

The Impact of Occupational Pressure on Integrated Education among Kindergarten Teachers

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Abstract: Due to the complexity and specificity of the physical and mental development of special needs children, there are significant individual differences that require special school teachers to put in more effort in their work. However, due to the imbalance between the actual teaching effectiveness of teachers and their efforts, they are prone to negative psychological states such as occupational burnout and self-doubt. With the increasing professional pressure of kindergarten teachers, it affects the implementation of integrated education. Integrated education aims to promote mutual understanding and respect among children with different abilities and backgrounds. However, in reality, current preschool teachers are facing issues such as diverse needs of young children, insufficient teaching resources, and career development pressures, which affect teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes for young children. Therefore, it is necessary for the education department and all sectors of society to pay attention, solve problems, achieve the goal of integrated education, and enable children to grow up in a good environment.

Keywords: Special Children; Integrated Education; Occupational Pressure; Teaching Resources; Job Burnout

1. Introduction

The key to education is teacher-based. This exposition deeply reveals the cornerstone role of teacher's power in the development of education. [1] As the concept of integrated education becomes more and more popular, some special children are able to enter ordinary kindergartens with classes. However, according to the latest statistics of the Ministry of Education, by 2023, the total number of kindergartens in China has reached 274,000, while there are only 77,000 full-time special education teachers. This data shows that special education kindergartens are still the main positions for special children to receive education, and special education occupies an indispensable position in the development of China's education cause. [1] Because of the key role of special kindergarten teachers in the growth of special children, their professional quality directly affects the quality of education. In view of the complexity and difference of the physical and mental development of special children, special kindergarten teachers need to have solid professional knowledge and superb educational skills to implement personalized teaching programs to meet the unique needs of each special child. This requirement undoubtedly increases the work burden of special kindergarten teachers and requires them to pay more efforts and efforts. However, the speed of physical and mental development of special children is relatively slow, and the hard work of teachers is often difficult to quickly transform into significant teaching results. This imbalance between pay and gain is very easy to cause teachers' negative psychology such as burnout, self-doubt and powerlessness. In addition, special kindergarten teachers often need to assume multiple roles such as administrative management and cross-field cooperation, which further aggravates the work pressure and psychological burden.

Therefore, how to effectively relieve the professional pressure of special kindergarten teachers and improve their professional happiness has become a major problem in the field of special education. However, through literature review, it is found that previous studies on teachers' occupational

stress mostly focused on general kindergarten teachers, and relatively insufficient attention was paid to special kindergarten teachers. In view of this, this study takes special kindergarten teachers as the research object to deeply explore the current situation of occupational stress and its influencing factors, in order to provide strong support for improving the working environment of special kindergarten teachers and promoting their professional growth. [1,2]

2. Literature Review

2.1. Occupational Stress

In the 1970s, researchers began to pay attention to "teacher occupational stress". In 1978, Kiriaku and Sutcliffe defined "teacher stress" for the first time, which refers to the negative emotions, such as tension, frustration and depression, caused by teachers' individual psychological or physical inability to adapt well to the changes in the working environment. After that, scholars at home and abroad have made different definitions of teachers' professional pressure. [1]Lu Luo, a scholar in Taiwan, believes that teacher stress refers to the negative emotions caused by teachers' assessment of their own abilities and needs, and their realization that their personal resources are not enough to meet the requirements of the job. [1,2]Bakker and Schaufeli define teacher occupational stress as the emotional ups and downs that occur when teachers perceive that demands do not match their abilities or that resources do not meet job demands. Marilyn believes that the professional stress of teachers is caused by the imbalance between risk and protective factors. [3,4] If the proportion of risk factors is too high, an individual's ability to cope with difficulties will be restricted, and then he or she will feel the existence of pressure.[5,6]

To sum up, although scholars have different definitions of occupational stress, they generally agree that teachers' occupational stress is the negative impact on physiology and psychology caused by their insufficient ability to cope with work tasks.

2.2. Research on Professional Stress of Teachers in Special Schools

2.2.1. The Current Situation of Occupational Pressure for Teachers in Special Kindergartens

At present, the research conclusions on the current situation of occupational stress of teachers in special kindergartens are not uniform, but most studies show that the occupational stress of teachers in special kindergartens is relatively large, and the occupational stress score exceeds the theoretical average. Scholar Wang Lingfeng found that two-thirds of special kindergarten teachers can experience occupational stress above the medium level. The research of Hua Heping, Liu Jing and Wang Hui all confirmed the conclusion that special kindergarten teachers are a group with high occupational pressure. [7,8] By comparing the occupational pressure of general education teachers and special kindergarten teachers, Banahatti found that because special kindergarten teachers need to spend a lot of time and energy to deal with trivial events, they are under greater occupational pressure than general education teachers. However, He Chunying drew an inconsistent conclusion in his research, that is, the work pressure of special kindergarten teachers is lower than the national average, which may be due to the particularity of the research object. Most of the subjects in He Chunying's study came from special education background, with solid professional knowledge and rich experience in coping with pressure. [4,5] In addition, the kindergarten and the government gave them strong support and assistance, so that they could fully realize their self-worth, obtain a high sense of happiness and relieve work pressure.[6]

2.2.2. The Influencing Factors of Occupational Pressure for Teachers in Special Kindergartens

Most researchers have investigated the influence of different demographic variables on occupational stress of special kindergarten teachers, such as gender and age. There are differences on the effect of gender on occupational stress of special kindergarten teachers. Some studies, such as Yang Ting et al., found no significant impact, while Wang Tao et al., pointed out that male teachers face more occupational pressure, especially in terms of job pay and load. This difference may be due to the difference of salary and teaching tasks in different sample areas. In terms of age, teachers between 25 and 34 years old are generally under greater occupational pressure. They are the backbone of kindergartens, with heavy teaching tasks and high self-requirements, but lack of teaching experience. Educational background is negatively correlated with the professional pressure of special kindergarten teachers, and low educational background leads to high pressure. In terms of teaching age, the conclusions are mixed. Most studies believe that teaching age is negatively correlated with occupational stress, but Zhong Mingfang found no significant effect. He Jiahui pointed out that teachers with six to 10 years of teaching experience are under the most pressure. The results were inconsistent depending on the survey area. He Jiahui investigated the special education kindergarten teachers in Zhejiang, most of them were young teachers with insufficient teaching experience, heavy tasks and great pressure. [9,10]A few researchers analyzed teachers' occupational stress from variables such as title, salary, degree of children's disorder, and type of teaching, but the number of studies was small and the conclusions were inconsistent. Follow-up studies are needed to improve the impact of relevant variables on

teachers' occupational stress.

2.2.3. The Impact of Occupational Pressure on Teachers in Special Kindergartens

According to the Yerkes-Dodson law, stress has a dual nature. Sometimes it can make people full of energy, and sometimes it can make people feel anxious and confused. So the effect of occupational stress is a double-edged sword. A large number of studies have shown that the negative impact of occupational pressure on special kindergarten teachers on individuals is significantly higher than the positive impact, which is reflected in three aspects: First, excessive occupational pressure will lead to a variety of physiological diseases of special kindergarten teachers. Studies have shown that long-term stress will damage the immune system and digestive system functions of special kindergarten teachers, and lead to many serious health complications, such as chronic fatigue, repeated colds, gastric ulcers, and high blood pressure, which will make them powerless and affect work efficiency and teaching quality. Second, occupational pressure can lead to anxiety, helplessness, frustration and other bad emotions of special kindergarten teachers, and various mental health problems. Some researchers have found that somatization, compulsion and depression are the main psychological problems of special kindergarten teachers. Third, excessive occupational pressure will increase the negative behavior of teachers, such as absenteeism, absenteeism, resignation and early retirement. [In addition, studies have shown that occupational stress not only affects special kindergarten teachers themselves, but also indirectly affects the growth of children. The work pressure leads to the reduction of teachers' teaching effectiveness, the decline of classroom teaching quality, and then hinder the development of children. The negative emotions of special kindergarten teachers will also affect the formation of children's mental health. These negative effects will reduce the professional happiness of special kindergarten teachers to some extent.

2.2.4. The Relationship between Occupational Stress, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, and Occupational Well-Being

For kindergarten teachers of integrated education, they need to take into account various roles, such as class manager, personalized teaching provider, education partner, etc., which puts more demands on the time, energy and ability of kindergarten teachers of integrated education. Over time, long-term, sustained high job demands can lead to work stress, which can affect health, job performance, sense of accomplishment, and happiness. Ansley et al. found that kindergarten teachers with integrated education had to endure long-term work pressure, which led to health complications such as anxiety, hypertension and gastric ulcer. [7,8]Secondly, the kindergarten teachers of integrated education who have been under work pressure for a long time have a negative attitude towards teaching, less work input, and insufficient positive reinforcement and support for students, which affects their growth and progress. Kindergarten teachers of integrated education can not get positive feedback from students and question their professional ability, which leads to negative psychology such as job burnout, powerlessness and despair, forming a vicious cycle. A large number of studies have confirmed that teacher self-efficacy is an effective feedback mechanism for teachers facing work pressure, which can reduce the psychological distress caused by high level of work pressure. Teachers with a high level of self-efficacy are very confident in their own abilities, and can actively take

effective measures to deal with problems and relieve the negative effects of stress with a positive attitude. On the contrary, teachers with a low level of self-efficacy do not believe that their teaching ability is enough to complete the teaching task, and the sense of pressure is enhanced, which leads to the escape mentality and job burnout. Secondly, self-efficacy also has an impact on teachers' career happiness. High self-efficacy helps teachers to realize self-worth, sense of belonging, sense of achievement and sense of happiness from teaching work. In addition, a number of studies have shown that self-efficacy is the mediating variable of the impact of occupational stress on occupational happiness. When individuals face high work pressure, they may have doubts about their own ability and lack of confidence, resulting in tension, pessimism and other negative emotions, which seriously affect the improvement of occupational happiness. It is speculated that the self-efficacy of kindergarten teachers with integrated education can cushion the negative impact of occupational stress on their occupational happiness. At the same time, a number of empirical studies have shown that emotional intelligence is one of the important factors affecting self-efficacy. Teachers with high emotional intelligence can better pay attention to their own emotional states, manage their own emotions and respond appropriately to the emotions of others, which helps them have more control over the teaching tasks to be completed, and show a stronger level of confidence in the aspects of teacher-student interaction in the classroom, creating a positive learning environment, meeting students' learning and development needs, so as to experience success in work. Gain satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment, which in turn increases self-efficacy. [10,11]

3. Research Method

3.1. Literature Study

By referring to domestic and foreign literature on occupational stress, emotional intelligence, occupational happiness and self-efficacy of kindergarten teachers with integrated education, this study sorted out related concepts, research methods and influencing factors, determined the research theme of this study and put forward research suggestions.[9]

3.2. Questionnaire Survey Method

In this study, a questionnaire survey was conducted by using a set of scales with good reliability and validity and demographic variables, including the Professional Happiness Questionnaire for Special Education Teachers, the Occupational Stress Questionnaire for Special Education Teachers and the General Self-Efficacy Scale, to understand the specific occupational status quo of teachers in integrated education kindergartens.[9,10]

4. Conclusion and Prospect

4.1. Conclusion

At present, relevant studies on these four variables still have shortcomings, which need to be further improved through follow-up studies, mainly reflected in the following three aspects:

First, studies on occupational stress, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and occupational well-being mostly focus on general education teachers, while research data on integrated

education kindergarten teachers are scarce, and there is still a lot of research space.

Second, the current research on occupational stress, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and occupational well-being of kindergarten teachers with integrated education has not reached a uniform status quo and differences in demographic variables, which still need to be further verified and improved.[11,12]

Third, there are few studies on the relationship between occupational stress, occupational happiness, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of kindergarten teachers with integrated education. At the same time, due to the differences between general education and special education in education objects, education methods and other aspects, it is impossible to simply apply the research results in the field of general education to the field of special education.[12]

To sum up, it is precisely because of the shortcomings of the existing research that provides an opportunity for this study. On the basis of previous studies, this study will study the relationship between occupational stress, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and occupational well-being of kindergarten teachers with integrated education, in order to understand the level, characteristics and mutual relationship of the four variables, and investigate the mediating role of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy variables in it, so as to make up for the shortcomings of relevant studies.

4.2. Prospect

First, expand the research sample, increase the research data of teachers in remote areas, and compare the differences in occupational happiness and occupational stress of teachers in kindergartens with integrated education in different regions. Second, the research methods are diversified. The combination of future research and qualitative research methods such as interview, case and observation make the research conclusions more comprehensive and convincing. Thirdly, we should continue to explore the influencing mechanism of the professional well-being of kindergarten teachers with integrated education. In future studies, some external factors, such as social support and coping styles, can be introduced to build a more complete and comprehensive theoretical model. Fourthly, the occupational stress, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and occupational happiness of kindergarten teachers with integrated education are dynamic processes. In the future, longitudinal design or experimental research is needed to explore the changes of occupational stress, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and occupational happiness of kindergarten teachers with integrated education in different periods, so as to better reveal the relationship between them.

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