Developing the professional capacity of preschool teachers through pedagogical training activities

Van-Thong Ho[1]
Thi-Kim Anh Le[2]
Van-De Nguyen[3]
Trong-Nam Phan[4]
Van-Dat Tran[5]

(Corresponding Author)

[1,2,3,4]*Dong Thap University, Vietnam.*
[1]*Email:* hvthong68@dthu.edu.vn
[2]*Email:* ltkanh@dthu.edu.vn
[3]*Email:* nvde@dthu.edu.vn
[4]*Email:* ptnam@dthu.edu.vn
[5]*An Giang University, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.*
[5]*Email:* tvdat@agu.edu.vn

Abstract

The primary purpose of educational programs is to enhance students' knowledge and skills through pedagogical training activities. However, preschool teachers in Vietnam face limitations in their professional capacity. Thus, this study aimed to address issues by evaluating the level of implementation of pedagogical training activities for preschool education students. The study used a scale for students' pedagogical practice activities to gather quantitative data from 629 participants (managers, lecturers and preschool teachers) in Dong Thap province in Vietnam to assess the extent of implementation of pedagogical training activities for preschool education students. The results showed that preschool teachers may not possess the essential knowledge of pedagogical practices. Pedagogical training uses conventional work-and-activity techniques despite the fact that it prioritizes innovation. Moreover, all school managers, teachers and students recognized the necessity of developing the professional capacity of preschool teachers. These findings illustrate the critical need for revitalizing educational approaches that are consistent with Vietnam's developing preschool teacher professional development context. The present study proposes some measures to innovate pedagogical practice activities in order to meet the requirements for developing the professional capacity of preschool teachers in Vietnam. Such initiatives hold promise for reshaping the educational landscape and fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the primary education sector of Vietnam.

Keywords: Pedagogical schools, Pedagogical training activities, Preschool education establishments, Preschool teachers, Professional capacity.

Contents

Contribution of this paper to the literature
This research significantly contributes to Vietnam's professional development of preschool teachers. It examines pedagogical training activities to improve teachers' skills and offers specific perspectives on the potential and problems in this field of study. The study also provides valuable recommendations that are in line with the broader objectives of educational reform in Vietnam.

1. Introduction

The qualifications, capabilities and professional ethics of the teaching staff are intricately linked to the quality of education (Huang, 2023; Rita, 2019). Teaching is a profession that is profoundly transformed by significant shifts in the context of learning and the essential function that teachers play in schools is associated with education itself (Almeida, 2015; Anchunda, 2021; Ayesha, 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Competent teachers must show their ability to adapt to the objective changes that correspond with educational progress. These changes require consistent professional capabilities (Oon-Seng, Woon-Chia, & Ee-Ling, 2017; Pham & Nguyen, 2020). Preschool education holds a paramount position in shaping a child's personality and serves as the foundational domain for initiating comprehensive human personality development within the realm of education (Lotter et al., 2018). The team of teachers who directly engage with children influences the quality of preschool education. The purpose of pedagogical training activities is to enhance the educational abilities of preschool teachers with the goal of helping students develop a passion for teaching and enabling them to gain knowledge, improve their expertise and develop moral values (Ithnain & Saidin, 2021; Ravhuhali, Mashau, Kutame, & Mutshaeni, 2015). Additionally, these activities facilitate self-examination and the evaluation of training quality within pedagogical schools (La, 2018).

According to the September 2022 report, there was a substantial gap in the teaching staff in Vietnam due to a lack of 127,583 teachers which is a serious concern for the education system in the country. This shortage has significant implications for the quality of education especially at the preschool level. In the ongoing 2022–2023 school year, the teacher-to-class ratio at the preschool level stands at 1.77 falling below the mandated standard of 2.2. This imbalance not only strains the available resources but also hampers the effective delivery of education. This shortage particularly affects the Mekong Delta region a crucial area in Vietnam. The demand for qualified teachers is substantial with 2,002 preschools catering to 584,099 children (Ho & Nguyen, 2022). The composition of the teaching workforce further exacerbates the challenges. A considerable number of preschool teachers in the region underwent intensive training courses between 1975 and 1990, originally considered temporary solutions at the elementary and intermediate levels. The departure of these experienced teachers has left significant gaps in the teaching force (Han, 2020). The absence of these veteran teachers, coupled with the existing shortage poses serious challenges to the ongoing efforts aimed at enhancing the overall quality of education in the Mekong Delta region. Addressing this teacher shortage and ensuring the availability of well-trained teachers is imperative to maintaining and improving the standards of education in Vietnam. It is necessary that the Mekong Delta area implement focused policies for teacher recruitment, training and retention in order to offer an ideal learning environment and advance the country's educational development.

There is a lack of comprehensive research into the critical role that pedagogical training activities play in the development of preschool education students in the Vietnamese educational context. It is crucial to recognize that the challenges confronting preschool education in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam surpass those in other regions despite the well-known benefits of pedagogical training activities for both teachers and students. Preschool education in the Mekong Delta faces substantial and unevenly distributed deficits in quantity and quality. The overall education program's standards are not fulfilled by a significant proportion of preschool teachers (Ho, Tran, Nguyen, Phan, & Cao, 2023). It is important in this context to enhance preschool teachers' professional competence through pedagogical training activities. This involves a specific focus on innovating requirements related to output standards, content, organizational methods and evaluation techniques. The assessment of results in pedagogical practice within preschool teacher training carries significant practical importance. It contributes to fostering the professional capability of preschool teachers aligning with the aim of fundamental innovation and comprehensive education and training in Vietnam. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the level of implementation of pedagogical training activities among preschool education students and propose innovative measures to renovate pedagogical practice activities aligned with the requirements for developing the professional capacity of preschool teachers. The present study formulates the following research questions to address these objectives:

What is the level of implementation of pedagogical training activities for preschool education students in Vietnam?

How can pedagogical practice activities be innovated to meet the requirements for developing the professional capacity of preschool teachers in Vietnam?

2. Lietrature Review

Gaible and Burns (2005) propose a standardized model referred to as standardized teacher professional development as an effective approach for cultivating the professional capacity of teachers. The standardized model efficiently provides important knowledge and skills to a broad spectrum of teachers through the internet, radio and face-to-face sessions. Hooker (2008) emphasizes that the standardized model intends to convey common knowledge and abilities to an extensive range of teachers. According to Gaible and Burns (2005), the standardized model serves as a means to introduce teachers to innovative ideas, alternative approaches and new professional connections when best practices are implemented. This approach facilitates the widespread distribution of

knowledge and teaching methods among teachers on a national or regional scale signifying a clear commitment to a specific educational trajectory by a country or project. The interconnected dynamics of goals, content, methods, and the organization of professional training activities are relevant in the context of preschool teacher professional development through pedagogical training activities for students (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). Any alteration in one of these factors leads to corresponding changes in the others. The pedagogical practice environment directly and consistently shapes the pedagogical practice activities of students. Conversely, the outcomes of pedagogical practice contribute significantly to the refinement of pedagogical skills and the overall professional capacity of teachers (Smith, Ralston, Naegele, & Waggoner, 2020).

The advancement of the professional competence of preschool teachers through students' pedagogical training activities is a dynamic and progressive process that requires a nuanced approach considering both preservation and forward-thinking perspectives particularly within the context of educational innovation (Dendenne & Derakhshan, 2019; Mičiulienė & Brandišauskienė, 2023; Rita, 2019). Consequently, activities intended to enhance preschool teachers' professional skills through students' pedagogical instruction must inherently incorporate legacy and foresight principles in order to ensure the continued advancement of the teaching profession (Ho & Nguyen, 2022). Preschool teachers develop professional capabilities through a spectrum of activities that train students' pedagogical skills. The discernible outcomes and procedural facets of these activities form the basis for assessing teacher capacity. Therefore, pedagogical training activities should be orchestrated based on operational principles that prioritize and endorse student involvement fostering the evolution of professional capacity. Simultaneously, these efforts empower students with the autonomy to independently elevate their professional capabilities (Ho et al., 2023).

Clark (1992) posits that the development of teachers' capacity necessitates close integration with practical engagement, repeated practice and hands-on experience with professional tasks fostering their evolution into seasoned professionals. Active participation in the continual planning, selection, drafting and reconfiguration of established thought patterns is mandated for teachers. This ongoing method requires regular assessment, redesign and the obtaining of knowledge from one's own experiences. It additionally involves an essential capacity to share information, expertise and professional habits with employees, managers and leaders in their field of influence. The success of this endeavor is contingent upon individual effort, robust learning motivation and the ability to self-improve through dedicated self-study. Various factors, including motivation, attitude, support from management and colleagues, training styles and the overall environment influence the shaping of pre-service teachers' pedagogical capacity (Huang, 2023; Lee, 2005; Munandar & Fathurrohman, 2020). However, the most pivotal element lies in the learning and application of pedagogical skills. These activities encompass the establishment of goals, engaging in self-study to become a dedicated teacher, fostering understanding and encouraging students. Additionally, the comprehensive developmental process involves planning both classroom and outdoor activities, executing teaching plans and evaluating student performance. Bridgstock and Hearn (2012) indicate that an intense focus on practice and observation is required for pre-service teachers to develop into competent teachers. This entails exposing students and teachers to a diverse array of experiences within classroom and school settings. Pham, Ha, and Nguyen (2019) note that in Australia, teacher training schools introduce internship courses for students beginning in the second year. These courses typically encompass a four-week placement in high schools and preschools guided by experienced lecturers. Alternatively, students may participate in student exchange programs structured as internships involving a year-long internship at a school. Subsequently, educational institutions overseeing these internships assess students' capabilities to gauge their suitability for future careers. Dunne and Wragg (1997) underscore that it is vital that students' pedagogical training activities incorporate two key elements:(1) the requisite skills and experiences for students to adeptly teach classes in the future and (2) the establishment of a robust relationship between theory and practice. This necessitates defining the theoretical program, the practice program, the internship and their interrelationships.

According to Yiming and YanPing (2011), in China, future teachers attend a challenging six-month internship programme in which they observe and participate in educational activities in kindergartens and schools. Students assume the role of authentic teachers participating in all school activities throughout this period. Schools hosting interns prioritize their role in training future teachers and provide optimal conditions for students to refine their professional skills. Bales (2015) delineates the process of becoming a teacher in the United States involving the attainment of a four-year bachelor's degree. Students cover a variety of subjects to acquire a comprehensive knowledge base in the initial two years of general education. They specialize in education after their third year. Over the course of their academic journey, students complete three internships during their academic career. The last internship is very important since the results affect the final grade and establish whether the student is qualified to teach. This approximately 15-week internship allows students to undertake various teacher responsibilities including lecture preparation, exam grading, participation in meetings and involvement in other school activities. Students are required to take the Praxis II exit exam after completion to assess their knowledge of teaching practices. Students become eligible to apply for a teaching license after passing Praxis II completing the requisite practice teaching hours and achieving a grade of B or higher.

Phan (2023) proposes strategies to enhance students' practical abilities underscoring the imperative for teacher training institutions to revamp the organization of pedagogical training activities. Teacher training institutions should allocate more time for practical experience within the training program to foster a cohesive connection between theoretical training and practical exposure. Furthermore, it is crucial to provide early exposure for pedagogical students to school and preschool environments to ensure that graduates can confidently and competently embark on professional practice. Pham et al. (2019) present a historical overview of pedagogical internship organizations in Vietnam. They critique the existing system highlighting limitations in practice activities and students' pedagogical internships. Participants criticize the roles and responsibilities of the participating departments and members and they point out that there is limited and unequal coordination between lecturers, teachers and students when it comes to assessing the pedagogical practice results.

Ho and Nguyen (2022) underscore two critical issues addressing recent deficiencies in pedagogical practice activities in Vietnam. Firstly, a substantial portion up to 90% of lecturers at pedagogical schools lacks practical experience participating infrequently in teaching at high schools and preschools. Secondly, the teaching staff at

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pedagogy schools and faculties predominantly contributes to teaching pedagogical modules based on work experience with minimal emphasis on continuous professional development. The practice school network plays a pivotal role in augmenting teachers' professional capacity through students' pedagogical training activities making significant contributions to teacher training in the education field (Pham et al., 2019). Ho et al. (2023) affirm the dynamic role of practice schools as vibrant platforms, companions and crucial partners in achieving the teaching training goals set by pedagogical schools. Therefore, it is imperative to create conducive conditions for practice schools to stand alongside pedagogical schools in nurturing future generations of teachers. According to Ho et al. (2023), an essential centre for pedagogical schools is the pedagogical structure which includes practice schools. The team of teachers must constantly find out the most efficient methods to help students learn, practice and immerse themselves in a continuous favourable learning environment. Pham and Nguyen (2020) examine international experiences and the current state of Vietnam's teacher education system highlighting challenges amid comprehensive education reforms. This paper analyzes teacher education and management, offering viewpoints and principles for restructuring. It proposes a new model, reorganizes the system with key educational universities and their local "satellites" and emphasizes relationships to meet labor market and societal needs. This research contributes insights into reshaping functions, missions and policies for teacher education in Vietnam.

The fundamental consensus among these studies is their shared emphasis on the pivotal role of students' pedagogical training activities in teacher preparation fostering the development of professional competencies and qualities. Studies have demonstrated that preschool teachers play a key role in assisting students throughout their practice sessions in addition to high school and preschool teachers. Consequently, a close collaboration between teacher training institutions and high schools and preschools is essential to facilitate weekly internships for students providing them with enhanced opportunities for teaching practice. This study aims to address these concerns by assessing the implementation of pedagogical training activities for preschool education students and proposing innovative measures to revamp pedagogical practice methods aligned with the evolving demands for the professional development of preschool teachers.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative methodology to assess the fundamental understanding of pedagogical training activities for students in preschool education. The pedagogical training variables encompass the role, aims, content, techniques, evaluation, conditions and influences on pedagogical training activities. The study also looked at the means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha values of these variables to see how well pedagogical training activities were put into practice for preschool education students.

3.2. Participants

This study uses a convenience sample consisting of 629 participants segmented into two sub-samples. The first sub-sample includes managers and lecturers associated with preschool education training at Dong Thap University (33 participants) and preschool teachers from Dong Thap province (150 participants). The second sub-sample comprises preschool students enrolled at Dong Thap University (446 participants). In the context of gender distribution, approximately 92% of the survey sample consists of female managers, lecturers and preschool teachers. The survey results indicate that all lecturers engaged in preschool education training at Dong Thap University possess a master degree with 27% holding a Ph.D. degree. Participants were provided with clear explanations emphasizing their autonomy to withdraw from the study at any stage. It was assured to the participants that the questionnaire did not request their names or the names of their schools because of strong confidentiality measures.

3.3. Research Instrument

The research employs a 52-item assessment scale encompassing seven factors to assess the progression of preschool teachers' professional capacity during students' pedagogical training activities distributed across distinct domains (see Appendix 1). Factor one includes 7 items addressing awareness of the role of pedagogical training activities in fostering professional capacity (e.g., "help students apply knowledge learned at pedagogical schools into educational practice at preschools"). Factor two comprises 6 items focusing on the objectives of pedagogical training (e.g., "foster political qualities and form professional attitudes and emotions for students majoring in preschool education"). Factor three encompasses 8 items pertaining to the content of pedagogical training activities (e.g., "participate in organizing activities to nurture and care for preschool children"). Factor four consists of 11 items associated with methods of organizing pedagogical training activities (e.g., "practice pedagogical skills in the methodology module with guidance from teachers"). Factor five includes 5 items addressing the evaluation of pedagogical training activity outcomes (e.g., "evaluate the results of pedagogical training according to each training content"). Factor six comprises 5 items related to conditions supporting pedagogical training activities (e.g., "support and create conditions for students to find accommodation and food during their pedagogical training"). Factor seven consists of 9 items addressing factors influencing pedagogical training activities (e.g., "content and training program for pedagogical skills in teacher training").

3.4. Data Analysis

The study based each observed item of the 52-item scale on the Likert scale and converted scores to a 5-point scale corresponding to the levels with the lowest score being 1 and the highest score being 5. The scale is divided into five equal levels. The distance between the scales is 0.8 calculated according to the formula [(max minus min)/n]. Accordingly, the scale includes five levels: Level 1: $1.0 \leq$ average score < 1.8; level 2: $1.8 \leq$ average score < 2.6, level 3: $2.60 \leq$ average score < 3.4, level 4: $3.4 \leq$ average score < 4.2 and level 5: $4.2 \leq$ average score ≤ 5.0.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the findings of the evaluation including feedback from different stakeholders such as 446 students, 33 managers and lecturers and 150 preschool teachers. The entire dataset includes 52 items with responses that show seven factors. These factors show the levels of satisfaction with pedagogical training activities among students specializing in preschool education at Dong Thap University.

Table 1. The level of implementation of pedagogical training activities for preschool education students.

Students' pedagogical practice activities scale	Students' self-assessment			Assessment of administrators, lecturers and teachers			N
	M	**SD**	**α**	**M**	**SD**	**A**	
1. Awareness of the role of pedagogical training activities in developing professional capacity.	3.82	0.77	0.72	3.58	0.79	0.88	7
2. Objectives of pedagogical training activities.	3.74	0.79	0.90	3.69	0.86	0.89	6
3. Content of pedagogical training activities.	3.86	0.68	0.62	3.54	0.82	0.85	9
4. Methods of organizing pedagogical training activities.	3.20	0.79	0.72	3.06	0.76	0.91	11
5. Evaluation of the results of pedagogical training activities.	3.46	0.88	0.95	3.07	0.73	0.82	5
6. Conditions to support pedagogical training activities.	3.68	0.81	0.89	3.58	0.82	0.93	5
7. Factors affecting pedagogical training activities.	2.93	0.79	0.88	2.86	0.92	0.75	9

Note: M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, α: Cronbach's alpha, N: number of observed variables.

The findings categorize the satisfaction levels into three distinct groups:

Group 1: This group encompasses components related to students' pedagogical professional training activities with an average score exceeding 3.5. This includes a nuanced understanding of the significance of pedagogy in enhancing professional skills, comprehension of the goals and substance of pedagogical training activities and recognition of the conducive conditions that facilitate these activities.

Group 2: This group encompasses students' pedagogical training activities with an average score ranging from 3.0 to 3.5. This category involves a systematic approach to practicing pedagogical skills and assessing the outcomes of pedagogical training activities.

Group 3: This group comprises students' pedagogical training activities with an average score below 3.0. This group addresses factors that exert influence on pedagogical training activities signifying areas that may require attention and improvement.

An analysis of the mean assessment scores across different indicator groups indicates a little discrepancy. The groups with the lowest ratings consist of: (1) pedagogical training and practice conducted by a non-pedagogical lecturer without the guidance of a preschool teacher. (2) Equipping preschool education students with knowledge, skills and the right mindset through professional training activities. (3) Ensuring effective coordination between pedagogical schools and preschool education establishments in organizing training for preschool education students. In contrast, the indicator group with the highest rating is involvement in socio-political activities in preschools.

The research findings reveal deficiencies and shortcomings in students' pedagogical training activities. Firstly, a prevalent misconception persists among some preschool teachers concerning the nature of pedagogical practice. There exists a perception that pedagogical practice is exclusively the responsibility of the school or pedagogical department rather than an inherent duty of the preschool itself. This misconception has significantly hindered preschools, pedagogical schools and faculties from effectively maximizing their management and coordination roles in teacher training. As a result, the synergy required for the most effective available teacher development has not been fully realized which has impeded the seamless integration of pedagogical practice into the broader educational context. Addressing and rectifying this misconception is crucial for fostering a more cohesive and collaborative approach to teacher training and professional development. Secondly, a noteworthy challenge lies in the formulation of goals by pedagogical schools and faculties for pedagogical training activities. These goals are often very formal and unclear concentrating mostly on broad and specific goals. Unfortunately, this approach lacks the necessary granularity in terms of clearly defined standards. The absence of specificity in goal-setting poses a significant impediment to establishing a seamless correlation between the intended goals and the tangible outcomes of pedagogical practice. This lack of specificity further extends to the inadequate management of goal evaluation and updates within pedagogical schools and faculties. The failure to precisely specify output standards for pedagogical practice and establish a transparent connection between the formulated goals and the content of pedagogical practice exacerbates this limitation. Consequently, the relationship between the overarching objectives and the practical application of these goals in pedagogical training activities becomes tenuous, hindering the effectiveness and precision of the training process. Addressing this challenge necessitates a more refined and detailed approach to goal formulation, evaluation and alignment with the practical aspects of pedagogical training.

Thirdly, a noteworthy limitation persists in the orientation of this innovation while pedagogical schools and faculties emphasize the importance of innovation in the content of pedagogical training activities. The prevailing approach predominantly leans towards work-related tasks and activities with a notable gap in giving due attention to the development of capacities and qualities as outlined in the preschool teacher professional standards. This oversight impedes the comprehensive alignment of pedagogical training activities with the evolving demands of educational innovation. The preschool teacher professional standards define key abilities and skills that are not fully addressed by the present focus on work- and activity-oriented approaches regardless of their importance. These standards serve as a benchmark for the requisite skills and attributes needed to meet the evolving landscape of educational innovation. The oversight in adequately incorporating these standards into the pedagogical training framework results in a shortfall in preparing teachers to effectively navigate and contribute to the changing

dynamics of early childhood education. A recalibration is required to ensure a more holistic integration of preschool teacher professional standards to enhance the efficacy of pedagogical training activities. This would involve a strategic shift towards nurturing not just work-related skills but also the broader capacities and qualities essential for teachers to excel in the contemporary educational landscape. Fourthly, the organization of pedagogical training activities continues to exhibit a lack of evolution and flexibility. The prevalent method characterized by centralized pedagogical internships in kindergartens underscores a notable rigidity in the current approach. This traditional model constrains the time students have to engage in practical experiences and cultivate essential professional skills. The enduring reliance on this stable yet less adaptive internship method persists with schools often justifying its continuation based on practicality and budget considerations despite its inherent inadequacies. The steadfast adherence to a centralized pedagogical internship model while offering stability and ease of implementation falls short in providing students with a comprehensive and dynamic learning experience. The limited time for practice inhibits students from fully honing the diverse competencies required in the field of early childhood education hindering the depth and breadth of skill development. It is imperative to recognize that the educational landscape is continuously evolving, necessitating a more responsive and versatile approach to pedagogical training. Schools need to reconsider the inherent limitations of the current model and explore innovative strategies that not only address budget constraints but also prioritize the holistic development of students' professional skills in alignment with contemporary educational demands.

Fifthly, the evaluation of students' pedagogical practice results reveals notable shortcomings marked by formality and a qualitative assessment approach. The prevailing method relies on the subjective judgment of evaluators introducing a significant degree of variability and subjectivity into the assessment process. The absence of a quantitative framework further compounds the issue contributing to a lack of precision and reliability in gauging the efficacy of pedagogical training activities. The current qualitative assessment paradigm falls short in delivering a comprehensive and standardized evaluation while providing insights into the qualitative aspects of students' performance. The subjective nature of the evaluation process introduces variability making it challenging to establish consistent benchmarks for success. Moreover, the absence of quantifiable metrics impedes the development of a reliable and objective understanding of students' pedagogical proficiency. There is a pressing need to transition towards a more robust and quantitative evaluation framework in response to these limitations. Integrating objective criteria, standardized metrics and clear performance indicators will enhance the reliability and validity of the assessment process. This shift will not only provide a more accurate reflection of students' pedagogical capabilities but also contribute to the overall improvement of the pedagogical training system by fostering accountability and transparency in the evaluation process.

5. Proposing Measures to Innovate Pedagogical Practice Activities to Meet the Requirements for Developing the Professional Capacity of Preschool Teachers

5.1. Building a Network of Relationships between Pedagogical Schools and Preschool Education Establishments in Organizing Pedagogical Training Activities

The interconnection between pedagogical schools and preschool education institutions is crucial and plays a pivotal role in facilitating hands-on experience and professional internships for students specializing in preschool education (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018). This training approach emphasizes a reduction in theoretical aspects and an increase in practical engagement at the facility. It aligns with the early development of professional skills associated with practical work in preschools aiming to consistently cultivate pedagogical skills for students right from the initiation of their specialized studies (Bayar, 2014). The affiliated preschool network enables students to actively participate in professional activities following the learning schedule outlined in the training program. This enables them to acquire career-related skills from an early stage and continuously throughout their educational journey ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the growing demands of society.

The pedagogical school takes a proactive approach to establish a network of affiliated preschools serving as prepared environments to host students for regular pedagogical internships, practical exercises and graduation internships (Brenneman, Lange, & Nayfeld, 2019; Çetin & Bayrakcı, 2019). Students have an opportunity to have an active role in fostering, caring for and teaching preschool at these satellite preschools. Furthermore, the satellite preschools additionally take on additional responsibilities such as (1) participating in active involvement in the science and training council to collaborate on output criteria and the framework for the educational institution training programme. (2) Coordination in organizing extracurricular thematic reports, collaboration in research and educational science experiments and the application of advanced teaching methods, testing, evaluation approaches and educational management techniques in the practical activities of preschools. (3) Facilitating the exchange of professional skills between lecturers and students, thereby contributing to the enhancement of teaching and educational quality (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). This exchange also aids in refining the content and training methods for preschool teachers within the pedagogical schools.

The pedagogical schools arrange meetings with the department of education and training and the department of education as well as preschool education institutions to deliberate on establishing a satellite preschool network (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). Additionally, it undertakes the execution of memoranda of understanding with preschools and employs entities to establish a robust legal foundation for implementing pedagogical training activities for students. Training activities at preschool educational institutions must be compulsory and constitute a substantial portion of the total credits in the training program as outlined in the regulations governing pedagogical schools. The school conducts summary conferences to assimilate insights addressing issues that warrant adjustments in the program for more effective pedagogical training activities at regular intervals such as quarterly or post-internships (Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019; Thao et al., 2022). The school dispatches working delegations comprising representatives of the school leadership, leaders from the training department and relevant departmental representatives to visit kindergartens throughout students' practical experiences in addition to assigning lecturers to oversee the delegation (Jovanova-Mitkovska, 2010). This enables the assessment of students' progress, promptly identifying strengths and weaknesses and the pros and cons of pedagogical training activities. These

insights inform the formulation of strategies for organizing activities that enhance students' pedagogical skills in alignment with the predefined goals.

5.2. Deploying a Model of Regular Pedagogical Training

Avalos (2011) and Santos (2019) conducted research on the effectiveness of the structured pedagogical training model which involves a set of sequential processes as shown in Figure 1. Step 1: Develop a plan for practicing pedagogical skills. At this stage, students and their groups conduct self-assessments of their pedagogical skills and competencies which serve as the foundation for crafting individualized training plans for each student. Step 2: Execute the pedagogical skills practice plan. Preschools play a pivotal role in tailoring the learning environment to the learners' needs. Preschools not only serve as the foundation for pedagogical skills training but also actively engage in managing and organizing activities. Students participate in practicing pedagogical skills and contribute to the teacher training process in pedagogical schools. Students and their training groups conduct regular self-evaluations to fine-tune their implementation plans throughout this step. Step 3: Evaluate the outcomes of pedagogical training. The assessment of pedagogical professional training results involves recording evaluations and assessing plans by the pedagogical professional evaluation council operating at the faculty or school level. The training department is responsible for providing testing and evaluation methods for each skill and profession. Introducing a novel aspect to this model, assessments occur multiple times, encompassing multiple sessions for each tool skill within a training course in a methodical and reasoned manner. Step 4: Engage in pedagogical practice. Only students who have successfully passed the tests and assessments conducted by the evaluation council can proceed to this step. Students opting for a pedagogical internship can select a school that has provided training in pedagogical skills for their practical experience.
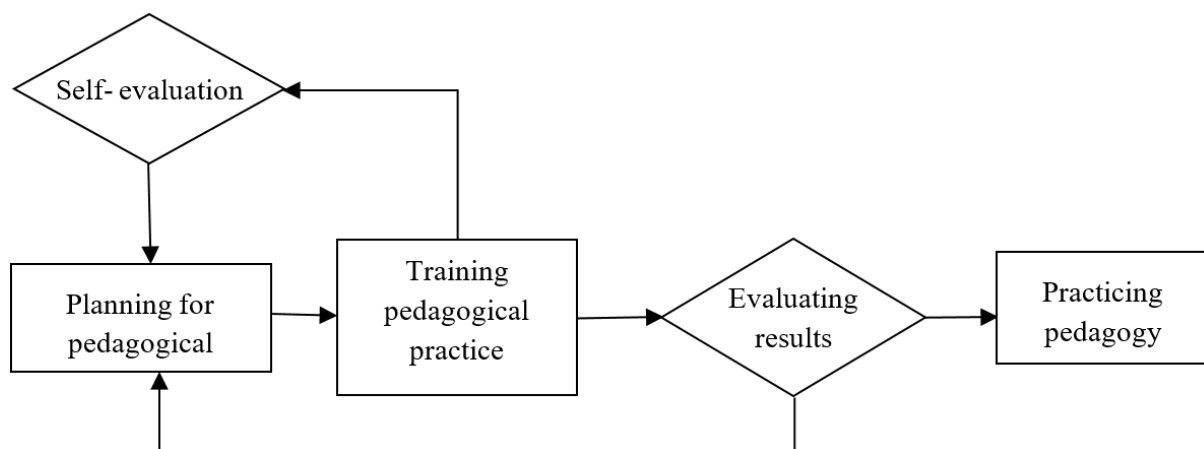

Figure 1. Model of regular pedagogical training.

5.3. Organizing Students Who Have Just Studied at the School or Pedagogy Department to Regularly Return to the Kindergarten for Internships

The pedagogy schools and faculty undergo a comprehensive adjustment of the entire course training plan to align with the structured pedagogical internship organization method (Ithnain & Saidin, 2021; Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2017). This involves a significant reduction in the teaching content load during student internship semesters allowing ample time for students to engage in activities at preschools. Simultaneously, the pedagogy school or faculty must determine: (1) the number of semesters in the training course (2 or 3 semesters) designated for students to practice pedagogy in kindergartens and (2) the professional and procedural requirements for students to register for internships. This includes adjusting relevant subjects with a focus on preparing students to practice their own skills and pedagogical abilities. Furthermore, we develop a set of professional standards to adhere to the requirements of the pedagogical training model. The district departments of education and training select preschools as internship locations and intern schools nominate internship instructors (recommended by the professional team and approved by the board of directors) forwarding the information to the district department of education. Each school submits comprehensive details about their teachers including the teacher's full name, year of birth, gender, highest professional degree, teaching experience and the grade level they are currently teaching. The pedagogy schools or faculty disseminate information about internship schools and teachers online facilitating students' online registration for internships (resembling the process of registering for a course at the school or faculty of pedagogy). Students consistently practice at the kindergarten considering the internship school as their "home" an environment for training, learning and self-cultivation throughout the internship semester. Preschools hosting intern students should create favorable conditions for facilities particularly the students' workplace during the internship so that they can reside at the school and fulfill their responsibilities.

6. Conclusion

The pivotal and decisive factor lies in the quality of teachers and educational administrators in the pursuit of educational innovation. It is believed that implementing suitable measures to enhance the professional capacity of preschool teachers within the context of educational innovation should encompass the following strategies: The first strategy is the fundamental reorientation of educational thinking. The entire education system must undergo a fundamental shift in its approach to education and educational management. This transformation should commence with the awareness and actions of educational managers and each teacher fostering a mindset conducive to embracing innovative educational practices. The second strategy is raising awareness among preschool teachers. Preschool teachers need to be aware of the imperative nature of capacity development activities aligned with professional standards. This involves fostering an understanding of the significance of continuous professional growth and adaptation in the rapidly evolving landscape of educational innovation. The third strategy is innovative approaches to capacity building. The process of organizing capacity-building activities for teachers necessitates

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thoughtful and effective measures. This includes the exploration and implementation of innovative methods for organizing pedagogical training activities. Future teachers should integrate practical, hands-on experiences and real-world applications even within the lecture halls of training institutions. This proactive approach ensures that future teachers are well-prepared for the dynamic challenges and requirements of contemporary educational practices. The study may lay the groundwork for the professional growth of early childhood teachers by creating a climate in which educational innovation is not just a desired outcome but also a common, cohesive culture within the educational community through deliberate attention to these elements.

7. Implications

The results of this study underscore the critical role that pedagogical training activities play in the development of preschool education students. The findings not only emphasize the immediate impact on individual students but also have far-reaching implications for various stakeholders in Vietnam's educational system. School managers should take note of the study's results recognizing the imperative to prioritize and invest in pedagogical training initiatives. This study reinforces the shared acknowledgment of the necessity and bolsters the professional capacity of preschool teachers. Teacher trainers should take these results as a call to action for preschool education professionals. The study emphasizes the need for trainer involvement in designing relevant and contemporary training programs. These findings carry substantial implications in the broader context of Vietnam's educational landscape. A collective effort from school administrators, teacher trainers and preschool education teachers is essential to integrating these insights into systemic changes. Policymakers should consider the study's results when formulating educational policies ensuring that pedagogical training remains a central focus of the professional development agenda.

8. Limitations

The current study provides important insights into how pedagogical training influences the development of preschool education students in Vietnam. However, it has certain limitations. Firstly, relying on a convenience sample might introduce bias and may not accurately represent all teachers in Vietnam. Future research should use random sampling for a more representative sample. This would improve the study's reliability and allow the findings to apply more confidently to all teachers. Secondly, the study mainly uses quantitative methods focusing on statistics. Future research could include qualitative methods capturing participants' views for a more holistic comprehension and a better understanding of the role of pedagogical training.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for students' pedagogical practice activities.

Pedagogical practice activities	Items (52)
1. Awareness of the role of pedagogical training activities in developing professional capacity (7 items)	• Help students apply knowledge learned in pedagogical schools to educational practice at preschools. • Help students practice and practice career skills. • Help students form and cultivate professional ethical qualities. • Help students self-assess their adaptability (Including aptitude) for the teaching profession. • Help students form feelings for the profession and promote students' abilities. • Help students form and develop the core skill system of the preschool teacher profession. • Help students identify the decisive factor of pedagogical training activities, which is the positivity, initiative, and self-awareness of students.
2. Objectives of pedagogical training activities (6 items)	• Fostering political qualities and forming professional attitudes and emotions for students majoring in preschool education. • Thoroughly grasp the educational principle of learning along with practice. • Help equip students with the professional skills of preschool teachers. • Fostering and developing professional capacity for students, aiming to meet the professional standards of preschool teachers. • Helping pedagogical schools realize training goals. • Help pedagogical schools have a basis for evaluating training quality.
3. Content of pedagogical training activities (9 items)	• Learn about the subject and educational environment. • Develop and implement educational plans. • Observe sample teaching hours and observe the lessons of colleagues. • Organizing preschool education activities (Teaching). • Learn about the subject and the educational environment. • Develop and implement educational plans. • Observe sample teaching hours and the lessons of colleagues. • Organizing preschool education activities (Teaching). • Participate in organizing activities to nurture and care for preschool children. • Participate in building an educational environment. • Participate in political and social activities at the preschool. • Check and evaluate children's educational results.
4. Methods of organizing	• Practice pedagogical skills in the methodology module, with guidance

Pedagogical practice activities	Items (52)
pedagogical training activities (11 items)	from instructors. • Regularly practice pedagogical skills in five areas of child development, with guidance from lecturers and preschool teachers. • Regularly practice pedagogical skills in five areas of child development without instructors or preschool teachers guiding. • Focused pedagogical training, with a pedagogical lecturer as the group leader. • Centralized pedagogical training, without pedagogical lecturers as group leaders and preschool teachers to guide. • Focused grassroots internship, with a pedagogical lecturer as the group leader and a preschool teacher to guide. • Internship at centralized facilities, without a pedagogical lecturer as the group leader. • Focused graduation internship, with a pedagogical lecturer as the group leader. • Graduation internship, without a pedagogical lecturer as the group leader. • Train pedagogical skills according to plans in coordination with preschool education establishments, with lecturers in charge.
5. Evaluation of the results of pedagogical training activities (5 items)	• Evaluate the results of pedagogical training according to the training content. • Evaluate the results of pedagogical training according to the different assessment levels of each training content; at each level, there is a specific and detailed description of the corresponding achieved content. • Evaluate the results of students' pedagogical training based on the assessment and classification of preschool teachers according to professional standards. • Students self-assess the results of pedagogical training according to the training content. • Students self-assess their results according to each training content. At each level, there is a specific and detailed description of the corresponding achieved content.
6. Conditions to support pedagogical training activities (5 items)	• Arrange an office room for students to practice pedagogical skills at the kindergarten. • Support and create conditions for students to find accommodation and food during their pedagogical training. • Create conditions for students to borrow books, documents, equipment, and teaching aids during their pedagogical training. • Provide financial support for students to engage in literary, physical, and aesthetic activities during pedagogical training.
7. Factors affecting pedagogical training activities (9 items)	• Awareness of the management and training of pedagogical skills in preschool teacher training. • Directing, inspecting, and evaluating the results of pedagogical training. • Content and training program for pedagogical skills in teacher training. • Pedagogical professional training activities in preschool teacher training. • The preparation of knowledge, skills, and mindset of preschool teacher students. • Professional capacity of instructors at preschools. • Operating methods of the steering committee for preschool pedagogical training activities. • Coordination between pedagogical schools and preschool education establishments in organizing pedagogical training activities for students.