	Observations with records	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Accompanying monitoring	3.2	26.7	3.2	27.1	3.2	26.2
	General inspections	8.8	73.3	8.6	72.9	9.0	73.8
	Sub-total	12.0	100	11.8	100	11.2	100
Custody & Emotional Expression	Friendly emotions	0.9	40.9	0.6	24.0	1.0	55.6
	Comfort & protection	1.3	59.1	1.9	76.0	0.8	44.4
	Negative emotions	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sub-total	2.2	100	2.5	100	1.8	100

Table 4. Overall distribution of three types of education & teaching behaviors among kindergarten teachers in Chongqing (times per person per day).

Teaching			Instruct/Require For Practices			Evaluation/Feedback		
Item	N	%	Item	N	%	Item	N	%
Presentation	4.3	31.4	Instruct/require for practices	2.1	24.7	General praise	0.6	46.1
Teaching	3.2	23.4	Help/explain/suggest	5.0	58.8	Specific praise	0.4	30.8
Enlightenment	2.5	18.2	Encourage to continue	1.0	11.8	General disapproval	0.2	15.4
Propose questions	2.2	16.1	Listen to statement of difficulties	0.2	2.4	Specific disapproval	0.1	7.7
Listen to answers	1.0	7.3	Provide activity choices	0.2	2.4	Listen to sayings about evaluation	0	0
Listen to expressions	0.5	3.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Listen to question proposals	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Listen to request	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	13.7	100	Total	8.5	100	Total	1.3	100

3.2.2. Management on Children's Daily Behaviors

Table 1 shows that daily management on children's behaviors account for 15.6% among the seven types of educational behaviors, ranking the second. In particular, giving instructions, and requiring for silence & attention are outstanding, respectively account for 47.4% and 26.3%. Propose rules behaviors account for 16.0%. Evaluation & feedback and solve individual's questions behaviors only account for 7.1% and 3.2% (refer to **Table 3**).

Among give instructions and propose rules behaviors, teachers in urban and rural areas both demonstrate simple give instructions behaviors (account for 98.6%) and propose rules behaviors (accounting for 96%), while listen to children's response to instructions and listen to their sayings about relevant rules respectively account for 1.4% and 4% (refer to **Table 5**).

In evaluation/feedback on children's behaviors, positive feedback and evaluations account for 72.7%. In particular, general positive feedbacks account for 54.5% while specific positive feedbacks only account for 18.2% (refer to **Table 5**). From this we can see that teachers' evaluation and feedback on children's activities and behaviors mainly focus on positive praise and confirmations. No matter the evaluation/feedback is positive or negative, the contents are mostly general and common praise or disapproval.

3.2.3. Observation & Monitoring

Observation & monitoring behaviors mainly include observation with records, accompanying monitoring and general inspections. **Table 6** shows that whether in urban areas or rural areas, teachers' observations and monitoring behaviors on children are mainly general inspections after teachers give instructions, reaching 8.8 times per person per day, accounting for 73.3%. Accompanying monitoring behaviors rank the second, reaching 2.9 times per person per day, accounting for 24.2%. Observations with records are 0.

Table 5. Overall distribution of daily behavior management among kindergarten teachers in Chongqing (times per person per day).

Give Instructions			Require For Silence			Propose Rules			Solve Individual Questions			Behavior Evaluation/Feedback		
Item	N	%	Item	N	%	Item	N	%	Item	N	%	Item	N	%
Give Instructions	7.3	98.6	Require for silence	3.0	73.2	Propose rules	2.4	96.0	Listen to children's requests	0.2	40.0	General positive feedback	0.6	54.5
Listen To Responses To Instructions	0.1	1.4	Intervention & prevention	1.1	26.8	Listen to children's sayings about rules	0.1	4.0	Approve requests	0.1	20.0	Specific positive feedback	0.2	18.2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Listen to statement of disputes	0.2	40.0	General negative feedback	0.2	18.2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Refuse requests	0	0	Specific negative feedback	0.1	9.1
Total	7.4	100	-	4.1	100	-	2.5	100	-	0.5	100	-	1.1	100

Table 6. Overall distribution of observation & monitoring behaviors among kindergarten teachers in Chongqing (times per person per day).

Item	General		Urban areas		Rural areas	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Observation With Records	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accompanying Monitoring	2.9	24.2	3.2	27.1	3.2	26.5
General Inspections	8.8	73.3	8.6	72.9	9.0	73.5
Total	12	100	11.8	100	12.2	100

3.2.4. Custody & Emotional Expression

Custody and emotional expression behaviors rank the sixth, reaching 2.2 times per person per day, accounting for 2.8%. Among such behaviors, the observed teachers demonstrate positive and friendly emotional expressions both in urban and rural areas. In particular, comfort & protection behaviors are the most, accounting for 58.7% of such behaviors. Friendly emotional expressions rank the second, accounting for 41.3%. Moreover, teachers' comfort & protection behaviors in urban areas are higher than the overall level and more than those in rural areas. However, friendly emotional expressions among teachers in rural areas are subtly higher than the overall level and subtly more than those in urban areas (refer to **Table 7**). Although such behaviors are still few, they have improved obviously compared to previous researches.

3.2.5. Participation into Children's Activities

Among the seven types of educational behaviors, teachers' participation into children's behaviors ranks their third, reaching 13.0 times per person per day and accounting for 16.6% (refer to **Table 1**). Compared to the previous years, teachers' participation into children's activities was only 10.9 times per person per day, accounting for 13.6%. The results of the fifth behaviors [5] have improved obviously.

Table 8 shows that among various behaviors of participation into children's activities, there are no great distinctions between teachers in urban and rural areas. The most frequently seen behaviors of participation into children's activities are temporary intervention, accounting for 48.7%, observation & monitoring (17.3%) and complete participation (15.8%). No participation (9.7%) and general instructions & teaching (8.5%) are less frequently seen among teachers' participation into children's activities.

4. Discussion and Analysis

From the above results, we can see that kindergarten teachers' educational behaviors have improved to a great degree compared to the previous situation. Teachers' behaviors have become more reasonable. In addition, their professional consciousness and career devotedness have enhanced; and irrelevant behaviors in education have reduced. In addition, teachers' understanding of children education's nature and characteristics is more profound. They pay more attention to teachers' "support roles" and attach importance to children's perception experience. Their participation into children's activities and direct teaching behaviors increase obviously. Emotional expression behaviors improve subtly. The above improvements may be because:

First, with the issuance and implementation of "Outline of Middle and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Planning in China", the government and every sector in society have paid great attention to pre-

Table 7. Overall distribution of custody & emotional expressions among kindergarten teachers in Chongqing (times per person per day).

Item	General		Urban Areas		Rural Areas	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Friendly Emotions	0.9	41.3	0.6	24.0	1.0	55.6
Comfort & Protection	1.3	58.7	1.9	76.0	0.8	44.4
Negative Emotions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2.2	100	2.5	100	1.8	100

Table 8. Degree of kindergarten teachers' participation into children's activities in Chongqing (times per person per day).

Area	No Participation		Observation & Monitoring		Temporary Intervention		General Instructions & Teaching		Complete Participation		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
General	8.0	9.7	14.2	17.3	40.0	48.7	7.0	8.5	13.0	15.8	82.2	100
Urban Areas	7.9	9.5	13.6	16.3	40.5	48.0	8.2	9.8	13.2	15.8	83.4	100
Rural Areas	8.2	10.1	14.8	17.7	39.4	48.6	5.8	7.2	12.8	15.6	81.0	100

schooling education, which thus improves children teachers' social status, enhances kindergarten teachers' sense of profession values and encourages teachers' career devotedness.

Second, the improvement of teachers' professional quality due to national, provincial and municipal training planning on kindergarten teachers' which have been implemented in recent years has made some achievements.

Third, due to the expansion of the scale of cultivating talents in pre-schooling and elevation of talent levels in universities, many graduates with bachelor and master degrees enter kindergartens, thus facilitating the improvement of overall kindergarten teachers' qualities.

Fourth, the implementation of kindergarten teachers' qualification system also promotes the improvement of kindergarten teachers' professional qualities to some degree.

However, there are still some problems, such as excessive teaching and requirements, inadequate listening to children's ideas and stimulation of their initiatives, low effectiveness of evaluation on children's behaviors, excessive orders and interventions in daily management, inadequate emotional exchanges between teachers and children, and insufficient care for children's individual demands. The main reasons are:

First, the structure of kindergarten teachers' professional knowledge is weak, *i.e.*, "practical knowledge" closely related to education & teaching is relevantly solid while basic cultural knowledge and discipline knowledge is weak. As a result [6], it is difficult for teachers to deepen into the evaluation on children. The evaluations are quite general.

Second, teachers-to-children ratio in kindergartens is relatively low (the research finds that the average teachers-to-children ratio is 1:18. In few rural areas, the ratio reached 1:30). The teachers shoulder a heavy burden, get tired of their profession, and lack sufficient energy to care for children's wills and emotions.

5. Conclusions

Based on the above discussion and analysis, we believe:

First, in pre-employment education, common education should be enhanced. Teachers' cultural qualities should be improved and the validity of professional knowledge education should be strengthened.

Second, pay attention to the training of discipline knowledge and teachers' psychological health in post-employment trainings so as to solve the educational behaviors caused due to teachers' lack of discipline knowledge and help teachers adjust their psychological pressure.

Third, expand the registration and distribution of kindergarten teachers so as to relieve their burdens.

Finally, enhance the investment into and support on children's education as well as stabilize teaching personnel in rural and remote areas.

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