

Identity and Construction: Deconstructing the "Omnipotent" Identity in Early Childhood Teachers' Self-concepts

Jing He^{1,2,*}, Ping Wang^{3, a}

¹ Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience, Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

² School of Education Science, Anhui Normal University, Wuhu, China

³ Faculty of Education, Northeast Normal University, Changchun, China

*Corresponding Author: Jing He E-mail: lanyueliang_hj@126.com, ^aE-mail: 3690150101@qq.com

ABSTRACT

The "ideal role" in the minds of early childhood teachers is the foundation and starting point of early childhood teachers' role research and the development of role theories. Through the questionnaire, the personality and ability characteristics of the "ideal early childhood teacher" were obtained, and the "ideal early childhood teacher" role as understood by early childhood teachers themselves was analysed. Through the questionnaire, the personality and ability characteristics of the "ideal early childhood teacher" were obtained, and the role of the "ideal early childhood teacher" as understood by early childhood teachers themselves was analysed. Drawing on the "Upland Associative Assessment Method", an associative assessment tool developed in the 1990s to assess the effects of moral education, we combined qualitative and quantitative methods to collect information on multi-dimensional role concepts at the conceptual level through the distribution of open-ended questionnaires, to obtain an appropriate amount of information on the extents of the ideal roles, and then discuss the connotations of the ideal roles of kindergarten teachers—connotation of role. The two theoretical frameworks of personality image and role cluster were used to analyse and summarise the characteristics of the "ideal kindergarten teacher" in the minds of kindergarten teachers from the collection of high-frequency vocabulary of characteristics and behavioural vocabulary, and then use the theoretical analysis to further construct the ideal personality image and the characteristics of the ideal roles in the minds of the subjects. Through the perspective of role conceptual elements, the deconstruction of the content of the ideal role of kindergarten teachers is carried out to define the dimensions of the ideal role of kindergarten teachers, describe the specific content of the ideal role of kindergarten teachers, clarify the problems related to the conceptual connotations, and effectively outline the specific meanings and basic patterns of the ideal role of kindergarten teachers.

KEYWORDS

Ideal Role; Early Childhood Teacher; Role Perception; Personality Traits; Competency Elements.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Motivation

In psychology, self mainly refers to self-consciousness and self-concept, which is the individual's recognition of his or her state of existence and the result of the individual's perception of his or her social role. The self is a joint research topic in psychology, sociology, philosophy and other disciplines. Sociologists and psychologists such as James, Cooley, Mead, Freud, and Piaget have carried out relevant research on the "self". Knowledge of the individual is an important research topic

in Western sociology and philosophy. Self-aware individuals can only have a sense of subjectivity when they carry out specific practical activities, and the self is the subject of the activities. Individual socialisation is manifested in identifying and internalising social expectations, which is the formation of individual personality, including the self and the process of role learning and role-playing. Personality is the stable character and traits within an individual, and the self is the main component of personality; roles significantly influence an individual's personality, and roles are the external manifestations of personality, which influence the formation of an individual's personality.

Role and personality are ultimately expressed through the specific actions of individuals. Behavioural patterns are the core content of sociological research, and the primary purpose of rooted theory research also lies in exploring and understanding individual behavioural patterns. What kind of image of "ideal role" do early childhood teachers have in their minds? This is early childhood teachers' foundation and starting point of role learning. The form of the ideal role is the starting point and foundation for the development of role theory. Through the questionnaire, the personality and ability characteristics of the "ideal kindergarten teacher" were obtained to analyse the role of the "ideal kindergarten teacher" as understood by the kindergarten teachers. The two theoretical frameworks of personality image and role cluster were used to analyse the characteristics of "ideal teachers" in the minds of kindergarten teachers from the collection of the high-frequency vocabulary of characteristics and behavioural vocabulary. Then, theoretical analysis was used to construct the ideal personality image and the characteristics of the ideal roles in the subjects' minds. Through the perspective of role conceptual elements, the deconstruction of the ideal role of kindergarten teachers is carried out in order to define the dimensions of the ideal role of kindergarten teachers, describe the specific content of the ideal role of kindergarten teachers, and clarify the problems related to the conceptual connotations, to effectively outline the specific connotations and basic patterns of the ideal role of kindergarten teachers.

1.2. Research Problem

The concept of self-role has been explored in various studies over the years. Couch (1962) examined the relationship between family role specialization and self-attitude in children. Dukes et al. (1973) focused on self-role incongruence and role enactment in simulation games. Chassin et al. (1985) investigated the role perceptions, self-role congruence, and marital satisfaction in dual-worker couples with preschool children. Jones (1986) delved into the relationship between socialization tactics, self-efficacy, and newcomers' adjustments to organizations. Meyers-Levy (1988) studied the influence of sex roles on judgment. Wei et al. (2011) explored the self-role perception of nurse practitioners in northern Taiwan, highlighting positive self-role perceptions such as enjoying success and self-improvement. Reich et al. (2013) studied life satisfaction and the self, examining self-role congruence as a predictor of life satisfaction. Wang et al. (2014) linked transformational leadership with employee creativity, emphasizing the role of creative role identity and creative self-efficacy. Iwasaki et al. (2017) focused on the importance of maternal/self-role satisfaction in reducing anxiety among Japanese mothers. In a more recent study, Reich et al. (2019) introduced the concept of self-role integration as a person-specific predictor of life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour. This study emphasized the importance of understanding the linkages between actual self and role identities in predicting life satisfaction and behaviour.

The ideal role of early childhood teachers is a topic of interest in education, with various studies focusing on teacher professionalism and practices. Chen et al. (2006) conducted a study in the USA to assess the attitudes, skills, and instructional methods related to computer use among pre-kindergarten teachers. This highlights the importance of preparing early childhood teachers for the integration of technology in the classroom. Fenech et al. (2010) discussed the need to reimagine and practice teacher professionalism in the Australian early childhood education sector in a way that upholds children's rights and interests. This suggests that professionalism in early childhood teaching goes beyond technical practices and should consider the broader context of children's well-being and

development. A Canadian study by Chang-Kredl et al. (2014) focused on pre-service teachers' identity expectations in early childhood education. The study emphasized the emotional dimensions of teachers' memories and identities and the importance of addressing the political aspects of a prospective teacher's convictions. This highlights the complexity of preparing individuals for a profession with high attrition rates. The role of ICT in early childhood education was explored by Kerckaert et al. (2015), emphasizing the development of scales to measure ICT use and influencing factors in early childhood settings. This suggests that technology integration is an essential aspect of the ideal role of early childhood teachers in the modern educational landscape. Park et al. (2017) examined early childhood teachers' beliefs about readiness for teaching STEM subjects, revealing various themes in teachers' opinions about STEM education. This indicates the importance of understanding teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards specific subject areas in early childhood education.

Furthermore, Hakim et al. (2018) conducted focus group discussions with early childhood education teachers in Indonesia to investigate their perspectives on professionalism in early childhood practice. The study identified key elements contributing to teachers' understanding of professionalism, emphasizing continuous professional development. Overall, the literature suggests that the ideal role of early childhood teachers involves a combination of technical skills, emotional intelligence, and commitment.

Personality traits play a significant role in various aspects of life, including educational and career choices, unemployment duration, conflict management, consumer behaviours, and academic achievement. Larson et al. (2010) found that personality traits, combined with vocational self-efficacy and interests, influence the selection of educational majors. Uysal et al. (2011) highlighted the impact of personality traits on individual unemployment duration and job offers. Gratz et al. (2011) emphasized the role of personality traits in childhood borderline personality features, especially in the presence of environmental stressors like emotional abuse. Furthermore, personality traits have been linked to empathy levels (Winning et al., 2015), followed recommendations on social media platforms (Tommasel et al., 2015), consumer behaviours (Liu et al., 2016), and career outcomes (Green et al., 2016). Personality traits can influence conflict management styles and job performance (Ayub et al., 2017). Malykh (2017) explored the impact of 'Big Five' personality traits and non-verbal intelligence on academic achievement among high school students, highlighting the complex relationships between intelligence, personality traits, and academic success. These studies underscore the importance of considering personality traits in various contexts to better understand individual behaviours, choices, and outcomes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Question raising and research design.

"The Upland Associative Assessment Method (UAAM) is an associative assessment tool developed by Japanese scholars in the 1990s to assess the effectiveness of moral education, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to make the results objective. The word association method has been used in psychology and linguistics for a long time, and the main procedure is to let the subjects freely associate words in a group and then process and analyse the data collected, including the number of words and their frequency of occurrence.

This method avoids the influence of national policies and public expectations on interpreting concepts in closed questionnaires and reflects the subjects' fundamental views and perspectives. Individuals interpret their ideas and perceptions of the concepts through associations. When "ideal role of early childhood teachers" is the central word, subjects are asked to make associations and write down the associations within a specified period, and these words can reflect the ideal roles in the concepts of early childhood teachers. Some of the more common ways of doing this include directly collecting

understandings and perceptions of ideal roles, such as "What do you think the image of a good early childhood teacher is like?" and then summarising the contents of the open-ended questionnaire. Another example is to ask early childhood teachers to judge the ideal teacher's prescribed, acceptable and prohibited behaviours in order to infer the behavioural patterns of early childhood teachers.

Accordingly, this study determines the extent of ideal roles by distributing an open-ended questionnaire to highlight the concentration of ideal role content and then discuss the connotations of ideal roles of early childhood teachers. On the other hand, unlike collecting information at the practical level, this method is more suitable for collecting multidimensional conceptions of the ideal role at the conceptual level. It was found that the method of asking teachers to answer the question "What is the ideal role?" directly through an explicitly structured questionnaire was challenging to implement, mainly because the term "role" is abstract and many answers were far from the role theory or limited to the role theory. The main reason is that the term 'role' is abstract, and many answers are far from role theory or limited to a single aspect. As a result, the study's logic was mainly inductive, summarising the extension of the ideal role. Accordingly, this study drew on this word association method to develop the questionnaire by using the words "ideal early childhood teacher", "good early childhood teacher", and "poor early childhood teacher" as associations with the following steps. The specific steps are as follows:

2.1. Open-ended Questionnaire for Data Collection

Four kindergartens in S province, T city and H city were selected, two of which are located in the urban areas of provincial capital cities, and the other two are located in the urban areas and rural areas of prefecture-level cities; one of the first two kindergartens is a provincial excellent demonstration kindergarten, and the other is a kindergarten of a district organ. Sixty-four kindergarten teachers in small, medium and large classes were selected to fill in the questionnaires, including junior and senior interns majoring in preschool education in teacher training colleges and kindergarten teachers in service. During the open-ended questionnaire collection process, the participants were asked to write down as many words as possible to describe their conception of the "ideal kindergarten teacher". The open-ended questionnaire was based on a free-association approach and contained three questions about the qualities of an "ideal early childhood teacher", his/her behaviour, and how he/she differed from "good teachers" in other school sectors.

Table 1. Basic Information Sheet for Early Childhood Teachers.

| Dimension | Variant | Numbers | Percentage |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------|------------|
| Genders | Male | 8 | 12.5% |
| | Female | 56 | 87.5 % |
| Years of teaching experience | 0~5 years | 63 | 98.44% |
| | 5~10 years | 1 | 1.56% |
| Professionals | preschool education | 63 | 98.44% |
| | Other specialities | 1 | 1.56% |

2.2. Questionnaire Data Analysis Using Content Analysis

After the questionnaire data were collected, the research was conducted mainly using the "word frequency analysis" and "category analysis" of the content analysis method and the adequate vocabulary was categorised and integrated according to the following rules. Firstly, the daily behaviours of "ideal kindergarten teachers" were analysed. The obtained data were collated and summarised, and the characteristics of ECE teachers or overly broad terms were eliminated to form

an understanding of the daily behaviours of ideal ECE teachers, which were mainly classified into two types of behaviours, namely, occupational role behaviours and social activity role behaviours. Secondly, the characteristics of the 'ideal role' should be analysed. This question reflects the specificity of the professional work of early childhood teachers, and the number of times the words "responsible for children", "patient with children and parents", and "quick response" were mentioned showed a high probability.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Analysis of findings: ideal roles in early childhood teachers' self-concepts.

The ideal role of the individual early childhood teacher is the specific expression of the ideal role in kindergarten education practice and is also an essential part of the ideal role. According to the relevant analyses of educational research texts, the ideal role of early childhood teachers is embodied in the specific practical activities of kindergarten, where young children are the main actors and teachers are the supporting roles", which is the most common theatre metaphor in the current field of early childhood education. Early childhood teachers, as the actual implementers of kindergarten educational activities, are the actual players of the teacher's role in early childhood education activities, and their ideal role concepts are the most intuitive reflection of the ideal role in practice. Collecting and organising the ideal role concepts of early childhood teachers and launching relevant discussions can effectively enrich the connotation of ideal role concepts in the education system.

3.1. Presentation Logic of the Ideal Role in Early Childhood Teachers' Conceptions

"Perception" refers to an individual's viewpoint and perception of something. Unlike the monolithic representation of ideal roles in policy making and educational research, the "ideal role" in the conception of early childhood teachers refers to a general conception of the "ideal role of early childhood teachers", that is, views and perceptions related to the "ideal role" of early childhood teachers. The "ideal role" in the conception of early childhood teachers refers to the general conception of the "ideal role of early childhood teachers", i.e., the views and opinions related to the "ideal role" of early childhood teachers. The emphasis on 'role' is because not all perceptions of 'early childhood teachers' can be described as role-related. Since this role conception answers the ontological question of the "ideal early childhood teacher", it is more inclined to deduce the way of the ideal early childhood teacher's existence by deductive logic, including the role conceptions of specific individuals and groups.

Usually, they are more inclined to the behaviours and qualities of specific early childhood education activities, such as the description of "supporter, collaborator, and interlocutor", and are mostly epistemologically oriented towards kindergarten play and teaching activities. This conception of roles reflects the actual situation of early childhood teachers but can be used as a basis for developing kindergarten educational activities. Concepts are often embodied in specific practical activities, and the concrete expression of the role is the behavioural pattern, so the ideal role refers to the behavioural pattern of the conceptual role, which is also in line with the sociologist's view of role theory. The description of "behavioural patterns" can reflect the conceptual roles, but "conceptual, behavioural patterns" mainly refer to the individual judgement of the researcher's contingent, probable and actual behaviours of the ideal roles, which differ from the specific behaviours in the concrete practice. The role is also influenced by the individual's relationship with the person. In addition, roles are also influenced by the individual's relationship, status, and specific situations. Based on the above analyses, the ideal role in the conception of early childhood teachers is a more specific form of existence. The reason for this is that early childhood teachers are the actual workers of early childhood education practice, the actual players of the role which directly affects young children's physical and mental development. The ideal role is analysed starting from the conception of the role of early childhood teachers. It can be found that the ideal role in the conception of early childhood teachers is mainly

manifested in specific educational behaviours, i.e., among the four elements of the role: expectation, relationship, status and behaviour, the ideal role in the conception of teachers is mainly directed to the aspect of "behaviour". They use the word association method to collect data through the collection of teachers' associations, obtain the extension elements of the ideal role in the conception of early childhood teachers, and explore the form of the ideal role and the content of the elements.

3.2. Specific Presentations of Ideal Roles in Early Childhood Teachers' Perceptions

Personality trait theory and personality type theory are these two approaches to describing personality in personality research. Traits refer broadly to personality traits, which are generally expressed as adjectives. Traits are stable behavioural tendencies that are more abstract than habits and can be inferred from a person's external behaviours. They are the intrinsic motivational mechanisms of an individual's behaviours; personality traits are stable across time and situations. In this study, we mainly used the method of personality description to analyse the questionnaire to collect data and collected adjectives or adjective phrases reflecting the traits or characteristics of the "ideal early childhood teacher" through the questionnaire and interviews in order to allow early childhood teachers to describe the traits that the "ideal early childhood teacher" should have in their perceptions. The study aimed to ask teachers to describe their perceptions of what an "ideal early childhood teacher" should be. The main instruments used in personality research were Cattell's 16 Personality Factor Test and the Big Five Personality Factor Inventory. The personality traits of responsibility, patience, caring, keen observation, and quick response ability in the questionnaire were relatively consistent with joyfulness, perseverance and autonomy in the 16 personality factors. In order to refine the ideal roles in the concepts of early childhood teachers, this study takes the "personality and image of ideal roles" as the primary form of reflection of the concept of ideal roles and adopts the way of the free association of early childhood teachers to collect the collection of epithets of the concepts of ideal roles of teachers, and supports the use of the terms "good teacher" and "bad teacher" to describe the ideal roles of young children. The questionnaire survey on "good kindergarten teachers" and "poor kindergarten teachers" effectively supplemented the ideal role. Through the questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews, the adjectives of the characteristics of the "ideal early childhood teacher" were sorted out, and the vocabulary was categorised according to the principle of merging and summing up. The words that were too broad appeared infrequently and were challenging to merge, such as the level and the quality, were deleted. According to the suggestions of several preschool education experts and professors, after further summarising and naming each dimension, the "ideal early childhood teacher's role characteristics" in the conception of early childhood teachers were formed.

3.2.1. "Personality Traits" of the Ideal Role of the Early Childhood Teacher

The original meaning of "personality" is the image of an individual in the stage, the impression and characteristics of an individual in the conception of other members, and the external presentation of an individual's role. By extracting the traits of the ideal personality of early childhood teachers, it is possible to find the distinctive features of the ideal personality in the conception of early childhood teachers. Personality is composed of traits that combine to form different personalities. Therefore, the "ideal early childhood teacher" role should be multifaceted and composite; that is, it must contain various personality traits. In the questionnaire design process, we mainly reflect the theoretical idea of personality trait theory and collect adjectives to extract the personality characteristics of "ideal early childhood teachers" in the conception of early childhood teachers. In analysing and summing up, we mainly adopt the personality type theory and classify "ideal early childhood teachers" into the following types of personalities. In analysing and summarising, the "ideal kindergarten teacher" was mainly classified into the following personality traits using the theory of personality typology. Through the completion of the open-ended questionnaire by 64 kindergarten teachers, a total of 382 relevant associations were collected. The ideal role concepts of early childhood teachers in the questionnaire survey were consistent in content and form. After conducting word frequency statistics,

the top 10 words were selected as the primary association words. The details are shown in Table 3-2 below.

Table 2. Personality Traits and Importance of the "Ideal Early Childhood Teacher"

| Attributes | Total Word Frequencies | Percentage of word frequency |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| warm-hearted and friendly | 179 | 89.06% |
| self-confident and generous | 168 | 75% |
| uprightness and courageous | 169 | 57.81% |
| Fairness and Impartiality | 89 | 51.56% |
| Honest and faithful | 67 | 51.56% |
| Enthusiastic and open-minded | 182 | 96.88% |
| Broad-minded | 158 | 84.38% |
| Calm and collected | 155 | 73.44% |
| Responsibility | 165 | 57.81% |
| Willingness to contribute | 132 | 57.81% |
| Diligent and studious | 146 | 58.34% |

By analysing the personality traits of the "ideal kindergarten teacher", it can be seen that the role traits are mainly related to the interaction between kindergarten teachers and young children and the personality traits of kindergarten teachers in the contact between kindergarten teachers and their families. Among them, "cheerful and enthusiastic", "confident and generous", and "enthusiastic" highlight the difference between the professional roles of kindergarten teachers and those of teachers in primary and secondary schools and other school segments, which is in line with the contents of the interviews with kindergarten teachers. The interviews with the kindergarten teachers showed that all of the kindergarten teachers agreed that "extroverted" personality traits were more in line with the professional role of kindergarten teachers and that they were conducive to the work of kindergartens. Almost all of the kindergarten teachers who identified themselves as introverted in the interviews talked about their difficulties with home and family contact, while those who identified themselves as extroverted said they struggled with their parents. On the other hand, teachers with "extroverted" personalities said that the process of dealing with parents was "gratifying" and that they "made more friends and learnt a lot". Personality traits such as "responsible", "fair and just", and "calm and collected" mainly reflect the outward appearance of a "good teacher" in the process of teacher-child interaction. The external presentation of a "good teacher" is mainly reflected in teacher-child interaction. When talking about the topic of "ideal teacher" and "good kindergarten teacher", "responsible for children", "patient", "cannot be impatient", and "cannot be a good teacher" are the most important. "Being responsible for children", "being patient", and "not being impatient and aggressive" are personality traits that almost all kindergarten teachers would recognise and put at the top of their list. As for the personality trait of "diligent and studious", most kindergarten teachers attribute it to the enhancement of professional knowledge. The "personality trait" dimension of the ideal early childhood teacher mainly describes the expected qualities in teacher-child interactions and other aspects of kindergarten and reflects teachers' optimistic attitude in their work and life.

3.2.2. Specific Images of Ideal Roles

The image of the role is a combination of behavioural patterns, values, personality traits and other aspects of the subject of the role. The "image" dimension of the ideal teacher's role mainly describes the expectations and relationship management in the interaction between teachers and children and

embodies the optimistic attitude of teachers in their working lives. The ideal early childhood teacher should have three ideal role images: "participant, co-operator", "facilitator, guide", "consultant", "facilitator" and "facilitator". Facilitator, guide", "counsellor", and "facilitator, inspirer". As shown in the figure below, there are three ideal role images and corresponding characteristics of the "ideal early childhood teacher" in the eyes of early childhood teachers. "Participant, collaborator" means that teachers and children learn together, promote each other in thinking and exploring, and make progress together. The "facilitator and guide" refers to guiding children's learning. The term "consultant" refers to the person to whom young children turn for help, advice and discussion about their learning problems and issues. The term "facilitator and inspirer" refers to the provision of learning assistance to children, with particular emphasis on inspiration and guidance.

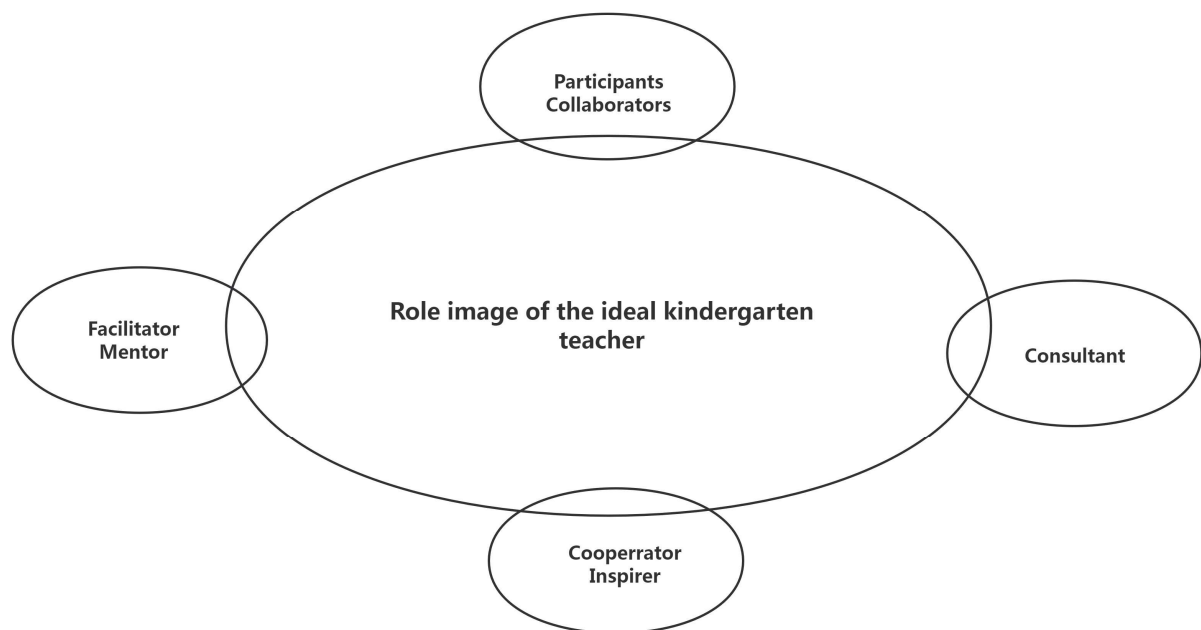


Fig. 1 Specific images of the ideal role of an early childhood teacher.

3.2.3. Competency Elements of the Ideal Role

Table 3. Competency Elements for the Ideal Early Childhood Teacher Role.

| Vocabularies | Total Word Frequencies | Percentage of word frequency |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Capacity of caring for young children | 100 | 26.23% |
| Teaching skills | 73 | 19.35% |
| Ability to support and direct play activities | 123 | 3.23% |
| Ability to motivate and evaluate young children | 9 | 13.79% |
| Communication and cooperation skills | 53 | 11.86% |
| Ability to play the piano, dancing, singing, painting | 84 | 22.03% |
| Capacity for self-reflection | 13 | 3.64% |
| Self-directed learning capacity | 7 | 1.85% |
| Capacity to conduct research | 21 | 5.56% |

The ideal role in the conception of early childhood teachers is directly related to the content of their daily work and life and is the most direct reflection of their ideal behavioural patterns. While

collecting data on ECE teachers' conceptions of ideal roles, the term "ECE teachers' competence" was still used as the central term to reflect the extended elements of their conceptions of roles. The main results are shown in the table below. Firstly, most ECE teachers' conception of the ideal role should be the ability to take care of young children first, which is the most essential ability of a caregiver. Secondly, the ability to teach, the ability to play and sing and draw, and the ability to support and guide play activities are the competencies required to carry out specific educational and teaching activities; the ability to motivate and evaluate young children is a reflection of the teacher's competence in the process of teacher-child interactions; the ability to communicate and co-operate is a reflection of the competence in the process of home-home interactions or home-based co-education; and the ability to reflect on oneself, to learn independently, and to carry out research is a reflection of the ideal role's Self-learning ability.

3.2.4. "Good Early Childhood Teachers (GETs) and Poor Early Childhood Teachers (POETs)

"Good Kindergarten Teachers" and "Poor Kindergarten Teachers", i.e., those who fulfil their roles well and those not well adapted to their roles, reflect the differences between ideal Kindergarten Teachers and those who do not quite fit the norm. "Good teachers" can be seen as a group that plays the role of ECCTs well and "poor teachers" as a group that does not play the role well, and "good teachers" and "poor teachers" are used as the central terms to collect teachers' opinions. Good teachers" and "poor teachers" were used as the central words to collect teachers' associations and gain a deeper understanding of the ideal roles perceived by early childhood teachers. By comparing the differences in role conceptions between the two, the ideal role-playing status of kindergarten teachers was assessed to reflect the ideal role conceptions of kindergarten teachers side by side. According to the questionnaire, "respecting children", "being responsible", and "being patient" have become essential criteria for measuring the ideal Kindergarten Teacher. In the description of an ideal kindergarten teacher, besides fulfilling the duties that kindergartens should fulfil, the prominent expression is some "attitudinal" words, which indicate the teacher's responsible status in communicating with children and parents. In the eyes of Kindergarten teachers, the "excellence" of an ideal Kindergarten teacher involves many aspects. As one of the Kindergarten teachers in the interview mentioned:

Nowadays, many kindergartens have very high requirements for kindergarten teachers in all aspects; in the park, under the premise of their work, professional skills must also be excellent, multi-talented, paper-cutting, handmade, environmentally friendly creation of each hand. I also want to show strong problem-solving and interpersonal skills in kindergarten activities and parent contact.

Compared to good teachers, incompetent teachers, in addition to not complying with kindergarten rules and regulations and not having a teaching qualification, also display behavioural deviations reflected in kindergarten rules and regulations regarding lack of conscientiousness and respect for kindergarten rules and regulations. The ideal early childhood teacher role usually needs to fulfil the aspects advocated in policy and educational research, and if early childhood teachers ensure that they stay within the basic 'role' norms, they will be categorised as competent teachers. This implies that a fundamental professional role can be ensured if behaviours align with the fundamental role norms, but if the ideal role is to be attained, performance must be more outstanding in all aspects. The self-construction of the ideal role of early childhood teachers is of great value. The image of the ideal role in the conception of early childhood teachers is positive, both traditional and modern, but needs the assumption of the spirit of early childhood teachers, which is similar to that of teachers in general and should have its unique qualities. Early childhood teachers have the same criteria for evaluating the ideal role. The ideal teacher should have a positive attitude towards work and be able to respond to public and parental expectations while doing his/her job well. Incompetent teachers, on the other hand, are reflected in the lack of work and misconduct. In the questionnaire survey, the subjects preferred to judge "incompetent teachers" from the perspective of misconduct. They regarded teachers whose behaviours did not go beyond the national policies and systems and the rules and regulations of the

school as "ordinary teachers" and those whose behaviours exceeded the basic standards as "ordinary teachers". Those whose behaviour does not go beyond national policies and school regulations are regarded as "ordinary teachers", while those whose behaviour goes beyond the basic standards are not regarded as early childhood teachers.

Using "ideal role of kindergarten teachers" as the central association word, the statistics of the questionnaire results show that there is consistency in the form and content of the ideal role in the conceptions of kindergarten teachers. Using the frequency and centrality of the associations as the ranking of the importance of the ideal roles, the concepts of being responsible for children, being patient, being able to do an excellent job of connecting with children at home, and being a reasonable observer are at the top of the list of ideal roles in the concepts of kindergarten teachers. In terms of specific dimensions, the ideal roles of early childhood teachers were mainly elaborated from the dimensions of action, identity, character, and status. In terms of the criteria for judging the role of early childhood teachers, "failure to meet the requirements of the position" and "misbehaviour" are used as the boundaries of whether or not they can be classified as a "group of early childhood teachers".

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of the elements of the ideal role in the self-concept of the early childhood teacher.

The conceptual role is used as an entry point to depict the epiphenomenal elements of the ideal role in order to frame the framework structure of the ideal role. The key to using concepts to analyse the issue of ideal roles lies in defining the extent of the roles. As the epithets of roles are more scattered, the conceptual elements of roles can be used to ensure the systematic nature of the analysis. The ideal role in the conception of early childhood teachers focuses more on behaviour and traits, which also involve several other elements.

4.1. Behavior

According to relevant statements of role theory, role expectation can not be limited to "norms" and "rules". Its essence is the expectation of individual role behaviour, the matching degree of individual role behaviour with its status and identity¹³. However, the reality in the policy text is different. The ideal Role in policy documents is an integral part of the ideal Role of preschool teachers. Due to the limitation of language expression in policy documents, the expression of some role contents tends to be macroscopic and principled, mainly focusing on the ideal role expectation of content standards and Role shaping results and needing more directionality to the specific behaviours of preschool teachers. From the final realization of these content norms and ideal roles, the specific "content standards" and "norms of behaviour" can be deconstructed into specific norms of behaviour for preschool teachers. For example, according to the content of the language field in the Guidelines for Kindergarten Education, preschool teachers' specific rules of behaviour in the education process are specified in detail, and the specific content standards in the activities in this field are expounded. However, the connotation is more exhaustive than several simple aspects. The policy document's stipulation of the content of the ideal Role of preschool teachers is too macroscopic and principled, which points out the direction for the concrete realization of the ideal Role in practice, provides the possible scope for the concrete operation of the ideal Role, and also leads to the confusion and fuzziness of the ideal Role. In different time backgrounds, the role expectations of preschool teachers in policy texts are mainly reflected in the trend of increasing and concretising expectations of behavioural patterns. For example, preschool teachers are required to "cooperate", "support", and "explore" the autonomous behaviours of individual children in educational activities. In making and implementing education-related policies, it is easy to be influenced by educational theories. Therefore, the specific behaviour norms of preschool teachers in the policy and the principles of interaction with children in the daily work of kindergartens are the direct manifestations of early childhood education

theories. Although the direct application of policy in early childhood education practice may lose the intention of a policy requiring macroscopic guidance, the increase of specific behavioural standards is conducive to the actual development of early childhood education practice activities. The ideal Role of preschool teachers in the policy lies in the dimensions of "conservation" and "education", mainly in the form of specific provisions on the practical behaviour of preschool teachers, which is also the primary content manifestation of the national level to standardize the ideal Role of preschool teachers.

4.2. Relationship and Status

"Status" and "relationship" are two aspects that influence each other in the concept of Role. The position of the Role subject in the social system directly determines the specific direction of the relationship object with which the role subject is highly related. The discussion of the "relationship" of the Role subject cannot be separated from the social "status" of the Role. Therefore, in the process of related role discussion, we should first clarify the social status of the Role subject and then analyze the "relationship network" in which it is located. The position of preschool teachers in the policy document can be carried out through the whole and the specific two aspects. With our country's preschool education gradually moving towards the era of high-quality development, the expression and content proportion of preschool teachers in policy texts shows an increasing trend. In early childhood education, preschool teachers are also subordinate in the policy documents. However, with the continuous improvement of preschool teachers' status and Role in the development of preschool education, their Role in the subordinate relationship is also increasing. The expression in the field of preschool education in relevant policy documents is based on the logic of children's development, but the Role of preschool teachers in specific practical activities in kindergartens cannot be ignored. The focus of the policy document has always been on preschool education itself and early childhood teachers as a means of preschool education development. Through the three dimensions of conservation, education and professional development, the present of the ideal Role of preschool teachers in the policy document is explained separately. Policies and regulations such as "child-oriented", "respect for children", and "ability first" explain that preschool teachers need to become professional staff with a "respect for children" attitude and concept and "professional ability" in specific ways. In this process, preschool teachers establish a relationship with the specific content of the professional standards for preschool teachers in different ways to meet the standards and role requirements of each professional Role in the policy text, and this specific way of establishing a relationship should be combined with specific preschool education practice and context. As mentioned above, with the development and changes of The Times, the statement standard of the content standard of the childcare dimension in the policy text has mostly stayed the same. Preschool teachers can adopt the methods of "full-time or part-time professional learning of preschool education" or "skill training". Since the 20th century, with the development of the new view of children and the view of teachers, the educational content, educational methods and evaluation standards of early childhood education have changed constantly. Nevertheless, in general, the "ideal role" in the policy document is the standard preschool teachers should achieve in playing the professional Role, which needs to be internalized into the professional concept and professional development perspective of preschool teachers.

4.3. Anticipation

From the perspective of theory and practice, the ideal role in the conception of early childhood teachers focuses mainly on practice and is more inclined to the dimension of reality. Because early childhood teachers are the frontline staff in early childhood education, and every teacher leading a class faces actual young children, their conception of ideal roles is more inclined to the work practice of early childhood teachers. Unlike the role expectations from the perspective of educational objectives in policy texts and the role expectations based on theoretical perspectives in educational

research, the role expectations of early childhood teachers are closer to real-life scenarios. Early childhood teachers' role expectations also reflect the guidance of their behaviour. In contrast to the role expectations that are too macro and generalised, the role expectations of early childhood teachers are more specific and vivid. The "good early childhood teacher" is the concretisation of the role expectations, the detailing of the ideal role behaviours, and the ideal early childhood teacher's behaviours in policy texts and educational research. In the eyes of young children, a "good teacher" is generally a "friendly" teacher "with whom they can play", and young children will influence the ideal role in the conception of the kindergarten teacher and will be used as a "good teacher" for daily behaviour. The children will influence the teacher's conception of the ideal role and be used as a "discipline" for everyday behaviour. Expectations point to specific behaviours of the role subjects and have a guiding effect on the subjects' behaviours, but the ultimate purpose of such specific and detailed role expectations is to achieve the role expectations in the standards and norms.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In summary, the deconstruction of the ideal Role of preschool teachers in relevant policy texts is highly consistent, and there is an increasing trend in policy texts. The Role of preschool teachers in policy texts can be explained from the three significant frameworks of care, education and professional development. Therefore, the "ideal individual kindergarten teacher" should be a well-rounded individual who can develop in all aspects of childcare, education and professional development. Based on this logic, it is necessary to formulate specific standard dimensions for the "ideal preschool teacher" in three aspects: care, education and professional development. This standard is the "norm and criterion" of the expectation category in the policy discourse, and the content of the rule itself reflects the professional Role of preschool teachers in the policy text. Early childhood care and education dimensions receive equal attention in this deconstructive logic. Generally speaking, the expectations (norms and standards) for the Role of preschool teachers in the policy texts are mainly aimed at kindergarten care and education practice, and the roles of preschool teachers in terms of professional quality and professional competence are required to be more pluralistic and co-constructivist. The relevant standards for the ideal Role of preschool teachers show a trend of being more scientific and specific with the development of The Times.

The role orientation of preschool teachers in the policy text is based on the expectation logic, including relationship, status, behaviour and other role elements. The role expectation in role theory is usually the expectation of the behaviour pattern of the Role subject, which in the policy text points to the specific content standards of conservation, education, professional development and role-shaping outcomes. Therefore, the expectation of the role of preschool teachers in the policy text is presented in the form of content standards, and it also points to relevant provisions in three aspects. The reason for this is that, on the one hand, logically speaking, the expectation of the Role in the policy text is the expectation of its upper concept of "individual". According to the role theory analysis, the expectations of roles in policy texts are mainly presented through multiple rules and norms.

On the other hand, the policy text focuses on developing early childhood education. When the working mode of early childhood education can reflect the Role of early childhood teachers, it is reflected in the final form of individual early childhood teachers, the Role of children. This ideal individual expectation includes the institutional norms for preschool teachers individually and as a group, which manifests the expectation for the Role of the ideal individual, reflected in the content standard and the result of the realization of the Role in the policy text.

Through the presentation of the content of the policy texts, it is found that the length of the preschool education policy texts is getting longer and longer, and the attention to preschool teachers is also increasing. For example, in the kindergarten Education Guidelines, Kindergarten Work Regulations and Professional Standards for preschool teachers, the frequency of mention of preschool teachers is

20 times, 20 times and 50 times, respectively. The increase in the frequency of presentation in policy texts not only increases the content of policies but also refines and enriches the description of the role expectations of preschool teachers.

REFERENCES

- [1] C. Couch; "Family Role Specialization and Self-Attitudes in Children*", *SOCIOLOGICAL QUARTERLY*, 1962. (IF: 3).
- [2] Richard L. Dukes; Constance J. Seidner; "Self-Role Incongruence and Role Enactment in Simulation Games", *SIMULATION & GAMING*, 1973.
- [3] Laurie Chassin; Antonette M. Zeiss; Kristina M. Cooper; Judith Reaven; "Role Perceptions, Self-Role Congruence and Marital Satisfaction in Dual-Worker Couples with Preschool Children", *SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY QUARTERLY*, 1985. (IF: 3).
- [4] Gareth R. Jones; "Socialization Tactics, Self-Efficacy, and Newcomers' Adjustments to Organizations", *ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL*, 1986. (IF: 8).
- [5] Joan Meyers-Levy; "The Influence of Sex Roles on Judgment", *JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH*, 1988. (IF: 6).
- [6] Ching-Wen Wei; Heng-Hsin Tung; Chiou-Fen Lin; Chi-Chen Sun; Shaw-Nin Shih; "[Self-role Perception Of Nurse Practitioners In Northern Taiwan]", *HU LI ZA ZHI THE JOURNAL OF NURSING*, 2011.
- [7] Warren A. Reich; Ellen M. Kessel; Frank J. Bernieri; "Life Satisfaction and The Self: Structure, Content, and Function", *JOURNAL OF HAPPINESS STUDIES*, 2013. (IF: 3).
- [8] Chung Jen Wang; Huei-Ting Tsai; Ming-Tien Tsai; "Linking Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity in The Hospitality Industry: The Influences of Creative Role Identity, Creative Self-efficacy, and Job Complexity", *TOURISM MANAGEMENT*, 2014. (IF: 6).
- [9] Riho Iwasaki; Azusa Arimoto; Takashi Naruse; Satoko Nagata; Sachiyo Murashima; "The Importance Of The Maternal/Self-Role Satisfaction For Reducing Anxiety: A Cross-Sectional Survey Of Japanese Mothers", *JOURNAL OF UOEH*, 2017.
- [10] Warren A. Reich; Celeste Sangiorgio; Jason Young; "Self-Role Integration: A Person-Specific Predictor Of Life Satisfaction And Prosocial Behavior", *THE JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY*, 2019.
- [11] Jie-Qi Chen; Charles Chang; "Using Computers in Early Childhood Classrooms", *JOURNAL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH*, 2006. (IF: 4).
- [12] Marianne Fenech; Jennifer Sumsion; "Early Childhood Teachers and Regulation: Complicating Power Relations Using A Foucauldian Lens", *CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD*, 2006. (IF: 3).
- [13] Marianne Fenech; Jennifer Sumsion; Wendy Shepherd; "Promoting Early Childhood Teacher Professionalism in The Australian Context: The Place of Resistance", *CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD*, 2010. (IF: 3).
- [14] Sandra Chang-Kredl; Sarah Kingsley; "Identity Expectations in Early Childhood Teacher Education: Pre-service Teachers' Memories of Prior Experiences and Reasons for Entry Into The Profession", *TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION*, 2014. (IF: 4).
- [15] Stephanie Kerckaert; Ruben Vanderlinde; Johan van Braak; "The Role of ICT in Early Childhood Education: Scale Development and Research on ICT Use and Influencing Factors", *EUROPEAN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL*, 2015. (IF: 3).
- [16] M.Park; D. Dimitrov; L.Patterson; Do-Yong Park; "Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs About Readiness for Teaching Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics", *JOURNAL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH*, 2017. (IF: 4).
- [17] Limin Zhang; Mo Wang; "Understanding Male Kindergarten Teachers' Motivation for Teaching in Mainland China: A Case Study", *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION FOR TEACHING*, 2018.
- [18] Lukmanul Hakim; Carmen Dalli; "To Be Professional Is A Never-ending Journey': Indonesian Early Childhood Practitioners' Views About The Attitudes and Behaviours of A Professional Teacher", *EARLY YEARS*, 2018.
- [19] Pekka Mertala; "Teachers' Beliefs About Technology Integration in Early Childhood Education: A Meta-ethnographical Synthesis of Qualitative Research", *COMPUT. HUM. BEHAV.*, 2019. (IF: 3).
- [20] Erin Hamel; Yuenjung Joo; Soo-Young Hong; Anna Burton; "Teacher Questioning Practices in Early Childhood Science Activities", *EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION JOURNAL*, 2020. (IF: 3).

- [21] Lisa M. Larson; Tsui Feng Wu; Donna C.Bailey; Courtney E.Gasser; Verena S.Bonitz; Fred H. Borgen; "The Role of Personality in The Selection of A Major: With and Without Vocational Self-efficacy and Interests", JOURNAL OF VOCATIONAL BEHAVIOR, 2010. (IF: 3).
- [22] Selver Derya Uysal; Winfried Pohlmeier; "Unemployment Duration and Personality", JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC PSYCHOLOGY, 2011. (IF: 4).
- [23] Lisa Rachelle Riso Lilenfeld; "Personality And Temperament", CURRENT TOPICS IN BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCES, 2011. (IF: 3).
- [24] Kim L Gratz; Robert D Latzman; Matthew T Tull; Elizabeth K Reynolds; C W Lejuez; "Exploring The Association Between Emotional Abuse And Childhood Borderline Personality Features: The Moderating Role Of Personality Traits", BEHAVIOR THERAPY, 2011. (IF: 3).
- [25] Anthony P. Winning; Simon Boag; "Does Brief Mindfulness Training Increase Empathy? The Role of Personality", PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES, 2015. (IF: 3).
- [26] Antonella Tommasel; Alejandro Corbellini; Daniela Godoy; Silvia N. Schiaffino; "Exploring The Role of Personality Traits in Followee Recommendation", ONLINE INF. REV., 2015. (IF: 3).
- [27] Zhe Liu; Yi Wang; Jalal Mahmud; Rama Akkiraju; Jerald Schoudt; Anbang Xu; Bryan Donovan; "To Buy or Not to Buy? Understanding The Role of Personality Traits in Predicting Consumer Behaviors", 2016. (IF: 3).
- [28] T. Clifton Green; Russell Jame; Brandon Lock; "It Pays to Be Extraverted: Executive Personality and Career Outcomes", 2016. (IF: 3).
- [29] Nailah Ayub; Suzan M. AlQurashi; Wafa A. Al-Yafi; Karen A. Jehn; "Personality Traits and Conflict Management Styles in Predicting Job Performance and Conflict", INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, 2017. (IF: 3).
- [30] Cui, J., & Kwong, P. K. An Analysis of Working to learn and learning to work: research on China higher education's Research, Development and the relationships work and learning.
- [31] Cui, J., Liu, H., & Wan, Q. (2024). Measuring the Digital Assets, Brand Services and Service Quality Quantitative Analysis: Evidence from China. International Journal of Social Sciences and Public Administration, 2(3), 503-510.
- [32] Sergey Malykh; "The Role of Personality Traits and Intelligence in Academic Achievement of Russian High School Students", PROCEDIA - SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES, 2017. (IF: 3).