

# ***Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of Preschool Teachers' Post-Service Training Needs: a Case Study of a Kindergarten in S City, Jiangsu Province***

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**Abstract:** This study investigates preschool teachers' post-service training needs and explores strategies to enhance training effectiveness. A total of 31 teachers from A Kindergarten in S City, Jiangsu Province, participated in questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Results show that teachers widely recognize the importance of post-service training for professional competence and educational quality. Their main needs center on teaching skills, updated educational theories, and practical experience. Most preferred blended online-offline formats to balance flexibility and efficiency. Challenges remain, including mismatched content, limited resources, lack of personalization, and weak evaluation mechanisms. Drawing on domestic and international research, this paper suggests strengthening needs assessments, optimizing training content and methods, developing personalized profiles, and improving evaluation systems. These approaches are expected to enhance training effectiveness, foster teachers' professional growth, and promote sustainable preschool education.

**Keywords:** preschool teacher; post-service training; training needs; professional development; evaluation

## **1. Introduction**

Preschool education has attracted increasing public attention in recent years. As early childhood is a critical stage of lifelong development, preschool education quality directly affects children's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional growth. Preschool teachers play a decisive role, as their professional competence strongly influences educational outcomes.

With ongoing reforms, teachers in China are expected to continuously update educational philosophies, adopt innovative methods, and adapt to diverse learner needs. Post-service training provides a key pathway for meeting these requirements. However, training programs are often

criticized for being overly generalized, inflexible, and disconnected from classroom realities.

This study takes A Kindergarten in S City, Jiangsu Province, as a case to analyze teachers' training needs, identify existing problems, and propose feasible countermeasures. Findings aim to inform the optimization of training systems and improve preschool education quality.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2. 1. Training Needs**

Domestic research highlights the importance of post-service training but also its limited ability to address diverse teacher needs<sup>[4, 2]</sup>. Internationally, Guskey<sup>[1]</sup> emphasized that professional development effectiveness should be judged by its impact on teaching practices and student outcomes. Niemi<sup>[3]</sup> noted Finland's approach of aligning training with teachers' personal goals through reflective practices and collaborative learning.

### **2. 2. Training Models**

In China, training remains dominated by lectures and observation<sup>[2]</sup>, while teachers increasingly demand interactive formats such as case analysis and peer workshops<sup>[5]</sup>. Singapore offers a contrasting model by integrating structured mentoring, peer collaboration, and career development pathways (Asia Society, 2016), which balance institutional support with teacher autonomy.

### **2. 3. Evaluation Mechanisms**

In China, evaluations rely mainly on subjective feedback, lacking comprehensive indicators (Wang & Zhang, 2021). International practices adopt multidimensional tools, including classroom observation, peer review, and student performance data<sup>[1]</sup>. This suggests the need for systematic, diversified evaluation mechanisms in China.

### **2. 4. Theoretical Foundations**

This study draws on Knowles' adult learning theory, which emphasizes self-directed, experience-based, and problem-oriented learning, and on professional development theory, which views teacher growth as a continuous, context-specific process. These frameworks highlight the importance of training that is relevant, interactive, and personalized.

## **3. Research Design**

### **3. 1. Research Subjects**

The study surveyed 31 teachers from A Kindergarten in S City, Jiangsu Province. Participants varied in age, teaching experience, and education level. Specifically, 41.94% were aged 18–25, 25.81% were 26–30, 19.35% were 31–35, and 12.90% were 36–40. In terms of teaching experience, 48.39% had less than three years, 41.94% had 3–5 years, and 9.68% had more than five years. Educational backgrounds included junior college (64.52%) and

undergraduate (35.48%). This diversity offered a comprehensive basis for analyzing training needs.

### **3. 2. Research Methods**

A mixed-methods approach was adopted to ensure validity and reliability.

**Questionnaire Survey.** A self-designed questionnaire assessed teachers' training needs across four dimensions: (1) awareness and attitudes, (2) preferences for content and formats, (3) expectations for timing and frequency, and (4) satisfaction and effectiveness. Example items included: "Do you know the post-service training programs currently organized by your kindergarten?"; "Which training format do you prefer (online, offline, or blended)?"; and "What are your main reasons for participating in training?" The questionnaire was reviewed by five early childhood education experts for content validity. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.87, indicating strong internal consistency.

**Semi-Structured Interviews.** To complement survey data, interviews were conducted with 10 teachers (selected through stratified sampling based on teaching experience and professional title) and the kindergarten principal. Questions focused on perceptions of existing training, preferred training providers, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Each interview lasted 30–45 minutes and was recorded with consent.

**Document Analysis.** Policy documents and recent academic studies were reviewed to situate the findings within broader professional development trends domestically and internationally.

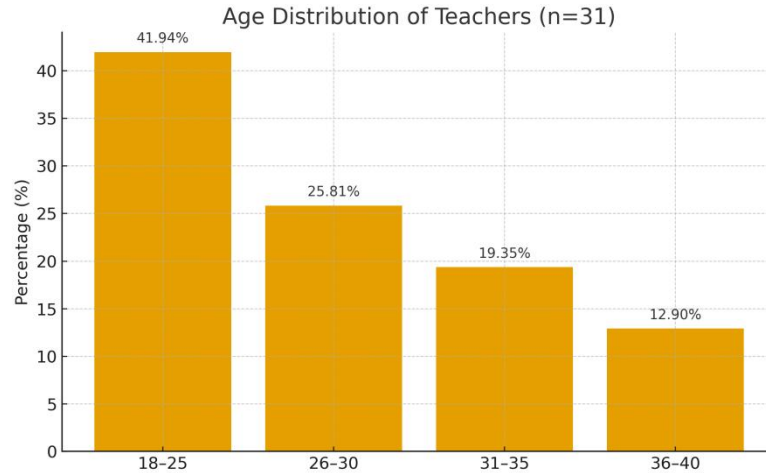
### **3. 3. Research Content**

The study focused on teachers' awareness and attitudes, content and format preferences, expectations for timing and frequency, and evaluations of existing programs.

## **4. Results**

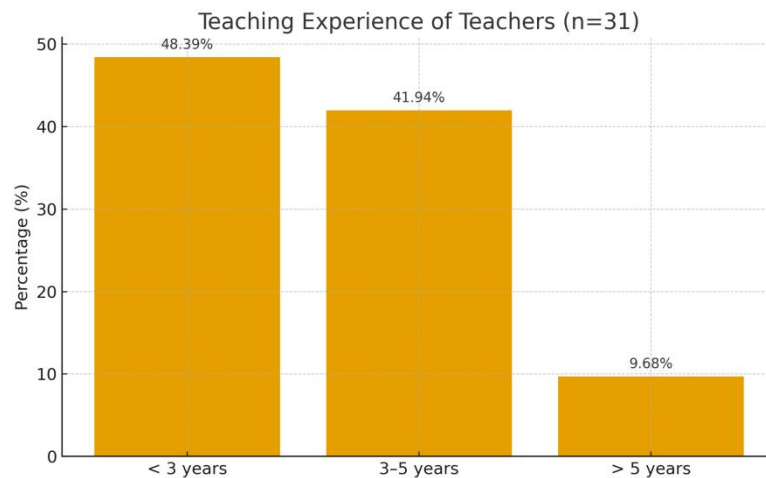
### **4. 1. Teachers' Demographic Characteristics**

Among the 31 respondents, 41.94% were aged 18–25, 25.81% were 26–30, 19.35% were 31–35, and 12.90% were 36–40.



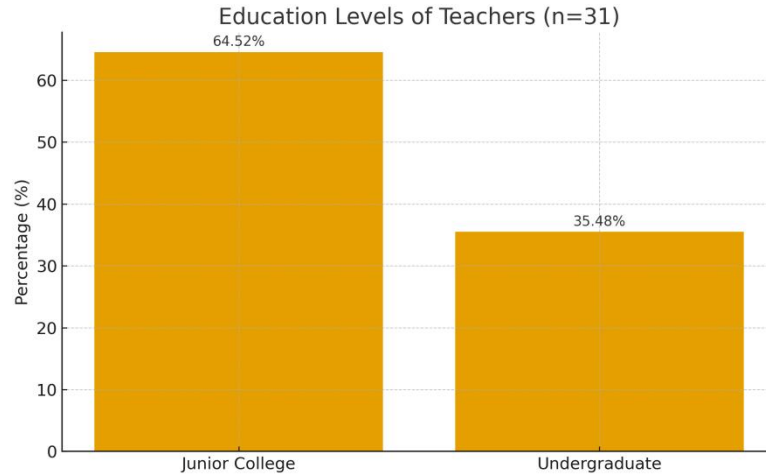
**Figure 1.** Age Distribution of Teachers (n=31)

In terms of teaching experience, 48.39% had less than three years, 41.94% had 3–5 years, and 9.68% had more than five years.



**Figure 2.** Teaching Experience of Teachers (n=31)

Educational backgrounds included junior college (64.52%) and undergraduate degrees (35.48%).

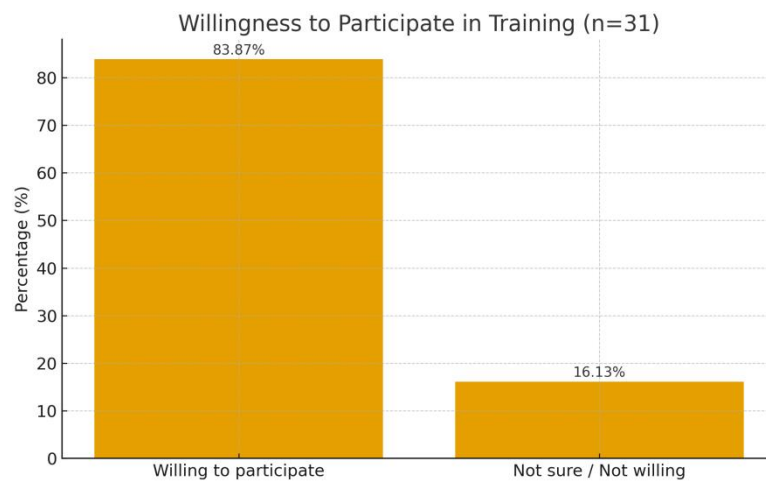


**Figure 3.** Education Levels of Teachers (n=31)

This diversity provided a comprehensive basis for analyzing training needs.

#### **4. 2. Awareness and Attitudes Toward Training**

Overall, 83.87% expressed willingness to participate in training; the remainder reported low motivation or uncertainty.

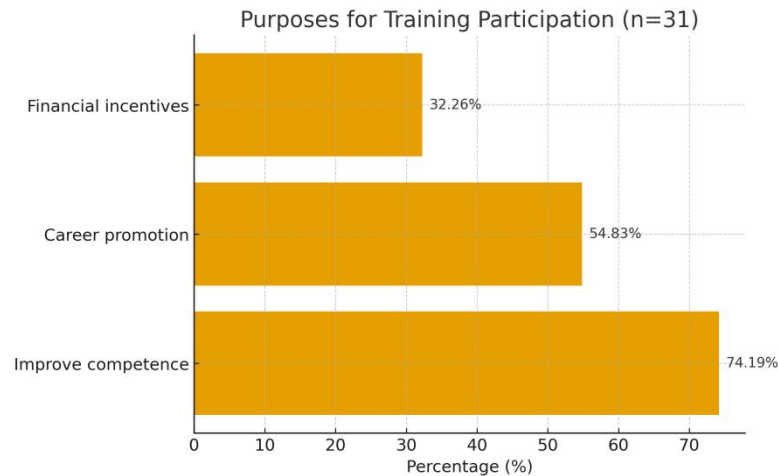


**Figure 4.** Willingness to Participate in Training (n=31)

Most teachers were aware of the importance of post-service training and believed it played a key role in professional growth and educational quality. 83.87% expressed willingness to participate in training, while a minority reported low motivation, citing limited time or weak institutional support.

### 4.3. Purposes of Training Participation

The top reasons were to improve professional competence (74.19%), career promotion (54.83%), and financial incentives (32.26%).

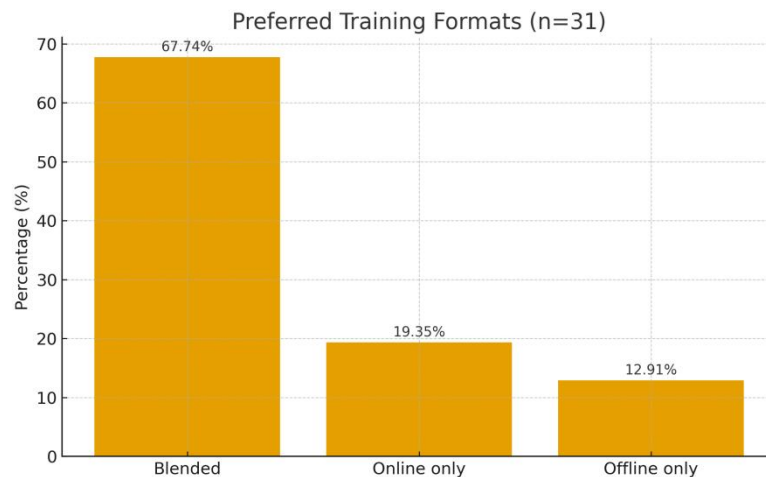


**Figure 5.** Purposes for Training Participation (n=31)

Survey results showed that 74.19% of teachers participated to improve professional competence, 54.83% for career promotion, and 32.26% for financial incentives. Interviews revealed that younger teachers emphasized skill acquisition, while senior teachers stressed career development.

### 4.4. Preferences for Training Content and Formats

A blended online–offline format was most preferred (67.74%), followed by online-only (19.35%) and offline-only (12.91%).

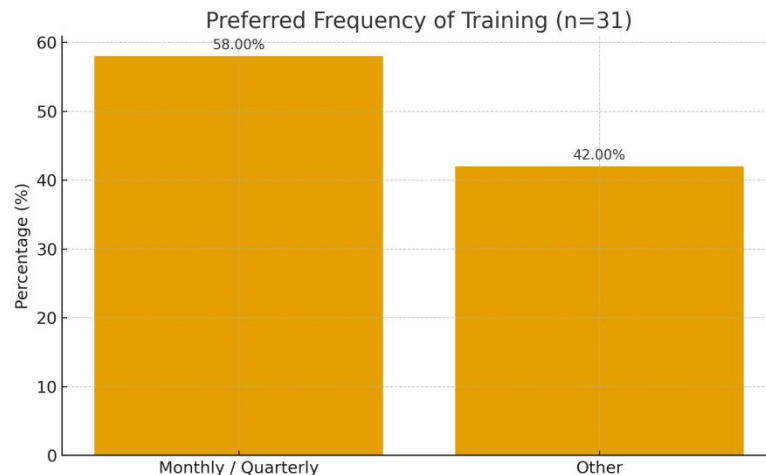


**Figure 6.** Preferred Training Formats (n=31)

Teachers showed strong demand for practical teaching skills, new educational theories, and case-based experience. Regarding formats, 67.74% preferred blended online-offline training, 19.35% preferred exclusively online, and 12.91% preferred only face-to-face. Many teachers highlighted the advantages of interactive workshops and peer learning.

#### 4.5. Preferences for Training Timing and Frequency

About 58% indicated that monthly or quarterly frequency would be most effective.

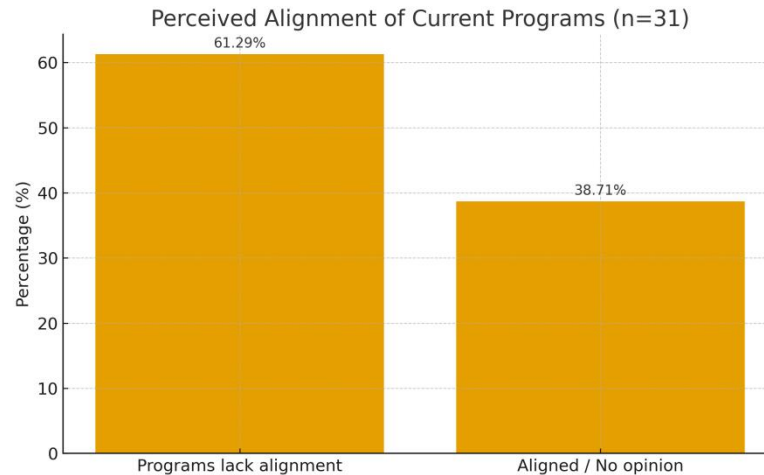


**Figure 7.** Preferred Frequency of Training (n=31)

The majority of teachers preferred training during summer or winter breaks, with shorter, more intensive sessions (e.g., one week) favored over scattered workshops. About 58% indicated that monthly or quarterly frequency would be most effective.

#### 4.6. Evaluation of Current Training

A total of 61.29% felt that current programs lacked alignment with their actual needs.



**Figure 8.** Perceived Alignment of Current Programs (n=31)

While most teachers acknowledged the positive impact of training, 61.29% felt that current programs lacked alignment with their actual needs. Common criticisms included outdated content, insufficient practical application, and overly formalized evaluation methods. Teachers expressed the need for follow-up support and long-term tracking to improve effectiveness.

## 5. Discussion

Teachers widely recognized the importance of post-service training but reported challenges including content-needs mismatch, limited resources, lack of personalization, and weak evaluation.

### 5. 1. Structural Barriers

Personalized training is hindered by administrative, resource, and cultural factors. Training design is often top-down with little teacher input. Uneven resource distribution leaves rural and smaller schools disadvantaged. Cultural norms favor compliance over teacher autonomy in professional development.

### 5. 2. Toward Individualized Development

Personalized teacher profiles should be developed to track career trajectories, strengths, and goals. Mentorship programs, as in Singapore, can support novice teachers, while Finland's collaborative communities demonstrate how reflection and teamwork can foster sustainable growth.

### 5. 3. Strengthening Evaluation

Reliance on satisfaction surveys is insufficient. Evaluation systems should combine classroom observation, peer review, and student learning outcomes. Feedback loops should ensure programs adapt dynamically to evidence-based findings.



## 5. 4. Policy Implications

Policymakers should increase investment in equitable resource distribution and encourage teacher-led learning communities. By integrating adult learning principles with international best practices, China can establish a more sustainable and impactful model of preschool teacher professional development.

## 6. Conclusion

This study shows that preschool teachers at A Kindergarten in S City value post-service training and display strong willingness to participate. Their main needs involve improving teaching skills and updating educational knowledge. However, training programs still face challenges in relevance, resources, personalization, and evaluation. Demand-oriented design, diversified formats, individualized pathways, and comprehensive evaluation can improve training effectiveness. Drawing on domestic and international practices, the study emphasizes systemic reforms to support teacher growth and enhance preschool education quality.

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