

*Full Length Research Paper*

## Elaborating the purpose and content of professional development plan for preschool teachers

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Professional development of educators, especially in preschool years has been neglected in Iran. The purpose of this study was to investigate the viewpoints of experts and teachers about the purposes and content of the professional development plan for preschool teachers. This research is a descriptive-analytic study conducted through both qualitative and quantitative methods. The statistical population included academic members of universities, PhD students, psychology instructors and teachers of preschool curriculum and education. In the qualitative part, the sample was selected via purposeful grid methods and the teachers were selected through stratified random sampling. The data were collected via semi-structured interview and researcher-made questionnaire. To estimate the validity of the interview and the questionnaire, content validity method was used, and to estimate their reliability, Cronbach's alpha was utilized. Qualitative findings were categorized using content analysis; quantitative findings were analyzed via inferential and descriptive statistics. The results of the Friedman's test demonstrated that, according to teachers, becoming an active and responsible teacher has the highest importance in the development plan, while identifying parents' and societies' expectations as well as interacting with them has the lowest importance. In the content, professional development of teachers, class management and settling problem in class are the first items in terms of importance; yet familiarity with contagious diseases in childhood and controlling them have the lowest level of importance.

**Key words:** Preschool, educators' professional development, curriculum, purpose, content.

### INTRODUCTION

In order for children to succeed in their preschool years, the main requirement will be their teachers' professional development and high levels of knowledge and skill.

Huge efforts have been made in this area and their major focus is to recognize common professional development through teaching educators to learn how to learn and

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transmit the learnt so that students could develop practically (Avalos, 2011). Thus, novel approaches toward professional development are in favor of lifelong learning and claim that professional learning could not be a short-term intervention. In these approaches, professional development is a long-term activity ranging from training school children and university professors to individual in-service educational plans for teachers (Richter, 2011).

Professional development, in spite of its form, is a purposeful effort, and content has an effective role in clarifying the path to achieve purposes. In this line, the present study aims to investigate the purposes of teachers' professional development as well as decent contents of their professional development.

Development and teaching are identified as two main purposes in teacher training. Training includes understanding the main concepts and principles used in teaching, the ability of teachers to present principles and methods in class, general development that is not focused on a special work, but on long-term goals and facilitates development of teachers (Richard and Fall, 2005). In fact, it can be noted that training causes learning and subsequently learning causes change in an individual. Purpose determines the direction of learning content and is used as an evidence for success.

Educators should try to develop constantly so that they can be specialists in their work. Hoy and Miskel (2005) believed that professional teachers are experts in their work area and are perfect in all professional and specialized subjects related to their fields. For professional development of educators, curriculums should be well planned. Curriculum is considered as the heart of education. In fact, purpose is the evidence and criterion for selecting and organizing the contents of education (Abbaszadegan, 1991). Amini (2004) explained the importance of purpose in selecting and organizing the content and stated, that content serves the element of purpose; in other words, authorities in the area curriculum planning should determine the content based on certain purposes. Without purpose, learning cannot induce educational development. This element is so important for the curriculum that decision making at any stage of curriculum planning would be impossible without it.

Studies conducted in the field of pre-school education, have investigated the purposes of this period; however, the purposes of professional development are generally neglected. Thus, there is not a single pattern that can be relied on and these purposes have dispersedly been discussed. The purposes of pre-school curriculum and activities derived from the purposes embedded in pre-school education ratified by Supreme Council of Education based on pupils' age are as follows: 1- Training motor-physical skills; 2- training emotional behavior and feeling; 3- training intellectual skills; 4- training moralities and social behavior based on Islamic values; 5- companionship with Quran and interest in learning the

holy script; 6- training artistic and aesthetic appreciation; 7- training religious views and religious interests; 8- training national identity; 9- training Persian language skills; 10- promoting health and immunity; 11- familiarity with environment and interest in nature and to maintain it.

Results from some of the studies on these purposes are consistent with the present research. For instance, Amani (2006) concluded that 70% of educators and 77% of managers have stated that mid-term tests cover the content and purposes of the educators' teaching periods. In another study by Noorian (2007) on analysis of the content of Persian books in elementary school (first grade) in Iran, revealed that half of the minor purposes of the curriculum are not consistent with the theoretical model of the study on learning purposes of reading and writing and can lead to educational problems for students.

Noori (2012) investigated innovations and new solutions of teaching in preschool levels in America, Canada, Australia and England and concluded that the final purposes have changed and the increase in learning specially in the advanced skills have augmented motivation in students. In a study by Sajadieh and Azadmanesh (2013) titled, "study of interpretive purposes of pre-school activities in curriculums of the Islamic Republic of Iran from the Islamic approach of practice" demonstrated that the first point neglected in the purposes of pre-school education is ignoring developmental and psychological traits of children at these ages and disregarding religious beliefs and values.

In order to realize predetermined purposes, educators should teach their learners materials. These materials are in fact the same contents determined by curriculum authorities. Eisner (1994) believes that the purposes should be elaborated on since they indicate the ends toward which the curriculum is moving. Selecting and organizing content is facilitated when purposes are stated clearly. According to some theorists, content is considered as the first step to achieve purposes. Thus, content is identified as an important element in curriculum. According to Maleki's (2006) definition, content includes a set of concepts, skills and interests that are selected and organized by planners.

Different countries emphasize different components of the curriculum with time period considered for them based on the content of the first preparation programs for teachers; however, they often deal with period of education and experiences, training material, the basis for educational period, professional studies (like periods of education), children's development and pragmatism (Ben- peretz, 1995; Cobb, 1999).

In specialized textbooks of the field, discussions emphasize on the content or research. More countries in the 90s were interested in training contents of initial preparation of teachers, passing training periods for employment of new teachers like other opportunities of

professional development (Baker, 1999). Meanwhile, many countries still focus on content without pedagogy and/ or practice. For example in Ethiopia, as in many other African (Bekalo and Welford, 1999) and Latin American countries (Villegas- Reimers, 1998), McDonnell (1999) believes that preschool teachers should be knowledgeable in 12 fields: 1) base, 2) child development, 3) curriculum, 4) health, safety and nutrition 5) children's supervision, maintaining records and evaluation, 6) providing a suitable environment for children, 7) principles and guiding children, 8) cultural variety, 9) special needs, 10) relationship between family and society, 11) professional development and 12) management and supervision.

Teachers should be trained to acquire these skills so that contents of preschool years include familiarity with Quran, story, poetry and song, manual work, game, painting, creative presentation, discussion, observation of experiment, field trip, watching film and familiarity with mood of using modern technologies. This was ratified in the 77<sup>th</sup> meeting of supreme Council in 15 July 2008 (Educational Planning and Research Organization, 2010). Regarding the purposes and content of pre-school education, it is expected that content of the course be decided so that their knowledge increases. The following are the results from different studies:

Hajizadeh (2004) studied educational needs of preschool centers teachers in eight fields of planning, psychology, management, occupational skills, human relations, supplementary devices, skills of immunity, health. Children literature needs education higher than intermediate level and their need in the field of management and human relations is in the intermediate level.

Mahmoudi (2007) evaluated the content of the books for preschool centers based on Lorestan Department of Education. The results showed that the content of Quran books do not match with the properties of children and the purposes were weak. The other books are in the intermediate level; and the books were weak regarding purposes. In his study titled "assessment of in-service training periods for managers and teachers of preschool centers", Ghahfarokhi (2008) concluded that teachers have higher needs in religious fields, concepts and practices of behavior modifications, training art concepts, methods and creation provision, application of instruments and technology and managers in the fields of human relationships, occupational skills and management functions.

Ervine's research (cited in Deraman, 2014) showed that the quality of educational materials of preschool centers enhances linguistic and mathematical skills and increases children's experiences. Thompson (2001) confirms that if these types of education are implemented in school and teachers participate in designing, management and implementation according to schools'

needs, they will be very successful. According to Price (2009), success of educational content is one of the reasons for technical vocational organizations.

Jovanava-Mitkovska (2010) in a research titled "need of teachers' continuous professional development" demonstrated that the (personal and professional) development of a teacher is a continuous process that is initiated by a person and remains until the end of his/her life. It may also be a process involving different methods including in-service training. For this reason, it has significant effect on beliefs of teachers, learning of students and education reforms; it affects teachers' improvement in teamwork and cooperation in class, teaching and learning tasks, and change in teaching methods, strategies, changes and role of mental factors in the learning processes.

Curriculum systems are expected to be consistent with innovations in science and technologies and determine purposes and contents proportional to these changes. In this research, in order to study purposes and contents relative to professional development curriculum of preschool teachers, four questions are investigated:

1. What is the viewpoint of academic members, instructors and experienced educators about purposes suitable for preschool educators' professional development curriculum In Iran?
2. According to educators, what are the purposes of professional development curriculum for preschool educators in Iran?
3. What is the viewpoint of academic members, instructors and experienced educators about contents affecting preschool educators' professional development curriculum in Iran?
4. According to the viewpoint of educators, what are the contents of preschool educators' professional development curriculum in Iran?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

The present study is analytic-descriptive. In the different sections of this study, two qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied. In order to collect data from academic members, PhD candidates and graduate students, qualitative method was used and to collect data on teachers, quantitative method was used. Findings of qualitative section were obtained from interviews with experts in addition to responding to research questions. Suitable items were extracted regarding purposes and content of professional development programs and were embedded in the related areas in the questionnaire (Clark et al., 2008; Creswell et al., 2007: 62-72).

### Participants

Statistical population includes two parts: academic members of

**Table 1.** Frequency distribution of preschool teachers.

Population	Isfahan	Fars	Total
Education	1500	1500	3000
Welfare organization	1100	1200	2300
Total	2600	2700	5300

universities constitute one part of the statistical population. Preschool teachers form the second population of the research in two provinces of Fars and Isfahan. Frequency distribution of preschool teachers in two provinces of Fars and Isfahan is shown in Table 1.

Stratified sampling method was used for selecting academic members, experienced teachers and educators (Creswell, 2007). In other words, people who had valuable information and were considered as typical sample of the research were selected (Williams, 2006:79). In addition to stratified sampling, grid sampling was used in the interviews (Noy, 2008:32). In this method, the interviewees were first asked to identify other people who could be interviewed about the subject of the research. For the academic members, teachers and experienced educators, the sample size was not calculated as qualitative. In qualitative researches, very big or small sample is not recommended, but criteria like data saturation and repetition of information are allowed (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007:242; Guest et al., 2006, 59). Therefore, in this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 individuals of academic members, teachers and experienced educators. These interviews began in August 2015 and ended in October. Average time of each interview was 60 min.

To select the teachers, random sampling was utilized to select the sample from Isfahan and Fars provinces of Iran. Moreover, to allocate sample, the optimal allocation method was used; each class was determined based on size of population. So, teachers were selected based on their number in each population.

The size of selected sample of preschool teachers with regard to the statistical population was 357 based on Morgan table. In order to increase the validity of the findings, sample size was doubled. Thus, 700 questionnaires were distributed and 566 of them responded (81%).

#### Data collection tools

In this research, two instruments of semi-structured interviews and a researcher-made questionnaire were used. The authors interviewed academic members, teachers and educators to obtain the expert views. Since there is no standardized questionnaire on the subject of this research, researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect data on the teachers.

To determine the reliability and validity of the interview and the questionnaire, content validity was used. To measure the interview reliability, first, eight individuals were interviewed. After objectively applying and summarizing important opinions and their classification, all written materials, summary of materials and determined categories were provided to the advisors and also two experts in research methodology. They also confirmed the summaries and categorizations by applying suitable changes and corrections.

To estimate reliability of the questionnaire, Chronbach's alpha coefficient was used. After performing preliminary study and analyzing the questionnaires, it was determined that reliability of purposes was 90% and that of the content was 90% as well.

#### Data analysis

To analyze the data collected from interviews, various methods were used (Creswell, 2007: 177-147; Campbell et al., 2003: 125; Mason, 1994: 91-96). To analyze the data obtained from the interviews in this research, some steps were taken: data preparation, data organization and data condensation in the framework of components through concentrated coding and combination of codes and finally presentation of data (Creswell, 2007: 148).

To analyze the quantitative data, descriptive and inferential statistics are used. In the descriptive level, mean and frequency were calculated. In the inferential level, in terms of two specifications of normality and variances, homogeneity was first studied. In cases where data have these two specifications, parametric test and otherwise the non-parametric test was used. Tests used in this research include Freidman's test, single-t Test, one-way variance analysis and Levine's test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, findings of the study are represented. The first and the third questions were answered using qualitative data and the second and forth questions' answers were provided through quantitative data.

**Question 1:** What is the viewpoint of academic members, instructors and experienced educators about purposes suitable for preschool educators' professional development curriculum In Iran?

To all the interviewers (20 individuals), authorities of preschool education, child psychologists and prominent professors of university working in the center for publication of educational books have done a proper job in compiling the purposes of preschool educators' professional development curriculum and they are satisfactory.

The main problem encountered in the implementation of these purposes is the lack of time for transferring them and low educational level of teachers. In these centers, concepts are taught theoretically in spite of the fact that in preschool levels, teaching should be practical and applicable. Moreover, the interviewees gave their comments on problems and barriers of actualization of the purposes. These comments are presented here in two separate parts:

#### Methods used to actualize the purposes

Barriers on the road to actualization of professional development of educators could easily be done through some simple step so that the proper ground is provided to reach the purposes.

#### Rewards for passing education periods

Since educational periods are short-term, just one good

teacher is not enough; teachers' knowledge level should be increased. A scoring system should be set for passing in service teaching periods of the teachers. Increase in knowledge level and number of scores indicate work quality. This knowledge level increase should affect their rights (interviewee 1).

***The need for presenting content experimentally: Educators have to gain the ability to attend classes in their best possible form after passing in-service training courses. These courses aim to do this (Interviewee No. 11)***

After passing these education courses, teachers should practically present in the class with complete susceptibility to purpose of these courses (interviewee No.13). The purposes of curriculum are taught theoretically but not practically. This causes challenge to the teachers. Teachers should be taught to actualize concepts in the class and skills should be practiced more (interviewee No.11).

***The need for the presence of managers in education periods***

Since managers of the centers are absent in the educators' teaching periods, they lack enough skill and attitude, are not familiar with the purposes of teachers' development, and do not pay attention to teachers. At least one education period should be regarded for managers and intervention in selection of the content and manipulating the determined content by authorities should be treated more scientifically.

***Proper presentation of content***

Marginal problems like history of preschool education, its definition, review of the literature in the field and redefining teaching methods should be avoided and nurture the sense of creativity and innovation along with application of teaching methods (interviewee 9). Interviewee No. 15 believed that teaching skills of teachers should be improved and at the same time, changes should be made in their attitudes.

***Obstacles to achieve the purposes***

80% of the interviewees believed that the purposes are well written; however, due to lack of awareness about purposes and content of preschool education, authorities are unable to create proper content for educators and this has become a major problem in the field. Here are some

of the ideas extracted from interviews:

***Problem of implementation***

The purposes of education compiled for preschool teachers have the potential to be implemented effectively in this period of education, and their effectiveness depends on their implementation; the serious problem in implementation here is that no supervision is imposed by state organizations on implementing methods that aim to realize purposes (interviewee No. 2).

***Attending classes just for acquiring a certificate***

One of the problems inhibiting learning purposes is that teachers think they are being compelled by managers of the centers to attend these classes just to obtain a certificate; and as a result, they do not learn and they work according to the opinions of the managers after they receive their certificate.

***Low salary of teachers***

Examining the problems of teachers' professional development, they first refer to their low salary. They believe that they should have income to provide requirements of their development. All interviewees believe that teachers can be professionally developed through salary increase. Interviewees No. 9 stated that there has been many teachers that worked well and met all expectations from preschool teachers; yet, since their salary was so low that they even could not purchase books to increase their knowledge or participate in courses to improve their skills and update their information, they left and found another job.

***Low period of training and educating teachers***

Three interviewees from education and welfare organization believed that insufficient time given for education makes the teachers not to understand its purposes. Interviewee No. 5 believed that when certain purposes are given to teachers, education period should be determined.

***Lack of certain work books for teachers***

In terms of writing books, a huge effort is made for preschool and kindergarten years. Many books and workbooks for teachers of this period in the market are published by welfare organization, but they are not used.

**Table 2.** Results of Friedman’s test for ranking purposes of curriculum.

S/N	Area of curriculum purposes	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean of rank priority	Chi square
1	Developing to level of an active and responsible educator	4/60	0/58	7/02	122/801* Sig: 0.000
2	Promotion of knowledge level of teachers about preschool according to new science	4/59	0/56	6/91	
3	Training responsibility feeling against self and beginners	4/55	0/63	6/81	
4	Creation of positive attitude to teaching occupation	4/54	0/63	6/69	
5	Recognition of modern education methods and procedures	4/52	0/61	6/56	
6	Recognition of teaching principles and regulations	4/51	0/63	6/55	
7	Ability to work with colleagues and group	4/50	0/45	6/54	
8	Familiarity with the newest specialized resources of preschool education	4/49	0/64	6/47	
9	Making teachers able to identify issues of beginners and solutions to remove them	4/47	0/62	6/33	
10	Internalize creation and critical thought in teachers	4/45	0/67	6/25	
11	Ability to use technologies related to preschool	4/44	0/67	6/15	
12	Recognition of parents’ expectations and society from teachers and interaction ability of them	4/39	0/71	5/75	

\*p<0.05

There is no program to train teachers before new academic year begins and workbooks are not introduced to them, making certain purposes to be avoided (Interviewee No.1).

**Lack of a connecting bridge between students and preschool centers**

One of the applied dimensions of education is establishment of the relationship between students and preschool centers that guide students’ activity practically (Interviewee No.8). Lack of emphasis on theoretical dimension and emphasis on practical dimensions of the determined purposes give teachers the opportunity to enter these centers, obtain information and knowledge on working with children and learn purposes practically. Familiarity of teachers with types of games and related works make them be interested in new games and works (Interviewee No.1).

**Question 2:** According to educators, what are the purposes of professional development curriculum for preschool educators in Iran?

In order to study the levels of the purposes of professional development curriculum, Freidman’s test was used. The results of this test are presented in Table 2.

According Table 2, chi-squared statistic is used to study the significance of the ranking at p <0.5 level. Based on the results, developing the level of being an active and responsible educator, increasing the knowledge of teachers in the area of science and training them to be responsible are in priority 1 to 3 in the area of curriculum purposes; and recognition of parents’ and societies’ expectations and the interaction between them came last. It should be noted that the mean of all items is higher than the presupposed mean of the research, indicating that all parameters are important and should be considered.

**Table 3.** Test of comparison of the mean grade of teachers' viewpoint in the area of preschool teachers' professional development purposes with the determined supposed criteri).

Statistical indices Variable	Mean of variable	Standard deviation	Supposed mean	degree of Freedom	T value	Sig
Curriculum purposes	4/50	0/45	4	565	26/79	0.000

In addition, single t-test is used for comparing the mean grade of the purposes of preschool teachers professional development with presupposed criteria to determine attention paid to this area, from the teachers' viewpoints. Moreover, in the present study, the mean of the special attention given by preschool teachers is 4.

In Table 3, the t value in the area of purpose of curriculum is more than the critical t value in the error level of 5 and 565% of degree of freedom. In the test, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and the mean of the population is higher than four. Therefore, it can be said that preschool teachers paid attention to the purposes of professional development curriculum.

In addition to the mentioned analyses, variance analysis revealed that the difference between viewpoints of preschool educators regarding purposes of the professional development program is not significant in the case of indices of education, field of study, years of experience and attending courses in the province or the organization.

**Question 3:** What is the viewpoint of academic members, instructors and experienced educators about contents affecting preschool educators' professional development curriculum in Iran?

According to 80% of the interviewees (16 people), content is compiled well; yet the people representing it cannot do a good job for preschool teachers for they lack enough knowledge on pre-school education and this becomes an insolvable problem.

The next important problem is expectations teachers and parents have from managers of the centers. Managers send teachers to these centers to receive a certificate, and since there is no systematic attitude toward parents, assistants and managers of the centers, teachers try and not what they are taught (interviewee No.8) to present the written content well, some cases are presented below:

### **Presentation of applied contents**

Interviewee No.18 believed that if content is presented in a way that makes education operational. This will help teachers not be confused while teaching in classroom. According to his opinion, content should concentrate more on making teachers capable in different skills and

teachers should be forced to practice games and do handwork.

### **Using ideas of managers, teachers and experts on presentation of content**

Managers have an important role in the presentation of content to teachers. If these contents are not well presented to teachers, they cannot apply them in their teaching. Therefore, managers and teachers should state their opinions about presentation of content and be satisfied with these contents.

On the other hand, experts of education and welfare organization who present the content should completely understand the preschool period and should know that teachers refer to obtain information about this period (Interviewee No.2).

### **Homogenizing contents in the country**

Contents of curriculum presented by Education and Welfare Organization and Quran Science Institution are completely different from each other. For example, teachers in Quran centers are taught in a way that reading and writing and alphabet teaching was emphasized and tried to teach writing and reading Quran in an age that according to many scientists is very early for teaching, reading and writing. Reading at these ages should be limited to reading pictures not reading words and text. However, teachings under supervision of education ministry are in complete contrast with these teachings. Interviewee No. 6 stated, "I believe this disagreement in contents can cause disorder in beginners' learning, and when I stated my opinion in our meetings they stated that since the purposes and activities are the same, we have no problem. Nevertheless, I believe that when students start the first grade, teachers face three classes of students. One class that does not pass the preschool period, one class that has not learned alphabet and one class who has learned it. If preschool education is supervised by the ministry of education, we will be more successful in terms of content".

**Question 4:** According to the viewpoint of educators, what are the contents of preschool educators' professional

**Table 4.** Results of Friedman's test for ranking content of curriculum.

S/N	Curriculum content	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean of rank priority	Chi square
1	Training mood of managing class and settlement of cause disputes in the class	4/60	0/58	8/42	654/198* Sig: 0.000
2	Training efficient methods to respond children' responses	4/53	0/60	7/89	
3	Behavioral problems of children in the preschool level	4/51	0/64	7/84	
4	Necessary educational psychological discussions like methods to change behavior and application of psychology in education	4/52	0/64	7/77	
5	Training communication skills special for teachers	4/50	0/64	7/67	
6	Learning disorders in child period	4/49	0/66	7/66	
7	Practical familiarity with types of individual and group games	4/48	0/64	7/65	
8	Practical familiarity with indirect and objective training in preschool	4/47	0/64	7/64	
9	Practical familiarity with application of art in the preschool education	4/44	0/66	7/38	
10	Problem solving application in content of preschool education	4/43	0/66	7/33	
11	Training how to improve emotional intelligence skills in children	4/42	0/64	7/29	
12	Familiarity with different types of storytelling methods	4/40	0/70	7/20	
13	Familiarity with poems related to children	4/37	0/69	6/99	
14	Familiarity with types of contagious diseases in children periods and ways to control them	4/23	0/77	6/25	

\*p&lt;0.05

development curriculum in Iran?

In order to study the status of these factors in terms of determining the priority and ranking of these factors in the content of professional development, Friedman's test was used. The results are presented in Table 4.

In Table 4, the result of Friedman's test was used along with chi-squared statistic shows that the classification in  $p < 0.5$  level is significant. According to the results obtained, teaching teachers how to manage the class, settle disputes in class, use efficient methods to respond children's questions and solve behavioral problems of children in the preschool level are in positions 1-3 in the content area while familiarity with types of contagious diseases in children and ways to control them hold the last rank. The mean of all these items is more than presupposed mean of the research and this indicates that

all of them are very important and should be considered. Besides, single t test was used to compare the mean of content score in the professional development area with supposed criteria determine level of attention paid to this area according to the viewpoint of these teachers. Results of this test are presented in Table 5.

In Table 5, in the area of content of professional development curriculum, showed that t value is more than critical t value of the table in the error level of 5% and degree of freedom 565. According to the test conducted,  $H_0$  is rejected and as a result, mean of the population is higher than four. Therefore, it can be said that preschool educators have paid attention to the contents of preschool educators' curriculum more than the determined criteria. In other words, proposed contents of curricula should be highly regarded according

**Table 5.** Test to compare mean of educators' score in the content area of preschool educators' professional development curriculum with determined supposed criteria (single sample t).

Statistical indices Variable	Mean of variable	Standard deviation	presupposed mean	degree of freedom	t value	Sig
Curriculum purposes	47/4	0/54	4	565	20/75	0.000

to preschool educators' opinion.

In addition to the mentioned analyses, variance analysis test was used to study mean difference, preschool educators' viewpoint in the field of preschool educators' professional development content in terms of studies, field of study, service record, and organization and its type. Results obtained from variances analyses showed that there is no significant difference between preschool educators in the field of preschool educators' professional development content in terms of variable of studies, field of study, service record and hour of attending periods.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the purposes and contents suitable for teachers' professional development. As people in the society pay more attention to preschool period, teachers' professional development in this level needs purposes and content that takes them closer to the desired professional development.

Results of this study explain purposes and content suitable for professional development of preschool teachers and analyze the problems that inhibit realization of these purposes and methods to achieve these purposes. These results state the problems that could be solved. A closer look and a wiser decision could facilitate this problem solving. Besides, results of this study show that purposes in the field of professional development of teachers are well developed and an update could make the educators more active as their main problem is inactivity in classroom context. This update could fill the gaps in the classroom and prepare teachers for an efficient presence in their classes.

While most preschool teachers have teaching certificates, only very few of them have enough knowledge in this regard. The reason is the lack of attentive teaching materials in training periods and participants' focus on receiving a certificate. Studies (Amani, 2006) have shown that teachers who are taught observe educational standards more and their teachings have higher qualities. In addition, there are other problems including problem to execute methods that realize purposes of the research, low salary of teachers, limited time for training, training teachers, lack of certain work book for teachers and lack of a bridge between

learners and preschool centers.

Noori (2012) showed if authorities regard certain methods and focus on implementation of methods to realize purposes, these problems will be eliminated. Attention of authorities to available problems can enhance promotion level of teachers and more standards in their training were observed.

Most preschool teachers do not a very high salary and this causes teachers to leave this work while they have a lot of experience and knowledge. They are generally encouraged to work in elementary school or do other works with higher incomes. Thus, teachers' replacement increases and limited time of teaching does not let them have any time for professional development. This makes teachers lack experience in starting work in this area and achieving professional development becomes more difficult for them. In other words, professional development purposes are seldom realized. Therefore, facilities should be provided for teachers to try harder with more desire to realize their predetermined purposes.

In order to solve such problems, sufficient costs should be allocated for professional development of teachers so that desirable results could be obtained. Besides, if content is set relative to purposes, achieving purposes will become much easier.

This study showed that educational system in Iran needs more practical content in the field of teachers' professional development. As researches have shown (Hajizadeh, 2004) lack of contents like child's psychology, children disorders and psychology in the teacher training periods, causes major problems in teacher development plans. If teachers know children more and learn such contents, teachers communicate better with children and as a result, the quality of their class and teaching rises and children develop more.

Results showed that the presence of applied and practical contents and proper presentation of them by authorities can prepare teachers to conduct a high quality of education. Teachers could manage class with high quality when he or she is developed professionally. Studies (Thompson, 2001) have shown that using managers' viewpoint in presenting content can help authorities in their programs for teachers' professional development for educators and managers know their weaknesses and are able to offer the content based on their shortcomings.

A deeper look at the results obtained from this study

reveals that offering contents like class management and teaching them to use efficient methods can reduce probable problems in their classes. These results can help authorities in their decision making process in the field of presenting content so that they can prioritize the indices obtained from this study.

This study necessitates further attention of authorities to better allocate time and money to eliminate problems and provide educators with better professional development programs, furthermore, a homogenous and well organized content throughout the country. This homogenous content, even if it is not very well developed can reduce the problems in the coming levels.

Finally, this article presents the proper content and purposes required by teachers for their professional development and offers decent solutions for eliminating their problems. While authorities' knowledge is limited to the field of preschool teachers' professional development, they refer to the content and purposes of preschool courses.

This article provides novel information for authorities in the field of preschool teachers' professional development purposes and contents that can be utilized to remove problems inhibiting realization of purposes using those problems as models. This information could be given to countries that have fundamental problems in this regard and use the same content as preschool courses to teach teachers.

### Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interest.

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