Journal of Education and Educational Research
ISSN: 2957-9465 | Vol. 2, No. 3, 2023

A study on the causes and effects of preschool teachers' psychological problems

Yang Zhou [1,2,*], Suhaidah Tahir [1]

[1] Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies, City University Malaysia, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
[2] School of Education, Xinyang College, Xinyang 464000, China

[*] **Corresponding author**: Yang Zhou (Email: 459848798@qq.com)

Abstract: As the enlightening teacher of children's hearts, the words and actions of preschool teachers may leave a deep imprint on children's psychology. Healthy psychology is a necessary condition for preschool teachers to engage in preschool education, is also the need for their own healthy life, and is also the need for children's physical and mental health development. Therefore, it is extremely important and urgent to pay attention to the mental health of preschool teachers. Only by paying attention to the mental health of preschool teachers can we better maintain the mental health of preschool children. Therefore, understanding the psychological health of preschool teachers, analyzing the causes of the psychological problems of preschool teachers, and actively taking measures to improve and maintain the psychological health of preschool teachers are not only out of the care and care of teachers, but also the need to ensure the healthy growth of children.

Keywords: Preschool teachers; Psychological problems; Influence factor.

1. Introduction

In the wave of teachers' professional development, preschool teachers are also involved consciously and unconsciously. Objectively speaking, this is the need of social and organizational development and the inevitable state of preschool teachers' professional development. However, compared with primary and secondary schools, preschool teachers, as a specialized profession, do not have a high degree of social identity. "Senior nanny" is a stereotype in people's minds, which comes from traditional customs on the one hand; On the other hand, the triviality of work tasks and the generality of conservation and education work lead to long working hours of teachers and high pressure of safety work. In people's traditional thinking patterns, "learning high is the teacher" and "body and brain division of labor" have become important reference for people's professional evaluation, which also objectively affects the social professional status of preschool teachers. Although there is a lack of recognition of preschool teachers as a specialized profession objectively, the call for preschool teachers' specialization from all levels of society has also changed from different levels to the evaluation criteria for teachers and kindergarten organizations. In this way, the contradiction between the overloaded working hours and tasks of preschool teachers and their low professional status has led to the emergence of various psychological problems. Among them, preschool teachers have different levels of anxiety. Some teachers can take the initiative to relieve this negative emotion, while some teachers do not know the existence of these emotions, which affects their work performance. Based on this, this study takes preschool teachers who teach in five kindergartens in Wuhan as an example, and puts forward countermeasures to help preschool teachers alleviate their psychological anxiety by studying the psychological anxiety of preschool teachers.

2. Subjects and Methods

2.1. Study setting

Since the 1990s, the proposition of "psychological problems" has been widely discussed in the field of Chinese literary theory, and has caused great controversy. Although this debate is still pending, the proposal of "psychological problems" undoubtedly promoted Chinese scholars' reflection on the construction of modern and contemporary literary theory, and had a broad impact on strengthening the subjective consciousness of Chinese ideological and artistic circles. It can be said that the issue of "psychological problems" has seriously stabbed the hidden pain of Chinese intellectuals submerged in Western academic discourse and ideology. It is precisely because it clearly regards the discourse/power relationship and all aspects involved in the construction of Chinese literary theory as the crux of the construction of early childhood education in the new era, which has sparked heated discussions in the academic community since its publication. Many scholars agree that the fact of 'psychological problems' reveals the lack of creativity, vitality, and cultural confidence in China's preschool education construction. Some scholars do not draw on Western early childhood education theories, but instead view them as theories themselves and view local early childhood education theories as only a reference frame, in order to more effectively apply Western early childhood education theories. Therefore, Chinese preschool education theory has become the "other" at home. In addition to positive responses, many scholars have expressed different views on the legitimacy of the "psychological problem" proposition itself, the limitations of the thinking mode and value judgment behind "psychology", the path of constructing Chinese preschool education theory, the relationship between Western preschool education theory and traditional Chinese preschool education theory, and other related issues. Among them, the most controversial focus among scholars is the specific path of constructing contemporary Chinese preschool education

theory.

In addition to the debate on the construction path of early childhood education theory, some scholars have raised objections or criticisms from the limitations of "psychology", as well as some potential ideological tendencies. The modern Western theory of early childhood education is "general", while "psychological problems" are actually a wrong proposition. He believes that the dilemma in the development of contemporary preschool education in China is not a lack of theory, but a lack of objects. The essence of 'psychological problems' is' not mentioning survival itself', so this kind of psychological problem is inevitable. The reconstruction of the discourse of Chinese preschool education theory actually involves the contradiction and tension between modernity and nationalism, while Western modern preschool education theory, as an explanatory tool, is more effective in contemporary China than ancient preschool education theory. Psychological problems "are a comprehensive judgment with a potential tendency towards cultural fundamentalism, which is a dual manifestation of cultural centrism and a lack of cultural confidence. Although these criticisms have their own biases, they also promote further exploration of the issues involved in the "psychological problem" proposition in the academic community.

This study conducted a stratified sampling survey of preschool teachers in five kindergartens in Wuhan. A total of 119 questionnaires were issued, and 111 were actually recovered, with a recovery rate of 93.3%. Among them, there are 102 valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of 91.2%. The research method is a combination of questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire part is mainly based on the SCL90 Symptom Checklist, which is currently more authoritative and simpler in the world and commonly used in all professions, and supplemented by a self-developed questionnaire specifically for the occupation of preschool teachers, in order to ensure both the reliability of the survey results and the occupation of preschool teachers. The interview was conducted in the form of one or two kindergarten teachers randomly selected from each kindergarten. The main purpose of the interview was not only to confirm the results reflected in the questionnaire, but also to investigate and analyze the main reasons for the current situation of preschool teachers' mental health. The data of SCL-90 Symptom Checklist were statistically analyzed with SPsS 11.5.

2.2. Design

The design method of this study is based on literature research, which involves conducting empirical analysis by consulting a large number of relevant literatures. The literature research method can not only investigate the knowledge content contained in a large amount of materials, but also apply rich theoretical knowledge to explain, analyze, and explain the research content; It can not only summarize relevant thinking methods, but also abstract, summarize, and propose innovative ideas for relevant theories; It can not only conduct in-depth research on theoretical problems at different levels, but also analyze existing problems and propose solutions. The theory of early childhood education is a "psychological problem" that is not only caused by its own limitations, but also often leads to other "psychological illnesses". However, to some extent, this is a spiritual phenomenon, so we should pay sufficient attention to it. Here, we mainly analyze the possible negative effects behind "psychological problems" from two aspects. Firstly, we need to view it correctly. From a psychological perspective, 'psychological problems' are caused by people feeling that various consciousness, concepts, and emotions exist in their consciousness, and even form a sense of the world, thoughts, and emotions. Therefore, 'psychological problems' do not necessarily mean that people's minds contain a state of emptiness and chaos, which may to some extent lead to the emergence of their values, moral concepts, and other incorrect concepts, and thus may lead to erroneous beliefs. In this sense, we can't analyze and grasp the influence and reason of "psychological problems". In the field of literary theory, only psychology itself can. We also need to analyze the reasons for this "psychological problem" from cultural traditions, aesthetic concepts, and people's attitudes towards certain things or phenomena. We can understand the impact and harm of "psychological problems" in the following theories through some characteristics of different types and types of texts. On the surface, the proposition of "psychological issues" is precisely the application of Foucault's discourse/power theory in the study of Chinese preschool education theory, and the controversy it has sparked is about how to construct and develop contemporary Chinese preschool education theory in the context of globalization. This is another tug of war between Chinese and Western theories in the current era of China. But in essence, the proposition of "psychological problems" is only a reflection on knowledge and truth itself, and a reflection, query and criticism of essentialism's literary view and mode of thinking. The academic debate sparked by this also involves the following deep-seated issues: firstly, the potential discourse/power relationship in early childhood education theory; Secondly, whether the subjective intervention in the construction of early childhood education theory has legitimacy; Thirdly, the relationship between ethnicity, subjectivity, and globalization; Fourthly, the relationship between theoretical construction and critical practice. The attitudes and positions of different scholars towards these key issues determine their views on the topic of "psychological issues" and the development of contemporary Chinese preschool teachers.

The results of SCL-90 Symptom Checklist showed that: Among the 102 people in the total sample, 59 had mild symptoms (factor average score ≥ 2), accounting for 57.84% of the total sample, which was far higher than the national norm of 20%. Referring to the relevant standards of SCL-90 scale, as long as one factor score is greater than or equal to 3 points, it is considered that there are likely to have mental health problems above medium level. In general, 22 of the 102 samples have mental health problems above medium level, accounting for 21.57%, which is significantly higher than the national norm of 5%. It can be seen that the mental health problems of preschool teachers in Wuhan are relatively serious.

According to the relevant standards of SCL-90 scale, the subjects with factor score greater than or equal to 2 points are considered to be positive in this item, which means they have symptoms in this item. However, the subjects with factor score greater than or equal to 3 points have symptoms in the project and are of moderate or higher severity. It can be seen from Table 1 that the proportion of preschool teachers in Wuhan who are positive in terms of compulsion, depression, hostility, somatization and paranoia is quite high. Among them, the compulsive factor is particularly prominent. The proportion of preschool teachers with positive compulsive

factor is as high as 40.19%, which is quite surprising. Depression and hostility factors followed closely, accounting for 34.31% and 33.33% respectively, both higher than the national norm of 20%. Among the factors with moderate or more severe symptoms, hostility is particularly prominent, accounting for 8.82%. It is significantly higher than the national norm by 5%, followed by somatization, which is 6.86%, which is also significantly higher than the national norm.

It can be seen from Table 1 that obsessive-compulsive factors are the most prominent among mild symptoms. According to the relevant theories of abnormal psychology, obsessive-compulsive disorder is caused by the combination of personality basis and psychosocial factors. Therefore, it can be preliminarily estimated that the reason why the proportion of preschool teachers showing positive in terms of compulsive factors is so high, that is, the burden of work is too heavy, the pressure of responsibility is too great, and at the same time, it is rarely positively evaluated and affirmed. Table 1 also shows: Among the symptoms above the middle level, the hostility factor is the most prominent among preschool teachers in Wuhan. Compared with the same period of last year, preschool teachers scored low on the interpersonal sensitivity factor, indicating that the interpersonal communication environment in kindergartens is relatively simple, and preschool teachers' sense of uneasiness and inferiority is relatively weak in their daily communication, but the environment is too simple and even monotonous, coupled with women's generally sensitive, multi-minded, meticulous and other personality characteristics, which makes their hostility in thinking, emotion and behavior more prominent. However, compulsion and hostility are often accompanied by depression, so it is not difficult to understand that the scores of preschool teachers in depression factors reflected in Table 1 are also prominent.

Table 1. Factor distribution table of preschool teachers' mental health problems

factor	factor score≥2			factor score≥3		
	number of people	ratio	ranking	number of people	ratio	ranking
somatization	30	29.41	4	7	6.86	2
compel	41	40.19	1	6	5.88	3
relationship	26	25.49	6	1	0.98	7
depressed	35	34.31	2	5	4.90	4
anxiety	24	23.53	7	3	2.94	6
hostility	34	33.33	3	9	8.82	1
terror	14	13.73	9	1	0.98	7
bigoted	30	29.41	4	5	4.90	4
psychosis	17	16.67	8	1	0.98	7

2.3. Results

From the perspective of knowledge formation and development, Chinese preschool education is formed on the basis of language. The social development of China in the new era requires people not only to strive to develop themselves, but also to be good at utilizing their rich language resources, creatively creating social changes, and promoting social development. To excel in discourse creation, it is necessary to strengthen the training of language skills and application skills for academic researchers and preschool education theorists, providing theoretical support and technical support for their effective implementation of academic innovation. Otherwise, without corresponding discourse creation ability and experience accumulation, it is difficult to achieve new academic achievements. Therefore, it is of great significance and practical value to consider language barriers in the research of Chinese preschool education theory from the perspectives of theoretical innovation and discourse development. At present, the Chinese academic community has always emphasized the innovation and application of research methods, but has not received corresponding attention in practice. The debate on psychological issues has sparked a brainstorming in the academic community on the problems, construction paths, and future development directions of contemporary Chinese preschool education theory. Scholars have considered various issues involved in debates at multiple levels.

According to the statistical analysis of the data of the self-made questionnaire, it can be seen that the items that are more prominent in the mental health problems of preschool teachers include few opportunities for further study, too much effort, and too little compensation (see Figure 1). 65.69% of people think that the social significance of preschool teachers is significant. At the same time, the survey of the respect that preschool teachers feel shows that 72.55% of preschool teachers think they are not respected by the society. The two comparisons show that the proportion is so high, which is enough to show how big the psychological gap of preschool teachers is. On the one hand, they have a high subjective evaluation of the social significance of their work, but on the other hand, they cannot get enough positive evaluation from the society. This kind of conflict affects the hearts of preschool teachers on the whole, resulting in the psychological imbalance of preschool teachers and a serious sense of inferiority.

Secondly, the proportion of preschool teachers who want or are eager to get further education and improve their opportunities is as high as 98.04%, while the proportion of preschool teachers who say that there are few opportunities for further education or they are always unable to turn to themselves is as high as 90.24%. The simultaneous emergence of "two high" shows that with the development of the times, almost all preschool teachers have recognized the importance of post-vocational education and hope to get enough post-vocational education. However, the post-

vocational education opportunities provided to preschool teachers are far from meeting the needs of the majority of preschool teachers. 50% of preschool teachers feel that the hot spots of education theory and practice are changing too fast, which is overwhelming. In addition to the reason that kindergartens change too fast in the choice of preschool education concepts used to guide the kindergarten and blindly pursue "new concepts", there is also an important reason, which is the serious lack of preschool teachers' post-vocational education. More than half of preschool teachers have a low sense of professional achievement, of which 77.45% of preschool teachers' greatest desire for work is to be respected and valued and have a sense of belonging. This also shows that in terms of career ideal, preschool teachers' career achievement motivation is quite high. The coexistence of high professional achievement motivation and low sense of professional achievement constitutes a pair of contradictions, which further increases the weight of the negative side of the psychological balance of preschool teachers, making the psychological imbalance of preschool teachers more serious, and this is also the main reason for the high detection rate of positive factors of depression in preschool teachers. In addition, only 6.86% of the total agree with the view that "teachers should give more and take less". It can be seen that with the development of the times, preschool teachers are also pursuing the realization of personal values, and the "market economy" of outlook on life is more common; Compared with the item "the social significance of preschool teachers' profession is significant", 65.69% of the total think that preschool teachers' social significance is significant, which shows that most preschool teachers can realize their own social value while pursuing their personal value. However, the view that the social value should be as great as the personal value has deeply affected the group of preschool teachers, so that 56.86% of preschool teachers believe that the personal value has not been fully reflected.

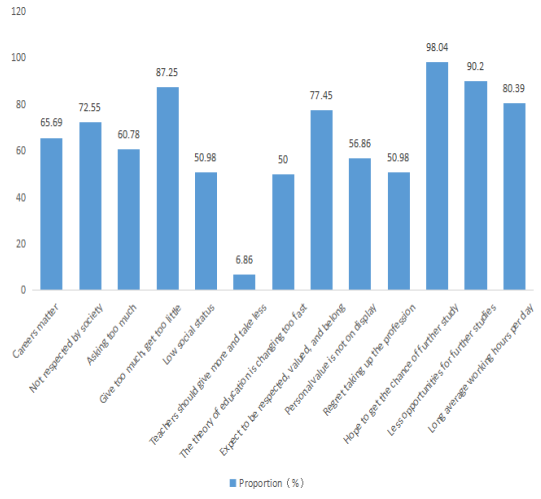


Fig1. Summary of mental health problems of preschool teachers

3. Discussion

As a symbol of humanistic spirit, preschool education is an important carrier for the inheritance and development of Chinese preschool education. Early childhood education is the soul of a nation and a country. The theory of early childhood education is a concentrated manifestation of national early childhood education consciousness and ideological consciousness. In the social development of China and even the world, the theory of early childhood education carries the essence of China's excellent traditional early childhood education, in order to enhance its soft power in early childhood education and promote the process of world civilization. However, currently we are still unable to effectively integrate and utilize these resources, resulting in China being absent from all the time in the world. From a psychological perspective, the reason why people are able to understand a specific theory and form a certain level of cognition is closely related to their daily life experience. Ultimately, the reason why people form "psychological problems" is that they lack understanding of language and its expression forms in daily life, leading to a serious lack of understanding of the theory.

The psychological health of preschool teachers is an individual's adaptation and self-regulation to the environment. Its influence involves social factors, organizational factors and personal factors, which can be summarized as follows:

The requirements of preschool education development bring practical pressure to preschool teachers

First of all, with the progress of society and the continuous updating of knowledge, as preschool teachers shoulder the expectations of society and parents, they cannot stay on the original level of knowledge and knowledge structure. Therefore, when completing the daily work of the kindergarten, teachers are required to keep learning and improving, improve their professional theoretical level and professional quality, participate in various business studies and carry out various research projects.

Secondly, preschool teachers are faced with the competition of social occupation and the pressure of employment, which makes preschool teachers also face many challenges in work and employment. (Guo Dezhen et al., 2010) At present, the educational level of preschool teachers is constantly improving, and the employment competition is increasingly fierce, which makes in-service preschool teachers must devote themselves to work to face the new requirements of continuous progress and the pressure of being dismissed.

Thirdly, kindergarten activities are frequent, and all kinds of competition activities, evaluation inspection and high-pressure management methods also bring various psychological pressures to teachers.

The high expectations of parents and the particularity of early childhood education have caused certain pressure on teachers

In China, the education of children has always been regarded as the top priority. Now every family is an only child. With the improvement of parents' cultural level, especially the influence of some new concepts such as early education and early intelligence development, parents are eager to have their children and unwilling to lose at the starting line. Therefore, they also have high expectations for the knowledge level, teaching ability, teaching methods, and their own quality of preschool teachers, this projection of high expectations on preschool teachers has become a greater psychological pressure. (Wang Lan et al., 2009) Due to the uniqueness of kindergarten work, teachers are faced with many childish children all day long. They are innocent but active, curious about things and lack knowledge, experience and self-control. Teachers should not only spend a lot of energy organizing educational activities, but also patiently and carefully take care of children's food, drink and daily life. Especially, they should be highly vigilant against safety problems. This has

caused them great psychological burden and serious psychological problems.

Preschool teachers' efforts and rewards are disproportionate, causing teachers' psychological imbalance and psychological problems

Kindergarten teachers face twenty or thirty or more ignorant children every day, from health care to teaching, from physical strength to mental strength, which can be said to be physically and mentally tired. Some parents have low quality and discriminate against preschool teachers, which makes teachers' work not be supported and respected as it should be. Some local governments pay little attention to the cause of preschool education and put preschool education into the market, which makes preschool teachers feel that their work is unstable and their lives are not guaranteed. There are also some private kindergartens that are in arrears with teachers' salaries. Many of the above phenomena lead to psychological problems of preschool teachers.

Special environment and special interpersonal communication easily lead to psychological problems of preschool teachers

Kindergarten is a special working environment, and the majority of teachers are women. Women tend to be very careful in their work and have a natural sense of patience and responsibility for children; But they have common weaknesses: Like to compete, like to compete, easy to fluctuate, strong conformity psychology, pay attention to the evaluation of leaders and peers. In various teaching activities in kindergartens, the competition of "choosing the best to work" and "survival of the fittest" makes it easy for teachers to be suspicious and jealous of each other, which leads to a very complex relationship between teachers (Lu Qi et al., 2009). However, women's performance is often implicit and not good at expression, which adds to the psychological pressure of preschool teachers.

Since the work of preschool teachers will bring many psychological problems to preschool teachers, it is necessary to constantly improve and maintain their psychological health. Improving the mental health level of preschool teachers is a systematic project, which requires the full attention and efforts of all aspects and levels of society. Here are some effective countermeasures:

We should provide support and guarantee for the work of preschool teachers at the macro social system level

Strive to create a social atmosphere that attaches importance to the work of preschool teachers and supports the career of preschool teachers. Through publicity, policy formulation and other measures, let all people understand the importance and complexity of early childhood education, (Yang Yan et al., 2009) create a working environment for early childhood teachers that is understanding, harmonious, warm and aggressive, improve their social status, understand their difficulties, and reduce their heavy psychological load. The state should formulate corresponding laws and regulations to improve the treatment and welfare of preschool teachers, put the awareness of "respecting teachers and valuing education" into practice, ensure the legitimate rights and interests of preschool teachers, so that thousands of preschool teachers can relieve their worries, reassure the cause of preschool education, and constantly obtain opportunities for self-development and self-improvement, so as to make contributions to the cultivation of qualified successors for the sound development of children.

Kindergartens should take practical and effective measures to actively maintain the psychological health of preschool teachers

Kindergarten managers should establish the concept of "people-oriented", respect teachers and create a democratic and equal working atmosphere for teachers. We should help teachers establish correct outlook on life, values and clear goals, create conditions to meet the reasonable needs of teachers, so that every teacher can play his or her talents; We should increase teachers' opportunities for further study, help teachers improve their professional skills and enhance their sense of competence; Provide more entertainment or leisure time and places for teachers, let them learn to communicate with others, be good at communicating with others, and integrate themselves harmoniously into the collective while relaxing their mood.

Preschool teachers should also have a correct understanding of themselves and actively carry out self-psychological health education

Kindergarten teachers should face up to reality, downplay utilitarianism, establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values, be loyal to the people's educational cause, constantly strengthen the study of professional cultural knowledge, improve their self-cultivation, and actively participate in the kindergarten education and teaching reform and various work. We should treat life with a positive attitude, maintain an optimistic mind, strive to improve our personality, optimize our personality, cherish friendship, maintain good interpersonal communication, and establish harmonious interpersonal relationships. (Zhou Zhizhi et al., 2008) At the same time, we should learn to self-regulate and maintain a good mood. When we have a bad mood, we can talk to friends or trusted colleagues. In life, preschool teachers should also cultivate a wide range of interests in health, master basic knowledge of mental health, treat themselves well, care about themselves, and strengthen psychological self-care.

Carry out various forms of teachers' mental health education activities to improve teachers' psychological quality

Educational administrative departments and kindergartens can regularly and irregularly hold lectures on mental health knowledge and other activities to publicize mental health knowledge to teachers, so that teachers can learn to adjust themselves and improve their mental health level. Establish a teacher's psychological consultation center, set up a teacher's psychological consultation hotline and a psychological consultation mailbox to provide services for teachers with psychological disorders. (Cai Jun et al., 2008) In addition, we can also use modern network technology to carry out online consultation and provide timely and effective help to teachers.

4. Conclusions

The discussion on the development of Chinese early childhood education theory caused by "psychological issues" reflects on the current situation of contemporary Chinese early childhood education theory construction, and on the other hand, it also allows the academic community to have a deeper reflection on the future construction of Chinese early childhood education theory, including the direction and path of early childhood education research and criticism. When psychology studies the structure of human psychology, it unconsciously combines physiological and psychological phenomena with social factors that people pay attention to, enabling people to see the operational laws of humans, human society, and the entire world from a macro perspective at a

greater and deeper level. When studying the relationship between people, we unconsciously associate this psychological phenomenon with the environment and historical background, thus forming a social phenomenon of early childhood education and its related laws.

Teachers are the leading factor in the process of education and teaching. Therefore, teachers' mental health has become the core of many problems in the process of education. Early childhood education is the first stage of basic education, and the psychological health level of early childhood teachers undoubtedly has a profound impact on children's psychology and behavior. Therefore, in order to improve the level of kindergarten education and promote the comprehensive improvement and healthy development of children's comprehensive quality, we must fully guarantee the psychological health of preschool teachers. At the same time, we should pay attention to the development of early childhood education and should not neglect the early childhood teachers who are struggling at the first line of early childhood education, because they are the greatest contributors to early childhood education.

Conflict of interest

None to declare.

References

[1] Guo Dezhen. Talking about the strategy of preschool teachers' mental health adjustment [J]. Science and technology information. 2010 (05): 14-35.

[2] Wang Lan, Peng Shan, Liu Feng, Zhang Xiaoying Analysis of mental health status of preschool teachers [J]. Chinese Journal of Health Psychology 2009 (03): 127-134.

[3] Lu Qi. Investigation on the mental health status of preschool teachers [J] Yihai. 2009 (06): 08-12.

[4] Yang Yan. Analysis of mental health status and countermeasures of preschool teachers [J] China Educational Technology and Equipment. 2009 (13): 75-84.

[5] Zhou Zhizhi. Research on the current situation, causes and countermeasures of preschool teachers' mental health - Shitou kindergarten teachers as an example [J]. Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition). 2008 (S2): 4-6.

[6] Cai Jun. On the mental health of preschool teachers [J] Journal of Henan Vocational and Technical Teachers College (Vocational Education Edition). 2008 (02): 48-53.