

# Preservice Teachers' Professional Ethics Awareness in Preschool Education and Its Enhancement Pathways: A Case Study of Chongqing City

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## Abstract

Professional ethics is the core of kindergarten teachers' profession. To understand the cultivation of professional ethics among preservice teachers majoring in preschool education in Chongqing City, this study used a self-compiled questionnaire to survey the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in the preschool education major at three normal universities in Chongqing City. The results showed that the overall and each dimension of professional ethics awareness is relatively high, with varying degrees of differences in aspects such as grade and gender. The professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers is mainly influenced by the preservice teachers themselves, the school's professional ethics education, and the social recognition of the kindergarten teacher profession. Based on the analysis of existing problems and influencing factors, this study summarizes the pathways to further strengthen the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education: first, to improve the professional ethics awareness of the professional ethics teacher team, second, to optimize the moral education curriculum for preservice teachers, third, to pay attention to the improvement of preservice teachers' self-awareness, and finally, to improve the social understanding of the kindergarten teacher profession from a social perspective.

## Keywords

Preschool Education Major, Preservice Teachers, Professional Ethics Awareness, Current Status Research.

## 1. Introduction

"Comprehensively strengthening the construction of professional ethics and style is an important measure to implement the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and to accelerate the construction of a strong educational country. Good professional ethics and style are the embodiment of the spirit and excellent qualities of teachers in the new era, and they are also the earnest expectation of the Party and the people." As the reserve group of teachers, preservice teachers can only be immune to the influence of bad social customs and demonstrate good professional ethics behavior in future teaching positions under the guidance of correct and noble professional ethics consciousness. In recent years, the educational community has continued to pay attention to the development of teachers' professional ethics, and most of the existing research has focused on the professional ethics of in-service teachers, while there is less research on the professional ethics education of the teacher reserve team - preservice teachers. Bachelor's degree preservice teachers, as the main force of the future teacher industry, are a group worth paying attention to in the field of education.

## 2. Research Design

### 2.1. Research Subjects

This study takes three normal universities in Chongqing City as the research subjects, a total of 187 questionnaires were distributed, 187 were collected, and 187 were valid, with a valid rate of 100%. Among them: 14 males, 173 females; freshmen 43, sophomores 51, juniors 35, seniors 58; urban students 106, rural students 81; students with teacher qualifications 70, students without teacher qualifications 117; 16 students who have not participated in internships, 56 students with internships of 10 days or less, 59 students with internships of 10-30 days, 34 students with internships of 30-90 days, and 22 students with internships of more than 90 days.

### 2.2. Research Tools

#### 2.2.1. Content Structure of the Tool

In order to understand the current situation of professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education in Chongqing City as prospective kindergarten teachers, the "Chongqing Preservice Teachers in Preschool Education Professional Ethics Awareness Survey Questionnaire" was compiled based on the theoretical construct of the three major levels of consciousness and the four major categories of preschool teacher professional ethics, referring to the "Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers" and other related research literature. The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part is the personal information survey, which understands the research subjects' gender, school, grade, place of origin, teacher qualification, and internship experience, mainly for information collection and classification, without a unified scoring; the second part is the professional ethics awareness survey form for preservice teachers in preschool education in the form of a four-point scale, with a total of 27 questions, including three sub-questionnaires of professional ethics cognition, professional ethics emotion, and professional ethics behavior intention. The three questionnaires also each contain the content of four projects: professional understanding and recognition, attitude and behavior towards children, attitude and behavior in child care and education, and personal cultivation and behavior, using a four-point scoring method. The third part is 17 open-choice questions, including investigations of professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education at the personal, school, and social levels.

#### 2.2.2. Reliability and Validity of the Tool

##### 2.2.2.1 Internal Consistency Reliability

The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient of this questionnaire is 0.905 after data analysis of the pre-survey statistics, and the reliability coefficient is greater than 0.9, indicating that the internal reliability of the questionnaire is very good.

##### 2.2.2.1 Structural Validity

The results of the factor analysis show that 5 effective public factors can be extracted from the scale. Although the 3 public factors corresponding to the sub-dimensions were not obtained, the extracted 5 public factors also formed a certain degree of correspondence with the 3 sub-dimensions, to a certain extent, verifying the structural validity of the professional ethics awareness scale, and the results are acceptable.

### 3. Analysis of the Current Status of Professional Ethics Awareness of Preservice Teachers in Preschool Education

#### 3.1. The overall level of professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education is relatively high.

**Table 1.** Overall Scores of Preservice Teachers' Professional Ethics Awareness in Preschool Education

Indicator	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation
Professional Ethics Cognition	187	3.27	0.35
Professional Ethics Emotion	187	3.46	0.44
Professional Ethics Behavioral Intention	187	3.40	0.46
Overall Professional Ethics Awareness	187	3.39	0.35

As shown in Table 1, the overall scores of preservice teachers in preschool education in the three dimensions of "professional ethics cognition," "professional ethics emotion," and "professional ethics behavior intention," and professional ethics awareness are 3.27, 3.46, 3.40, and 3.39, respectively. Among them, the "professional ethics emotion" dimension has the highest score, which is 3.46, followed by the "professional ethics behavior intention" dimension, which is 3.40; the "professional ethics cognition" dimension has the lowest score, which is 3.27. Since this study uses a 4-point scoring system, the median is 2.5, and the scores of each dimension and the overall professional ethics awareness are all higher than 2.5, therefore, the overall level of professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education in Chongqing City is relatively high.

#### 3.2. Analysis of the scoring situation of each dimension of professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education

##### 3.2.1. There is a bias in the professional ethics cognition of preservice teachers in preschool education.

The score of preservice teachers in preschool education at the level of professional ethics cognition is the lowest dimension among the three dimensions of professional ethics awareness, and the bias in the professional ethics cognition of preservice teachers in preschool education is mainly manifested in the cognition of professional dedication spirit and cognition. First, the survey results on professional dedication spirit show that only 9.6% of preservice teachers completely agreed with the statement "kindergarten teachers should dedicate everything to children," indicating that preservice teachers' understanding of "kindergarten teachers should love the preschool education career and have a spirit of professionalism and dedication" is insufficient. Second, in terms of professional positioning, 30% of students completely or relatively agreed with the statement "the work of kindergarten teachers is just a stable means of making a living," lacking a positive attitude towards the career ideals and development of kindergarten teachers.

##### 3.2.2. The professional ethics emotion of preservice teachers in preschool education is relatively warm and positive.

The survey results show that the professional ethics emotion is the highest scoring dimension among the three professional ethics awareness dimensions, indicating that in the future career, preservice teachers in preschool education can maintain a relatively positive mood and attitude

to face children and parents, can engage in child care and education work with a relatively full work attitude, and can obtain a more positive emotional experience from the kindergarten teacher profession.

### **3.2.3. The professional ethics behavior intention of preservice teachers in preschool education lacks professionalism.**

According to the survey results, the lack of professionalism in the professional ethics behavior intention of preservice teachers in preschool education is reflected in "cooperation with families and communities" and "self-regulation of emotions." Only 33.7% of preservice teachers stated that they would go to the families and communities where children are located for investigation and communication in their future kindergarten teacher work. Only 25.7% of preservice teachers said they are good at self-regulation and can maintain a calm attitude in their work.

## **3.3. Differences in Professional Ethics Awareness Levels of Preservice Teachers in Preschool Education**

### **3.3.1. Preservice teachers in preschool education in the junior year have higher professional ethics awareness levels than other grades**

Differences in professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education in Chongqing City show that there are no significant differences in the scores of professional ethics cognition ( $F=1.767$ ,  $p=0.155$ ), professional ethics emotion ( $F=1.484$ ,  $p=0.220$ ), and overall professional ethics awareness ( $F=2.013$ ,  $p=0.114$ ) among preservice teachers of different grades, but there is a significant difference in professional ethics behavior intention ( $F=3.075$ ,  $p=0.029<0.05$ ). After Tamhane test, it was found that the score in the "professional ethics behavior intention" dimension is significantly higher in junior year than in senior year. As shown in Table 3, in the overall and each dimension score of professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education, it can be found that the scores of each dimension and the overall score of preservice teachers in the junior year are relatively high among the four grades of preservice teachers.

### **3.3.2. Female preservice teachers in preschool education have significantly higher professional ethics cognition levels than male preservice teachers**

The independent sample T-test and one-way ANOVA of the overall and three dimensions of professional ethics awareness of different genders of preservice teachers in preschool education show that there is a significant difference in the "professional ethics cognition" dimension ( $t=-1.903$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ), with female scores ( $M=3.30$ ) significantly higher than male scores ( $M=2.96$ ).

### **3.3.3. Preservice teachers with 10-30 days of internship experience have slightly better professional ethics awareness levels than other durations**

Preservice teachers with 10-30 days of internship experience have slightly higher scores in professional ethics cognition, professional ethics behavior intention, and overall professional ethics awareness than other durations, but it does not reach a significant level.

## **4. Analysis of Influencing Factors on Professional Ethics Awareness of Preservice Teachers in Preschool Education**

### **4.1. The impact of career intention and learning participation on professional ethics awareness**

According to the survey data, we found that 62.03% of preservice teachers are willing to engage in their professional careers, but more than 30% are uncertain and unwilling to engage in the preschool education industry. Studies have shown that the emotional, behavioral, and

appropriate aspects of college students' professional identity have a significant predictive effect on the level of learning investment. [8] Therefore, a higher professional identity and future career ideals and plans can significantly promote the current learning of preservice teachers in preschool education. On the contrary, a lack of professional identity and ambiguous career choice attitudes will to some extent demoralize the learning of preservice teachers in preschool education, thereby affecting their professional ethics awareness.

According to this study's survey on the participation of preservice teachers in preschool education in professional ethics awareness education, 59.89% of students occasionally participate in professional ethics learning, 27.27% of students often participate, and 12.83% of students have never participated. The reasons for not participating in this part of the preservice teachers are that the school has not organized relevant educational activities or feels that there is no need to participate. On the one hand, this reflects that some colleges and universities attach relatively low importance to the professional ethics awareness education of preservice teachers and do not often organize or publicize; on the other hand, it also reflects that preservice teachers themselves do not fully recognize the importance of professional ethics awareness and do not have a comprehensive grasp of the necessary qualities as prospective teachers.

## **4.2. The impact of school professional ethics education on professional ethics awareness**

### **4.2.1. Professional ethics education courses**

The survey results show that 54.1% of preservice teachers' schools have set up special courses, and 29.95% of preservice teachers' schools have professional ethics education attached to other courses. This indicates that normal universities in Chongqing City currently attach great importance to the moral education and training of professional ethics. However, 4.81% of students said that their schools have not set up courses and do not learn about professional ethics education. When evaluating the professional ethics education courses of the school, 46.52% of preservice teachers believe that the professional ethics education courses set up by the school are very helpful for improving their own professional ethics literacy, and 45.99% of students believe they are relatively helpful. More than 90% of preservice teachers can improve their professional ethics literacy from the learning of professional ethics education courses, which shows the importance of professional ethics education, especially the establishment of professional ethics courses, for preservice teachers. Combined with the survey and interview results, we found that there are problems with the professional ethics courses for preschool education, such as too much theoretical course setting, less combination with practical application, and poor interest. The course content mainly includes professional ethics theory, laws and regulations, case analysis, etc., and lacks content related to practical ability. When evaluating the professional ethics education courses, the score for interest is the lowest.

### **4.2.2. Teachers' professional ethics level in this school**

According to the survey data of this study, 68.98% of students believe that the professional ethics level of teachers in this school is excellent, and 26.74% of students choose good, indicating that preservice teachers in preschool education currently have a relatively high recognition of the professional ethics of teachers in this school, and more than 90% of students believe that the professional ethics of teachers in this school is at a good level. In this study, preservice teachers also evaluated the professional knowledge, teaching level, and personal cultivation of teachers engaged in professional ethics education courses. The evaluation results show that preservice teachers in preschool education generally recognize the teachers of professional ethics courses, with the highest evaluation in professional knowledge, followed by personal cultivation and teaching level. Therefore, teachers in normal universities play a good role model for preservice teachers in preschool education, and teachers of professional ethics



courses can better educate and cultivate the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers, thereby promoting the improvement of professional ethics literacy of preservice teachers in preschool education. However, we also noticed that students' evaluation of the teaching level of teachers in professional ethics courses is relatively low, and the teaching level of teachers has a great influence on the teaching quality.

#### **4.2.3. Campus spiritual civilization style**

In the survey, 67.91% of students believe that the spiritual civilization style of this school is excellent, and 26.74% of students believe it is good. It can be seen that preservice teachers in preschool education have a high overall evaluation of the spiritual civilization style of the school, and more than 90% of students are relatively satisfied with the atmosphere of the school. Therefore, a good campus spiritual culture atmosphere has a positive role in promoting the professional ethics literacy of preservice teachers in preschool education.

### **4.3. The impact of social factors on professional ethics awareness**

After sorting the six social factors that may affect the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education, we have obtained the results. After scoring the different factors, we found that among the six factors affecting the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education, the importance is in the following order: the degree of respect for preschool teachers in society, the social status of preschool teachers, the expectations of society for preschool teachers, the salary and benefits of preschool teachers, selfish behavior, and materialistic behavior. It is not difficult to find that the respect and recognition of the preschool teacher profession in society, as well as the welfare treatment of the preschool teacher profession, are the social factors that preservice teachers in preschool education care about the most and affect their professional ethics awareness.

Studies have shown that some parents' expectations and views of preschool teachers in society are somewhat deviated from the essence of preschool education. They regard preschool teachers as transmitters of knowledge in advance, full-time responsible persons for children, and absolute followers of parents' will. Such phenomena are easy to cause cooperation problems between teachers and parents, thereby affecting the working state of preschool teachers. [9] The attitude of parents towards preschool teachers is very easy to affect society's view and expectations of preschool teachers. There are studies on the entry preparation of preschool teachers, and many teachers are facing psychological challenges and dilemmas before entering the job, such as dealing with home and garden relationships, professional burnout, and the lack of social recognition of the preschool teacher profession. The attitude and expectations of society towards preschool teachers have a great influence on the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers.

## **5. Pathways to Enhance the Professional Ethics Awareness of Preservice Teachers**

### **5.1. Improve the professional ethics awareness of the professional ethics teacher team**

#### **5.1.1. Moral education teachers should be the best of the best**

School education plays a leading role in the development of individuals, and students' learning has a teacher-oriented nature. The influence of teachers on students is not only in the classroom but also in their words and deeds outside the classroom, which has an important impact on students. Therefore, to enhance the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers, moral education teachers must have a high level of ideological consciousness and a good behavioral role model. First, the reputation of moral education teachers must be better than that of other teachers. Only with a good social comment can they more convincingly teach students. Second,

moral education teachers should have professional moral education knowledge. Moral education is a specialized discipline, and many normal colleges and universities think that moral education is a course that anyone can take, which puts moral education in an insignificant position from the ideological level. To fundamentally value moral education, we must choose professional moral education teachers.

### **5.1.2. Continuously improve the moral education awareness of teachers in normal colleges and universities**

The level of teachers' own moral education awareness determines the quality of moral education for students. First, regularly organize teachers for professional ethics education. The so-called "activity old, learn old," to improve teachers' professional quality, it is necessary to continue to learn and reflect. Schools can set up special teacher professional ethics construction organizations to regularly organize learning and feedback. Second, you can invite well-known professors at home and abroad to give moral education lectures, include teacher moral education in campus culture construction, and regularly carry out campus cultural propaganda. Third, teachers themselves must be strict with themselves, treat students, and treat the teacher profession with full enthusiasm, not only teaching students the knowledge in the books but also being a good example for students, guiding students with their own words and deeds.

## **5.2. Optimize the moral education curriculum**

The three normal colleges and universities in Chongqing have set up special moral education courses, and the vast majority of students believe that they can improve their own professional ethics literacy from the courses. However, there are still problems such as difficult course goals, too much theoretical content in the course, and low interest in the classroom. The research results show that preservice teachers are not satisfied with the moral education courses set by the school, and most students believe that the current moral education course setting is not helpful to their professional ethics awareness, which has a great impact on us. Normal colleges and universities must review the setting of moral education courses. Moral education is a specialized discipline with a special curriculum system, including course goals, course content, and course structure. The moral education course directly determines the direction and level of students' moral education and has a key impact on the formation of professional ethics awareness.

### **5.2.1. Comprehensiveness of moral education course goals**

Pay attention to cultivating preservice teachers' professional ethics cognition. In the basic education stage, we focus on cultivating students' moral behavior, but for college students who already have a high level of self-management ability, we should focus on moral cognition, and the cultivation of professional ethics awareness for preservice teachers in preschool education should also focus on professional ethics cognition first, guiding behavior with knowledge. Second, while focusing on cultivating preservice teachers' professional ethics cognition, the goals of moral education courses also need to be comprehensive, and moral education courses should cultivate students' moral cognition, moral emotions, and moral behavior. The combination of comprehensiveness and key emphasis.

### **5.2.2. Theoretical and interesting coexistence of moral education content**

The realization of course goals requires good course content to carry, and the content of preservice teachers' moral education courses should be both theoretical and interesting to better enable students to absorb and internalize. The content of professional ethics education courses should include professional ethics, laws and regulations, and related policy documents. As for the interest of professional ethics education course content, while teaching theoretical knowledge, attention should be paid to the atmosphere of teaching, and the interest of the content should be enhanced. Using case studies related to life can arouse students' interest

more, and attention should be paid to practical application. During the internship period, targeted tasks should be arranged for teachers' professional ethics. In short, professional ethics education is a unity of theory, emotion, and practice. Only through multi-faceted experience and learning can preservice teachers' professional ethics awareness be better improved.

### **5.2.3. Diversification of moral education teaching forms**

Teaching is a bilateral interactive activity combining teachers' teaching and students' learning. The research results show that in most moral education courses, teacher-led forms are more common, leading to classrooms dominated by teacher output, and students lack enthusiasm. Moral education teachers should reflect on whether their teaching methods are in line with the characteristics of moral education courses and students' learning. Teaching should be student-centered and adopt various forms such as student discussions, group cooperation, and sharing to ensure that knowledge can penetrate students' hearts.

### **5.3. Enhancement of preservice teachers' self-awareness**

The direction of development of things is determined by their internal factors. To improve the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers, not only should normal colleges and universities provide strong support, but more importantly, preservice teachers should give full play to their own subjective initiative, realize the importance of their future careers, and actively improve and perfect their own professional ethics awareness. Improving the self-awareness of professional ethics for preservice teachers mainly depends on their own practice. Therefore, normal colleges and universities should provide as many practice platforms as possible for preservice teachers. In classroom teaching, let students participate actively and talk about their feelings with their own experiences. When organizing preservice teachers for internships, use real teaching environments to let preservice teachers actively interact with students, love their future careers from the heart, and improve their professional identity.

### **5.4. Improve the understanding of preschool education in society**

#### **5.4.1. Regularly promote scientific preschool education knowledge to parents**

In response to the current situation where some parents' expectations and views of preschool teachers are somewhat deviated from the essence of preschool education, and they regard preschool teachers as transmitters of knowledge in advance, full-time responsible persons for children, and absolute followers of parents' will, it can be seen that the general public lacks scientific understanding of preschool education and preschool teachers. Some parents believe that education is a matter of kindergartens alone and that preschool teachers must take care of everything in children's lives and learning. However, they do not know that real preschool education is built by kindergartens, parents, and society working together. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to regularly explain scientific preschool education knowledge to parents and carry out home and garden cooperation activities to truly involve parents in their children's education.

#### **5.4.2. Improve the social status of preschool teachers from all aspects**

From the six factors affecting the professional ethics awareness of preservice teachers in preschool education, it is found that the degree of respect for preschool teachers in society and the expectations of society for preschool teachers are the most important. In contrast, in real life, many people believe that the profession of preschool teachers has a low threshold and is not professional, which is one of the reasons for the low social status of preschool teachers. On the other hand, due to the current situation where private kindergartens account for a large proportion in our country, many preschool teachers do not have positions, and their wages and benefits are low, which is an important reason for the low social status of preschool teachers. Therefore, to improve the impression of preschool teachers in society, it is necessary for both the country and society to take action. First, the country should pay attention to it from the



policy level and improve the welfare treatment of preschool teachers. Second, colleges and universities should cultivate preservice teachers with excellent professional theory and skills. Finally, preschool teachers should be dedicated and responsible in their positions, show professional ability, and gradually improve the public's view.

## 6. Conclusion

This study conducted an in-depth analysis of the professional ethics awareness of undergraduate students majoring in preschool education from three normal universities in Chongqing through questionnaire surveys. The findings revealed that the overall level of professional ethics awareness among student teachers is relatively high, but there are differences across the three dimensions of professional ethics cognition, professional ethics emotions, and professional ethics behavioral intentions, with the highest score in professional ethics emotions and the lowest in professional ethics cognition. Additionally, the study found that the professional ethics awareness of student teachers is influenced by various factors, including personal, school, and societal aspects, such as career intentions, learning participation, professional ethics education courses, the professional ethics level of school teachers, the spiritual civilization of the campus, and societal respect and expectations for kindergarten teachers.

In response to the issues identified in the study, this paper proposes several pathways to enhance the professional ethics awareness of student teachers: First, it is necessary to improve the professional ethics awareness of the ethics teaching team by selecting outstanding moral education teachers and continuously enhancing their ethical awareness. Second, optimize the moral education curriculum to ensure comprehensive curriculum objectives, theoretical and interesting content, and diversified teaching methods. Third, focus on enhancing the self-awareness of student teachers by increasing their professional identity through practical experience and participation. Lastly, from a societal perspective, improve the understanding of the kindergarten teacher profession, enhance its social status, and regularly promote scientific preschool education knowledge to parents.

In summary, enhancing the professional ethics awareness of undergraduate student teachers in preschool education is a systematic project that requires the joint efforts of individuals, schools, and society. The implementation of these comprehensive measures can effectively improve the professional ethics awareness of student teachers and lay a solid foundation for cultivating high-quality kindergarten teachers.

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