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### Research Article

## Developing the Preschool Teacher Workforce Based on the Human Resource Development Model and Professional Title Standards

\*<sup>1,2</sup>Nguyen Thi Le Huong

### About Article

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#### About Author

<sup>1</sup> Hoa Binh College of Education, Hoa Binh Province, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup> University of Education, Vietnam National University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Contact @ Nguyen Thi Le Huong  
[nguyenlehuongsmhb@gmail.com](mailto:nguyenlehuongsmhb@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

In the context of ongoing innovation in preschool education, teachers are required to meet professional competencies aligned with new job-position regulations and professional standards. Consequently, educational managers, particularly preschool principals, must identify and implement appropriate strategies to develop their teaching staff. A theoretical research design is used in this study, which includes document analysis and theoretical synthesis of academic literature, legal documents, and policies pertaining to the workforce development of preschool teachers. Based on an exploration of relevant theoretical concepts concerning preschool teachers (PSTs), professional title standards (PTS), and human resource development (HRD), this article proposes a strategic approach to developing a preschool teacher workforce (PTWF) in alignment with PTS rooted in an HRD model. Despite the lack of direct participant involvement, the study's conclusions are pertinent to school administrators because it is based on a thorough examination of national standards and HRD frameworks. The results have applications in improving the caliber of teachers, streamlining the workforce, and coordinating development plans with national education reforms. The effective application of this approach necessitates creativity, contextual appropriateness, and scientific rigor contingent upon local and institutional specificities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The fundamental and comprehensive reform of education and training in Vietnam has entered a pivotal phase underscored by the implementation of Conclusion No. 51-KL/TW of the Party Central Committee's Secretariat regarding the continued execution of the Party's resolution on educational reform (Secretariat of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 2019). Resolution No. 42-NQ/TW, promulgated by the 13th Central Executive Committee on November 24, 2023, delineates a primary target for attaining universal preschool education for children aged 3 to 5 by the year 2030. In accordance with this national mandate, the Education and Training Development Strategy to 2030, with a Vision to 2045, seeks to enhance access to universal preschool education and to establish a new national preschool education curriculum (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2024).

The revised curriculum underscores a competency-based framework, honors children's rights, and promotes their socio-emotional development in age-appropriate ways that foster holistic growth—physically, intellectually, and aesthetically. It aims to establish the groundwork for cultivating fundamental Vietnamese values at a young age. These revolutionary advancements have increased expectations of preschool teachers (PSTs), necessitating compliance with enhanced professional quality standards. As a result, emerging expectations and requirements require PSTs to consistently improve their skills and competencies.

There are still no well-defined methods for coordinating workforce development with institutional and professional title requirements, even though policies place a strong focus on worker quality. Preschool teacher workforce (PTWF) development, in particular, is frequently conducted without adequate integration of human resource development (HRD) frameworks and professional title standards (PTS), leading to fragmented or inconsistent implementation. Even while the development and training of the PTWF have been the subject of numerous studies, the literature has rarely looked at the problem from both the PTS and HRD perspectives, especially when considering Vietnam's changing educational administration systems. The purpose of this study is to fill this important research gap. The Human Resource Development (HRD) model, which prioritizes methodical workforce planning, professional development, utilization, and performance evaluation, serves as the foundation for this study's theoretical framework. This technique is used in conjunction with Vietnam's Professional Title Standards (PTS) to provide a methodical and contextually aware strategy for increasing preschool teachers' proficiency.

This dual dynamic offers both strategic opportunities and significant problems for the preschool teacher workforce (PTWF) and school administration. Although several studies have investigated the formation of PTWF, this topic has seldom been examined from the perspective of professional title standards (PTS). This study analyzes the theoretical underpinnings of PSTs and suggests a methodology for cultivating PTWF based on PTS and guided by the human resource development (HRD) paradigm. As a result, this study is important for improving preschool teachers' professional quality as well as for educating policymakers and educational administrators about

an integrated framework that can direct long-term workforce development in line with national educational reforms. This research establishes a basis for identifying the critical directions and elements necessary for workforce development in response to the current educational reform requirements.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, teacher development has attracted considerable attention from both foreign and Vietnamese experts, particularly regarding professional standards. Research on teacher workforce development increasingly employs the human resource development (HRD) perspective, viewing teachers as fundamental human resources in educational institutions.

Nadler (1970, as referenced in other HRD literature, with Batal (2002) also addressing HRM components) posited that HRD has three essential elements: training and education, optimal utilization, and the establishment of a conducive environment for development. Riches (1997) similarly underscored that human resource management prioritizes the augmentation of performance and efficient utilization of human resources. Although HRD theory has a strong foundation thanks to these fundamental viewpoints, they are still primarily conceptual in nature and have not been adjusted to the unique requirements of early childhood education in developing nations like Vietnam. When a PTWF is regarded as the human resource (HR) of a particular educational sector, scholars have examined its administration through HRD frameworks. Tri (2010) asserted that human resource development encompasses the management of three fundamental components: training, utilization, and the cultivation of a supportive work environment. Kha (2002) regarded the teaching workforce as the principal human resource of an educational level or sector, delineating its management to encompass (1) workforce development planning (including training, professional development, recruitment, resource allocation, and teacher policies), (2) organizing and directing implementation, and (3) assessing the execution of development strategies. Although HRD theory has a strong foundation thanks to these fundamental viewpoints, they are still primarily conceptual in nature and have not been adjusted to the unique requirements of early childhood education in developing nations like Vietnam.

Meier and Phuong-Meyer (2007) outlined the fundamental competencies necessary for educators, including teaching, educational guidance, diagnosis, assessment, counseling, ongoing professional development, and school enhancement. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) identified several elements for improving teacher competence: (i) psychological growth, (ii) professional and pedagogical enhancement, and (iii) career-stage progression encompassing adaptation to new difficulties and heightened professionalization. Mishra and Koehler (2006) introduced the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which amalgamates content, pedagogy, and technology as vital components for cultivating teaching proficiency in the digital era. Although these frameworks offer a wealth of pedagogical insights, they frequently ignore the structural and policy-level elements that affect preschool teaching efficacy in Vietnam, such as position-specific qualifications or state-mandated requirements.



In Vietnam, studies on teacher development have focused on professional ethics, skills, and the framework of teachers' capacities. Hac (2001) contended that effective teaching requires a progressive worldview, elevated moral standards, and advanced professional skills, positing that knowledge, skills, and strategies constitute the foundation of teacher competency. Moreover, a prevalent framework in Vietnamese educational philosophy, frequently linked to scholars such as Le Van Hong, Le Ngoc Lan, and Nguyen Van Thanh, defines teacher personality as consisting of two primary components: virtue (which includes a progressive worldview, affection for children, and professional zeal) and talent (evidenced through pedagogical practice and skills). Thuy (2020) recently delineated seven principal competency categories and eighteen essential competencies tailored for preschool teachers (PSTs).

In summary, research on teacher workforce development, including that of pre-service teachers, has been examined using several theoretical frameworks, including human resource development models, professional standards, and competency frameworks. Nonetheless, there is a significant deficiency in comprehensive studies explicitly targeting workforce development for distinct educational tiers or topic domains. Research focusing on the development of PTWF specifically derived from PTS is notably scarce.

In the present context of educational reform and shifting educational management paradigms, PSTs have encountered novel and intricate expectations. This situation highlights the importance of targeted studies on advancing PTWF in accordance with these requirements.

Consequently, the following research questions are addressed in this article:

(1) How might professional title requirements and human resource development approaches be combined to direct the workforce development of preschool teachers?

(2) What strategic components are needed to apply this integrated model to the preschool curriculum in Vietnam?

This article seeks to (i) organize the theoretical underpinnings related to the PTWF, PTS, and HRD models and (ii) suggest a cohesive approach that merges PTS and the HRD model as a framework for PTWF advancement.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a theoretical research methodology, employing the following: (i) Theoretical Synthesis: Evaluating, integrating, and organizing theoretical material related to the advancement of the PTWF in alignment with PTS, based on the HRD model. In order to provide a logical conceptual framework that directs PTWF growth in the Vietnamese context, the synthesis concentrated on key literature pertaining to teacher competences, professional title standards, and HRD theory. (ii) Document Analysis: Examine relevant instructions from the Communist Party of Vietnam, legal statutes established by the state, and official guidelines released by the Ministry of Education and Training that are directly applicable to the research topic. These documents include Conclusion No. 51-KL/TW (2019), Resolution No. 42-NQ/TW (2023), the Education Law (2019), the Law on Public Employees (2010), and Circulars No. 01/2021/TT-BGDĐT, 08/2023/TT-BGDĐT,

and 13/2024/TT-BGDĐT. Preschool teacher workforce policies can be influenced by normative and strategic orientations, and theoretical recommendations can be firmly rooted in nationally recognized regulatory frameworks using this approach.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. The Preschool Teacher Workforce and Its Emerging Requirements

#### 4.1.1. Definition and Structure of the Preschool Teacher Workforce

The Law on Education (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2019) defines "teachers" as individuals who undertake teaching and educational responsibilities in schools or other educational institutions. In the realm of general education, these individuals are referred to as "teachers."

Preschool teachers (PSTs) are public or private employees tasked with executing the preschool education curriculum in early childhood education environments (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). The Charter of Preschool Institutions specifies that PSTs are responsible for "nurturing, caring for, and educating young children" (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020).

Duong (2012) defined the teacher workforce as encompassing educational managers, teachers, and support personnel, while the emphasis frequently stays on teachers and school administrators. The preschool teacher workforce (PTWF) comprises individuals responsible for nurturing, educating, and caring for children in preschool settings.

The PTWF can be analyzed at two organizational levels:

1. Collective PSTs in a single preschool institution.
2. The aggregate of PSTs across multiple preschools within a larger administrative unit (e.g., district or province).

#### 4.1.2. Emerging Requirements for the Preschool Teacher Workforce

Amidst the continuing reforms in preschool education (PSE), the PTWF is anticipated to fulfill the advancing criteria of professional quality. Chau (n.d.) delineated four principal factors of teacher workforce quality: quantity, structural composition, academic qualifications, and the individual quality of each educator, as evidenced by political integrity, ethical standards, credentials, and pedagogical competencies.

Hien (2006) classified teacher quality into three domains: (1) academic qualifications in pedagogy, (2) pedagogical professionalism, and (3) ethical conduct and teacher identity. From this perspective, the quality of individual teachers, especially their professional competence and ethical characteristics, forms the essence of overall PTWF quality. Nonetheless, effective PTWF management must also consider workforce quantity and structural composition, in conjunction with ethical and professional competencies.

*a) Ethical Attributes and Professional Competence.* The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has issued the Professional Standards for Preschool Teachers (2018) and Professional Title Standards (PTS) (2021, 2023, 2024) to delineate the ethical and professional criteria for Preschool Teachers (PSTs). This study defines professional competence as the demonstrated capacity to perform job responsibilities and obligations effectively,



adhering to the moral and technical standards established by the designated position and applicable regulations.

*b) Workforce quantity requirement.* The requisite quantity of PSTs at an institution is ascertained according to the number of class groups and staffing standards delineated in regulatory guidelines (e.g., policies for employment positions, professional title frameworks, and staffing quotas for public preschool institutions).

*c) Structural workforce requirements.* A standardized PTWF requires a well-balanced structural composition. "Structure" pertains to the internal structure and demographic attributes of the workforce, operating as a cohesive system. Structural analysis improves the efficacy and sustainability of human resource management in early childhood education. This study emphasizes three fundamental structural elements.

*(i) Age distribution:* Examining the age distribution provides insights into the proportion of rookies to experienced educators and aids in predicting retirement and transition. These data can guide efficient staff allocation, recruitment tactics, professional development initiatives, and succession planning.

*(ii) Educational qualifications:* The Law on Education (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2019) stipulates that preschool teachers must possess at least an associate degree in preschool education. Under the prevailing PTS regulations (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021, 2023), qualification criteria differ by rank.

- Rank III (Code V.07.02.26): Requires an associate degree in preschool education or a higher qualification, together with a pertinent professional title training certificate that new recruits must acquire within 36 months.

- Rank II (Code V.07.02.25): Necessitates a bachelor's degree in preschool education or an associate degree in preschool education coupled with a bachelor's degree in education management in addition to the requisite training certificate.

- Rank I (Code V.07.02.24): Necessitate qualifications akin to Rank II, supplemented by further criteria for the superior rank encompassing advanced training or certification. Evaluating the certification framework demonstrates conformity with reform requirements and highlights the necessity for additional training and specialized professional development.

*(iii) Gender distribution:* PTWF is primarily composed of females. This pronounced gender disparity poses distinct issues for institutional design and management, necessitating the consideration of factors such as maternity leave, task allocation, and equitable access to professional development, all of which influence productivity and stability.

#### 4.2. Professional Title Standards for Preschool Teachers

In education, professional standards delineate the requirements, guidelines, and expectations for professional practice and are applied consistently to guarantee teaching quality in accordance with national curriculum objectives and teacher development goals (Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences, 2005).

The Law on Public Employees (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2010) defines a "professional title" as the requisite degree of professional qualification and ability for public employees in designated professions.

In this article, "professional title standards (PTS)" denote the

established requirements for the qualifications and abilities mandated for public employees (particularly PSTs) at each professional level associated with their assigned job roles.

The MOET released multiple circular outlining regulations, standards, appointment protocols, and wage classifications related to PSTs. The principal rules are Circular No. 01/2021/TT-BGDĐT (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021), later modified and augmented by circular no. 08/2023/TT-BGDĐT (Ministry of Education and Training 2023). Circular No. 13/2024/TT-BGDĐT has recently revised the requirements pertaining to the advancement of professional titles (Ministry of Education and Training, 2024).

The PTS for PSTs constitutes a thorough framework of criteria that includes ethical attributes, academic credentials, and professional skills essential for executing preschool education responsibilities at several professional levels. These criteria underpin the recruitment, promotion, performance assessment, and planning of professional growth trajectories.

#### 4.3. Human Resource Development and HRD Models

##### 4.3.1. Concept of Human Resource Development

Kha (2002) characterized human resource development (HRD) as the process of augmenting human capacity by training, retraining, and self-improvement, while also safeguarding physical and mental well-being. The process entails optimizing human potential through efficient recruiting, deployment, and establishment of conducive working conditions, including supportive surroundings, sufficient resources, and incentivizing policies.

Hung (2014) advocated for a competency-based human resource management strategy for educational institutions, which includes planning, organizing, leading, and evaluating, with a focus on utilizing competency frameworks to assess training requirements and devise development programs.

Although definitions differ, most align on the premise that human resource development (HRD) seeks to enhance individual and organizational capabilities through strategic initiatives, such as planning, recruitment, training, evaluation, motivation, and promoting a collaborative workplace, ultimately contributing to sustainable development and human welfare.

This study uses the HRD theoretical framework to direct the creation of a PTWF in alignment with the PTS. The aim is to improve PTWF quality through the implementation of essential HRD processes: workforce planning, recruitment and utilization, training and professional development, performance evaluation, and creation of a supportive work environment.

##### 4.3.2. Human Resource Development Models

Various international and Vietnamese scholars have suggested methods for human resource management (HRM) that are relevant to the development of teaching staff. The primary objective of HRM is to facilitate the transformation of an organization's human resources to coincide with institutional goals (Batal, 2002).

Core HRM responsibilities encompass harnessing human potential (e.g., via standardized training and professional development) and optimizing the effective utilization of this potential to achieve organizational objectives. Human resource





management involves overseeing individuals to facilitate their complete capacity development and managing the workforce as a whole. Human resources achieve optimal effectiveness at the collective level when strategically developed, allocated, and employed in accordance with the institution's mission and developmental goals.

In the context of preschool education, "human resources" pertain to educators, whereas the collective refers to the PTWF. Consequently, overseeing PTWF is essentially an endeavor in human resource management within this educational framework. From a theoretical HRM standpoint, the development of the PTWF comprises five essential components: (i) workforce planning; (ii) management of training and professional development; (iii) recruitment, utilization, and performance management (including differentiation based on performance); (iv) establishing a supportive work environment and motivational framework; and (v) monitoring and evaluation of management activities and outcomes.

#### 4.4. Integrating the HRD Model and Professional Title Standards in Developing the Preschool Teacher Workforce

Creating the PTWF in alignment with the PTS, grounded in the HRD model, necessitates the execution of a cohesive array of HR management processes customized to the specifications of each professional title rank. The processes encompass

(i) *Workforce planning*: Determining the necessary composition and structure of PSTs according to the PTS rank over designated planning horizons. This entails assessing the existing workforce profile, projecting future requirements (both quantitative and qualitative), and devising coordinated strategies to enhance the quantity, quality, and composition (age, qualifications, and gender) of the PTWF in accordance with PTS specifications.

(ii) *Recruitment and utilization*: Choosing and utilizing PSTs according to criteria that correspond with designated PTS rankings to fulfill the staffing requirements of preschool facilities. Effective usage entails allocating roles and duties according to certified competencies.

(iii) *Training and professional development*: Although different, both seek to improve the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes of PSTs, ensuring that they have the competencies and ethical attributes necessary to efficiently perform activities related to their specific PTS levels. This should be directed according to needs assessments guided by the PTS criteria.

(iv) *Evaluation and performance management*: Methodically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of individual educators concerning the responsibilities and criteria established by their PTS rank. Precise, open, and constructive assessments establish a basis for focused development, suitable allocation, acknowledgment, and required actions. By contrast, ambiguous or prejudiced assessments may result in discontent and reduced efficacy.

(v) *Creating a supportive work environment*: methodically evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of individual educators concerning the responsibilities and criteria established by their PTS rank. Precise, open, and constructive assessments establish a basis for focused development, suitable allocation,

acknowledgment, and required actions. By contrast, ambiguous or prejudiced assessments may result in discontent and reduced efficacy.

#### 4.5. Discussion

Formulating the PTWF in alignment with the PTS, informed by HRD concepts, constitutes a focused management strategy designed to improve the professional skills and ethical attributes of PSTs. This development must align with the assigned job roles and be strategically included in comprehensive organizational planning to guarantee adequate labor levels and structural equilibrium while being responsive to the unique socio-economic conditions of each region.

A fundamental aspect of PTWF development is establishing suitable staffing levels according to specified job roles and PTS ratings. Educational administrators must implement strategic workforce planning and staffing approaches that are congruent with institutional operations and regulatory frameworks governing PST job roles and PTS. This plan guides subsequent training and professional development efforts and supports efficient budgeting. This process must encompass political, psychological, social, and legal elements by promoting favorable work environments, enacting supportive legislation, and instituting effective governance.

When workforce size and composition align with specified criteria, they surpass simple numerical measures and serve as the foundation for comprehensive solutions concerning policy execution, workforce benefits, and enhanced institutional regulation.

The caliber of the PTWF is inherently connected to educator ethics, professional proficiency, and academic credentials, as delineated in the PST professional standards and PTS framework. Teacher ethics comprises moral integrity, behavioral conduct, and professional demeanor. A structurally balanced PTWF ideally embodies generational variety, utilizing the expertise of senior educators while capitalizing on the innovation and vigor of younger teachers. Additional structural considerations encompass diversity in social background, gender equilibrium (recognizing the existing disparity), political consciousness, and qualifications, with the minimum requirement being an associate degree in preschool education (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2019).

A robust PTWF is defined by professional cohesion, teamwork, collective expertise, and mutually respectful and supportive atmosphere. Optimizing the capabilities of this workforce necessitates coordinated actions by central and local governments alongside particular schools to establish effective incentive schemes, guarantee access to essential facilities and resources, and foster conducive working environments.

The primary strategic difficulty in using the HRD theory for PTWF development within the PTS framework is the formulation of policies that concurrently foster individual teacher development and enhance overall organizational efficacy. This involves augmenting both the quantity and quality of the workforce, while simultaneously promoting teacher well-being and professional fulfillment. Critical intervention domains encompass education, training, professional advancement, research involvement, recruitment



methodologies, and performance-driven applications, all underpinned by strong legal structures, efficient management instruments, and an inspiring workplace ethos.

Ultimately, PTWF development in conjunction with PTS and HRD constitutes a dynamic HRM process designed to modify the size, structure, and quality of the workforce to satisfy the changing requirements of PTS-related job roles during the various phases of institutional and regional advancement.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Creating the PTWF in alignment with the PTS, informed by HRD concepts, constitutes a focused management strategy designed to improve the professional skills and ethical standards of PSTs. This development must align with specified job roles and be strategically included in comprehensive organizational planning to guarantee adequate labor levels and structural equilibrium while being responsive to the unique socio-economic conditions of each region.

A fundamental aspect of PTWF development is establishing suitable staffing levels according to specified job roles and PTS ratings. Educational administrators must implement strategic workforce planning and staffing approaches that are consistent with institutional operations and regulatory frameworks that control PST job roles and PTS. This plan guides subsequent training and professional development efforts and supports efficient budgeting. This process must encompass political, psychological, social, and legal elements by cultivating favorable work environments, enacting supportive legislation, and instituting effective governance.

When workforce size and composition satisfy specified requirements, they surpass simple numerical measures and serve as the foundation for comprehensive solutions for policy execution, workforce benefits, and enhanced institutional regulation.

The caliber of the PTWF is fundamentally connected to teacher ethics, professional proficiency, and educational credentials, as delineated in the PST professional standards and PTS framework. Teacher ethics comprises moral integrity, behavioral conduct, and professional disposition. A well-structured PTWF should ideally embody generational diversity, utilizing the expertise of veteran educators while capitalizing on the innovation and energy of younger teachers. Additional structural considerations encompass diversity in social background, gender equilibrium (recognizing the existing disparity), political consciousness, and qualifications, with the minimum requirement being an associate degree in preschool education (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2019).

A robust PTWF is defined as professional cohesion, teamwork, collective competence, and an environment of mutual respect and support. To maximize the potential of this workforce, it is essential for central and local governments, along with individual schools, to collaborate to implement effective incentive programs, provide access to appropriate facilities and resources, and foster conducive working environments.

The primary strategic difficulty in using the HRD theory for PTWF development within the PTS framework is the formulation of policies that concurrently enhance individual teacher development and overall organizational efficacy. This

involves augmenting both the quantity and quality of the workforce, while simultaneously raising teacher well-being and professional happiness. Critical intervention domains encompass education, training, professional advancement, research participation, recruitment methodologies, and performance-driven applications, all underpinned by strong legal structures, efficient management instruments, and an inspiring workplace ethos.

Ultimately, PTWF development in conjunction with PTS and HRD constitutes a dynamic HRM process designed to modify the size, structure, and quality of the workforce to satisfy the changing requirements of PTS-related job roles during the various phases of institutional and regional advancement.

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