

# The Influence of Occupational Stigma on Kindergarten Teachers' Turnover Intention: A Family Perspective

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**Abstract:** Based on the identity boundary theory and from the perspective of family, this study explores the impact of occupational stigma on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention. The study investigated 495 kindergarten teachers from eight provinces and cities through occupational stigma perception questionnaire, turnover intention questionnaire, stigma questionnaire involving family members and family involvement questionnaire. The results show that the perception of occupational stigma can not only directly predict the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers, but also mediate the influence of family stigma. In addition, the three paths of the mediation are all moderated by family involvement variables: when the family involvement is high, occupational stigma can significantly and positively predict kindergarten teachers' involvement in family stigma and turnover intention, and involvement in family stigma can also positively predict turnover intention. On the contrary, when the degree of family involvement is low, occupational stigma has no significant predictive effect on kindergarten teachers' family stigma and turnover intention, and family stigma has no significant predictive effect on turnover intention. In order to avoid the impact of professional stigma on kindergarten teachers' turnover tendency, it is necessary to eliminate stigma from the three levels of society, kindergarten teachers and kindergarten teachers' families, and resolve the kindergarten teachers' turnover crisis.

**Keywords:** Kindergarten Teachers; Occupational Stigma; Turnover Intention; Family Perspective

## 1. Introduction

The stigmatization of kindergarten teachers is a

noteworthy social issue. Some scholars point out that this stigmatization manifests in three aspects: occupational stigma (e.g., being ridiculed as "child minders"), professional stigma (e.g., being deemed "unprofessional"), and event-based stigma (e.g., the "abuse of children" incidents causing stigmatization of kindergarten teachers) [1]. In the face of occupational stigma, practitioners in this occupation tend to choose to resign to respond. Research has shown that occupational stigma significantly stimulates individuals' turnover intention and influences their decision to resign [2]. For example, some scholars have also mentioned occupational stigma as a factor influencing the turnover intention of private kindergarten teachers [3]. The identity boundary theory suggests that individuals possess multiple identities such as occupation and family, and constantly switch roles between these identities [4]. Therefore, solely examining the impact of occupational stigma on turnover intention from the perspective of professional identity is inadequate: on one hand, some studies have found that occupational stigma not only affects individuals' professional identity but also negatively impacts their family identity; on the other hand, living in a typically family-oriented society, the Chinese population places greater emphasis on the relationship between occupation and family [5]. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring the relationship between occupational stigma and kindergarten teachers' turnover intention from a family perspective.

Some scholars refer to the negative impact of occupational stigma on family identity as "family implicated stigma", which means "the degree to which an individual perceives their family or relatives being stigmatized due to their occupation" [6]. For example, Lewis's (1998) study on exotic dancers showed that in order to avoid any negative impact of their occupation on their families, they would go to great lengths to

keep their occupation a secret in their personal lives [7]. Benjamin and colleagues' (2010) study further showed that this negative impact on families can indirectly influence an individual's decision to resign. Their research found that many cleaners have a high tendency to resign because their children are discriminated against in school due to their "dirty" work. Based on this, we formulate our first research hypothesis (H1): occupational stigma has an impact on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention through family implicated stigma, that means family implicated stigma plays a mediating role in the relationship between occupational stigma and kindergarten teachers' turnover intention.

The identity boundary theory also suggests that the degree of identity with a certain identity is an important factor influencing the switching and integration between different identities. When the identity is strongly identified, individuals tend to use this identity as the basis for understanding other identities. Among them, the perception of family identity can be summarized as "family involvement", which refers to the degree to which individuals identify with their family identity [8]. According to this theory, when individuals have a strong sense of family identity, i.e., high family involvement, they are more inclined to integrate different identities, including professional identity, around the center of family identity. At this point, individuals are more likely to understand occupational stigma from a family perspective and believe that it has negative impacts on their families and family members; conversely, when individuals have a low sense of family identity, there is a clearer boundary between professional identity and family identity, and the impact of professional identity on family identity is relatively small. Occupational stigma is difficult to have an impact on family identity. For example, Michel and colleagues' (2011) meta-analysis study pointed out that when family involvement is low, work factors have less impact on the family [9]. Based on this, we formulate our second research hypothesis (H2a): family involvement moderates the relationship between occupational stigma and family implicated stigma in kindergarten teachers; specifically, when family involvement is high, occupational stigma significantly predicts family stigma; however, when family involvement is low, the predictive effect of occupational stigma on family stigma weakens. In addition to influencing the role of

occupational stigma on family members' stigma, family involvement may also affect the role of family implicated stigma on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention. Turnover is an individual's decision-making behavior, and the identity boundary theory repeatedly emphasizes that identity for a certain role will affect individual decision-making. When family involvement is high, that is, family identity is strong, family implicated stigma will impact the identity formed around the family role. To avoid the negative impact on the family, turnover becomes an important option for individual decision-making. Conversely, when family involvement is low, the role of family factors in individual decision-making is relatively small [10]. Therefore, the impact of occupational stigma on family members is not enough to make practitioners decide to leave their jobs. Based on this, this study forms research hypothesis 2b (H2b): Family involvement moderates the effect of family implicated stigma on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention. That is, when family involvement is high, family implicated stigma can significantly predict the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers; when family involvement is low, the predictive effect of family implicated stigma on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention will decrease. Combining the above research hypothesis, we form a research hypothesis model diagram (Figure 1).

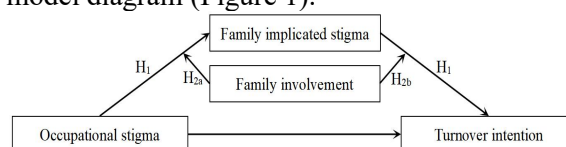


Figure 1. Research Hypothesis Model

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

In the questionnaire survey section, this study used a combination of online and offline sampling methods to distribute questionnaires to 506 kindergarten teachers from eight provinces and cities including Jiangsu, Shanghai, Beijing, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Guizhou, Liaoning, and Fujian. A total of 495 valid questionnaires were collected with a response rate of 97.83%. Invalid questionnaires mainly refer to those with consistent answers across all options. The specific information of the study subjects is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Basic Information of the Research Subjects**

		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	7	1.41
	Female	488	98.59
Marital status	Unmarried	224	45.25
	Married	260	52.53
	Others	11	2.22
Education level	Technical secondary school and below	51	10.30
	Higher vocational college	201	40.61
	College Bachelor's degree	210	42.42
	Graduate degree and above	33	6.67
Kindergarten region	City	253	51.11
	Country	242	48.89
Kindergarten type	Public	296	59.80
	Private	199	40.20
Establishment status	On the establishment rolls	204	41.21
	Not on the establishment rolls	291	58.79

In addition, to further clarify how occupational stigma affects the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers through family factors, this study also conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 12 kindergarten teachers from four kindergartens in Nanjing (two public and two private). Among them, one was male and 11 were female; six were on-the-job teachers and six were non-on-the-job teachers; two had a junior college degree, nine had a bachelor's degree, and one had a master's degree; five were married and seven were unmarried; and their ages ranged from 23 to 40 years old.

## 2.2. Research Instruments and Measures

### 2.2.1 Stigma consciousness questionnaire for staff workers

The "Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire for Staff Workers" revised by Pinel and Paulin (2005) [11] was used to measure the subjects' perception of stigma towards their chosen profession. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions, such as "Many people who are not in our line of work have many negative thoughts about my profession, even if they don't express them." Some questions are reverse-scored. Each question is scored on a 7-point Likert scale, where "1" means "completely disagree" and "7" means "completely agree". After the subjects finish answering the questions, the reverse-scored questions are reversed and the total score or average score of each question is calculated. The higher the score, the higher the perception of professional stigma. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.87.

### 2.2.2 Turnover intention questionnaire

Using the approach of Grandey, Tam, and Brauburger (2002) [12], three questions were used to measure the subjects' turnover intention, including "I plan to stay in my current job" (reverse scoring), "I have plans to leave this job this year," and "If possible, I would choose to leave as soon as possible." Each question was scored on a 7-point Likert scale, where "1" indicated "completely disagree" and "7" indicated "completely agree." After the subjects completed the questions, the reverse-scored questions were reversed and the total score or average score for each question was calculated. The higher the score, the higher the turnover intention. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.83.

### 2.2.3 Family implicated stigma questionnaire

The "Family Implicated Stigma Questionnaire" developed by Ji et al. [6] was used to measure the extent to which the study subjects perceived that their family members or families were stigmatized due to their occupation. The questionnaire consists of nine questions, such as "My occupation has become a burden for my family members." Each question is scored on a 7-point Likert scale, where "1" means "completely disagree" and "7" means "completely agree." After the subjects finish answering the questions, their total score or average score for each question is calculated. The higher the score, the higher the perception of family members or families being stigmatized due to their occupation. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.90.

#### 2.2.4 Family involvement questionnaire

The "Family Involvement Questionnaire" adapted by Paustian-Underdahl, Halbesleben, Carlson, and Kacmar (2016) [13] was used to measure the level of family involvement of the study subjects. The questionnaire consists of four questions, such as "The most important thing to me is about family." Each question is scored on a 5-point Likert scale, where "1" means "completely disagree" and "5" means "completely agree." After the subjects finish answering the questions, their total score or average score for each question is calculated. The higher the score, the higher the level of family involvement. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.91.

#### 2.2.5 Deep interview outline

In the interview study, semi-structured deep interviews were used to further clarify how occupational stigma affects the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers through family factors. The interview outline mainly includes five parts: personal basic information and work situation, family situation, views on occupational stigma in the early childhood education industry, turnover intention, and the relationship between the above factors.

### 2.3 Research Process

When collecting questionnaire data offline, the researcher first contacted the kindergarten principal or relevant person in charge, obtained their consent, and during a collective meeting of the teachers at the kindergarten, distributed the above questionnaire to the participating teachers and collected it on the spot after completion. When filling out the questionnaire, in order to avoid mutual influence among the respondents and prevent them from being reluctant to truthfully fill out sensitive information such as "resignation", the researcher required them to sit apart from each other and reminded them not to communicate during the questionnaire process. In addition, in the questionnaire instructions, it was emphasized that no personal information was required to be filled out, and the content provided would be strictly confidential and only used for scientific research purposes. During the questionnaire process, the researcher also reiterated in verbal form the importance of not filling out personal information and maintaining confidentiality, so as to eliminate any concerns from the respondents.

When collecting questionnaire data online, the researcher would input the above questionnaire into an online survey platform, creating a QR code and response link. Afterwards, the researcher would contact the kindergarten principal or relevant person in charge, obtain their consent, and send the above questionnaire's QR code and response link to the teachers' work group at the kindergarten. Teachers within the group could scan the QR code or directly click on the response link to participate in filling out the questionnaire. Once completed, they could click "submit," and the back-end system would automatically record the data from the questionnaire. The online survey's instructions also emphasized that no personal information was required to be filled out, and that all content would be strictly confidential and only used for scientific research purposes.

In terms of interview research, after arranging a time and place with the interviewees, the researcher would conduct the interview based on the structured order of the interview outline. While ensuring that the overall thought and structural order remained unchanged, the researcher could flexibly adjust the order of specific interview questions and interaction patterns based on the respondents' answers. Overall, the fundamental goal of the interview process was to collect effective information to the maximum extent possible.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

The questionnaire data was analyzed using SPSS17.0, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, mediation effect and moderating effect tests. In addition, to avoid the influence of common method bias, this study used the method of Harman's one-factor analysis to combine all the items of the questionnaire for exploratory factor analysis. The results of the principal component factor analysis (without rotation) showed that there were 12 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, of which the first factor could explain 22.34% of the total variance, which was less than the critical value of 40%. Therefore, it was inferred that this study did not have serious common method bias problems. For interview text data, based on the grounded theory approach and method, following a three-level coding analysis model, through continuous comparison and comparison, interviews with open coding, axial coding, and select encoding interviews text data are

classified into categories, and ultimately form a theoretical model.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis of Each Variable

The descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results of the four variables of occupational stigma perception, turnover intention, family implicated stigma, and family involvement are shown in Table 2. Among them, the mediating variable (family implicated stigma) was significantly correlated with both the independent variable (occupational stigma perception) and the dependent variable (turnover intention), which meets the analysis basis for mediation and moderation effects.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis of Each Variable**

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1. occupational stigma	4.25	1.62			
2. turnover intention	3.98	1.88	0.44***		
3. family implicated stigma	2.83	1.31	0.39***	0.48***	
4. family involvement	4.86	1.26	0.26***	-0.06	0.31***

Note: \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 3. Testing Steps and Results of Mediating Effect**

Testing steps	standardized regression equation	regression coefficient test
Step1	$Y = 0.46X$	$SE = 0.036, t = 14.48, p < 0.001$
Step2	$M = 0.39X$	$SE = 0.038, t = 11.65, p < 0.001$
Step3	$Y = 0.59M + 0.18X$	$SE_M = 0.025, t_M = 23.34, p_M < 0.001$ $SE_X = 0.031, t_X = 6.57, p_X < 0.001$

#### 3.3 Test of Moderated Mediation Effect

According to the test steps of moderated mediation model summarized, the regression equation  $Y = c_0 + c_1X + c_2U + c_3UX + e_1$  was first tested. The results showed that the coefficient  $c_3$  was significant ( $t = 7.25, p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the direct effect in the mediating effect (the direct effect of occupational stigma perception on turnover intention) was moderated by family involvement.

Subsequently, the regression equation  $M = a_0 + a_1X + a_2U + a_3UX + e_2$  was further tested. The results showed that the coefficients  $a_1$  ( $t = 9.74, p < 0.001$ ) and  $a_3$  ( $t = 8.56, p < 0.001$ ) were both significant. As the direct effect in the

#### 3.2 Test of Mediation Effect

According to the test steps of mediation effect, after centering the variables, the regression equations  $Y = cX + e_1$ ,  $M = aX + e_2$  and  $Y = c'X + bM + e_3$  were tested sequentially (where X represents the independent variable of occupational stigma perception, Y represents the dependent variable of turnover intention, M represents the mediating variable of family implicated stigma, U represents the moderating variable of family involvement, the same below). The test results are shown in Table 3. Among them, the coefficient c in the first step of the test is significant, and the coefficients a and b in the second and third steps are also significant, so further Sobel test is not needed. At the same time, the coefficient c' is significant, indicating that the mediating effect is significant but not a complete mediating effect. The proportion of mediating effect in total effect is:  $(0.39 \times 0.59) / 0.46 \times 100\% = 50.02\%$ , about half of the total effect.

Based on this, H1 was partially verified. On the one hand, occupational stigma directly affects the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers. On the other hand, occupational stigma also affects the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers through family implicated stigma, which plays a partial mediating role in the impact of occupational stigma on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers.

mediating effect was moderated by the family involvement variable, the regression coefficients  $b_1$  and  $b_2$  in the regression equation  $Y = c_0 + c_1X + c_2U + c_3UX + b_1M + b_2UM + e_3$  were further tested. The results showed that the coefficients  $b_1$  ( $t = 23.88, p < 0.001$ ) and  $b_2$  ( $t = 10.34, p < 0.001$ ) were both significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that both the first half path (the effect of occupational stigma on family implicated stigma) and the second half path (the effect of family implicated stigma on turnover intention) in the mediating effect were moderated by family involvement.

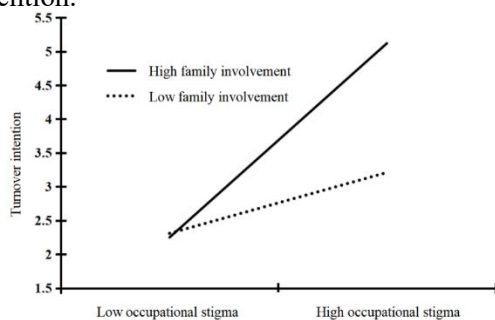
Accordingly, research H2 was partially verified. On one hand, as expected by research H2a and H2b, family involvement played a moderating

role in the effect of occupational stigma on family implicated stigma of kindergarten teachers, and also in the effect of family implicated stigma on turnover intention of kindergarten teachers. On the other hand, the direct effect of occupational stigma perception on turnover intention was also moderated by the family involvement variable, which was not anticipated in the research hypothesis.

### 3.4 Simple Effect Test

To more clearly demonstrate the moderating effect of family involvement, a simple effect test was conducted to examine the moderating effect, using one standard deviation as the criterion for high and low family involvement. Based on this, Figures 2-4 were plotted.

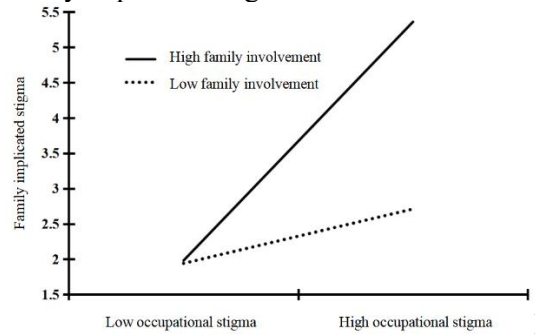
Figure 2 displays the moderating effect of family involvement on the relationship between occupational stigma perception and turnover intention. When family involvement is high (slope=0.29,  $t=4.77$ , Cohen's  $d=0.48$ ,  $p<.001$ ), occupational stigma significantly positively predicts kindergarten teachers' turnover intention, meaning that higher levels of occupational stigma perception lead to higher turnover intentions. Conversely, when family involvement is low (slope=0.09,  $t=1.54$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), occupational stigma has no significant predictive effect on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention.



**Figure 2. The Moderating Effect of Family Involvement on the Relationship Between Occupational Stigma Perception and Turnover Intention**

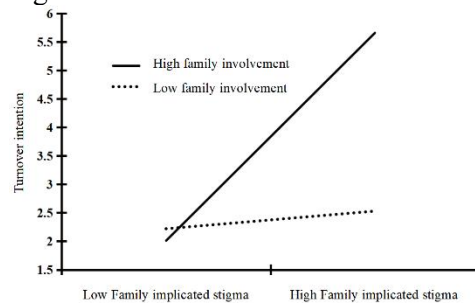
Figure 3 displays the moderating effect of family involvement on the relationship between occupational stigma perception and family implicated stigma. When family involvement is high (slope=0.26,  $t=4.43$ , Cohen's  $d=0.44$ ,  $p<.001$ ), occupational stigma significantly positively predicts kindergarten teachers' perception of family implicated stigma, meaning that higher levels of occupational stigma perception lead to higher levels of family

implicated stigma. Conversely, when family involvement is low (slope=0.05,  $t=0.97$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), occupational stigma has no significant predictive effect on kindergarten teachers' perception of family implicated stigma.



**Figure 3. The Moderating Effect of Family Involvement on the Relationship Between Occupational Stigma Perception and Family Implicated Stigma**

Figure 4 displays the moderating effect of family involvement on the relationship between family implicated stigma and turnover intention. When family involvement is high (slope=0.31,  $t=5.15$ , Cohen's  $d=0.51$ ,  $p<.001$ ), family implicated stigma significantly positively predicts kindergarten teachers' turnover intention, meaning that higher levels of family implicated stigma lead to higher turnover intentions. Conversely, when family involvement is low (slope=0.01,  $t=0.12$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), family implicated stigma has no significant predictive effect on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention.



**Figure 4. The Moderating Effect of Family Involvement on the Relationship Between Family Implicated Stigma and Turnover Intention.**

### 3.5 Analysis of Interview Data

The above research results are also supported by the interview data. Through coding analysis and continuous comparison, the following three results can be extracted from the interview text data:

Firstly, the level of occupational stigma perception by kindergarten teachers affects their

turnover intention. Based on the coding analysis of interview data, it is clearly found that if kindergarten teachers perceive strong occupational stigma, their turnover intention is also higher. For example, one interviewee pointed out: "Society doesn't recognize us, and there are so many mocking comments about us on the internet. What's the point of doing this job if there's no respect?" Conversely, if kindergarten teachers do not perceive occupational stigma, their turnover intention is relatively low. For example, one interviewee said: "Actually, parents still respect us and trust us. Feeling respected as a teacher gives us the motivation to continue working hard." (Due to space limitations, only one example is provided for each viewpoint.)

Secondly, kindergarten teachers tend to worry about the negative impact of their occupational stigma on their families, leading them to resign, which corresponds to research hypothesis 1. Based on the coding analysis of interview data, it was found that when kindergarten teachers perceive that occupational stigma affects their families, the turnover intention of the interviewees will also increase. For example, one interviewee said: "Originally, I thought it was okay because I didn't think the online information (referring to online occupational stigma information about kindergarten teachers) was real. But my parents really believe it. They think being a kindergarten teacher is not good and it's embarrassing to say it out loud. So they constantly advise me to quit my job and take the postgraduate entrance exam to change careers. After listening to them, I started to waver and I'm not sure if I can continue doing this job." On the other hand, if the family is not affected by occupational stigma, its impact on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers is relatively small. For example, one interviewee said: "Although there are sometimes some prejudices against our early childhood education industry, luckily my family members all approve my job and don't think there is any stigma. So I am happy at work and have their support."

Thirdly, if kindergarten teachers have different considerations for family factors, the impact of occupational stigma on them and their families varies accordingly, which corresponds to research hypothesis 2. For example, one interviewee with low family involvement said: "I don't care. As long as I'm single, I don't care about the negative information online about my

family. I am content with working hard to support myself." In contrast, one interviewee with high family involvement stated: "I think family is more important than work. If the 'stigma' you mentioned affects my family members, such as my child being mocked or criticized because of this, then I would definitely quit my job rather than let my child suffer."

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Different Paths of Perceived Occupational Stigma Influencing Kindergarten Teachers' Turnover Intention**

This study found that there are two paths in the influence of perceived occupational stigma on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers. The first path is the direct impact of perceived occupational stigma on turnover intention. This path is consistent with the results of previous relevant studies. A large number of studies have shown that perceived occupational stigma is positively correlated with the turnover intention of practitioners [14]. Zhang Yan and Li Guoqing [15] used the concept of "dirty work" to illustrate the impact of occupational stigma on practitioners. They pointed out that occupational stigma can lead to negative occupational stereotypes and negative professional identity, and practitioners will feel discrimination from society, ultimately leading to occupational withdrawal behavior, the most typical of which is turnover. In addition, not feeling the respect they deserve, damage to positive self-esteem, increased negative emotional experiences (such as shame, disgust, etc.), loss of potential or actual resources [16,17], are all possible reasons for practitioners' turnover caused by occupational stigma. Based on the above possible reasons, it is not difficult to understand the direct effect of occupational stigma on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers.

The other path of the influence of perceived occupational stigma on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers is through the indirect effect of family implicated stigma. On one hand, perceived occupational stigma can positively affect kindergarten teachers' perception of family implicated stigma. Ashforth & Kreiner (2014) have demonstrated through qualitative research that practitioners' perceived occupational stigma can affect their family identity perception to a certain extent [5]. In addition, in Chinese culture, "family" has unique

and important significance, and traditional family culture in China has strengthened the connection between family identity and other identities. This generalization of traditional family culture is prevalent in various organizations in China [18]. Therefore, in the context of Chinese culture, practitioners' experience of stigma in their professional identity is easily spread to their family identity, resulting in family implicated stigma. On the other hand, when kindergarten teachers perceive that their family members or families have been stigmatized due to their occupation, their turnover tendency will increase. Under the influence of "family", there is a contradiction between occupational stigma and positive family identity. When the formed occupational stigma cannot be eliminated in a short time, turnover becomes one of the choices for practitioners to eliminate the negative impact of occupational stigma on family identity. It may even become the only choice.

#### **4.2 The Regulatory Role of Family Involvement**

This study found that the three paths of the mediating effect were moderated by the variable of family involvement.

Firstly, the direct effect of occupational stigma perception on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers was moderated by family involvement. That is, when the degree of family involvement was high, occupational stigma could significantly positively predict the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers. However, when the degree of family involvement was low, occupational stigma had no significant predictive effect on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers. Scholars such as Shulman, Barr, Livneh, et al. (2015) pointed out that different people have different pursuits for their careers. Some people pursue their careers for the sake of their families, some for money, and some for the sake of family [19]. Obviously, high family involvement individuals, when engaging in specific occupations, will inevitably consider the impact on their families. Once the development of the occupation is detrimental to the development of their families (such as the negative impact of occupational stigma on the family), their likelihood of choosing resignation will increase. On the other hand, for low family involvement individuals, if the development of their careers and income are

not affected, and only the family factor is threatened, they may not necessarily make the choice of resignation.

Secondly, family involvement also moderated the relationship between occupational stigma perception and family implicated stigma perception. That is, the higher the degree of occupational stigma perception, the higher the degree of family implicated stigma that kindergarten teachers perceive due to their occupation. When the degree of family involvement was low, occupational stigma had no significant predictive effect on family implicated stigma. As stated in identity boundary theory, individuals tend to integrate other identities based on the identity with higher recognition. High family involvement individuals tend to integrate other identities based on their family identity, and some may even struggle to switch from their family identity to other identities. For these individuals, if they perceive that their occupation has social stigma, this perception is easily spread to their family members and they believe that their family members will be stigmatized due to their occupation. On the other hand, for low family involvement individuals, their family identity is separate from other identities, and different identities have strict boundaries. At this point, family factors have a limited impact on occupation factors. Occupational stigma in the professional identity is difficult to spread to the family identity.

Finally, family involvement also moderated the relationship between family implicated stigma and turnover intention. That is, when the degree of family involvement was high, the higher the degree of family implicated stigma that kindergarten teachers perceive due to their occupation, the higher their turnover intention. When the degree of family involvement was low, family implicated stigma had no significant predictive effect on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention. Similarly, based on identity boundary theory, high family involvement individuals tend to integrate different identities around their family identity. Therefore, they need to maintain positive associations between other identities and their family identity. Once other identities threaten positive family identity cognition, this threat must be eliminated. Similarly, occupational stigma perception leads to family implicated stigma. This threat to positive images of family members can be



eliminated through resignation behavior. For low family involvement individuals, there are strict boundaries between their family identity and other identities. Therefore, although family implicated stigma may have a negative impact on kindergarten teachers' family identity, this impact is difficult to cross the boundary between family identity and other identities and thus has a substantial impact on including turnover in occupation behavior. Conversely, low family involvement individuals are not inclined to eliminate family implicated stigma and its impact on their family identity through resignation.

#### **4.3 Research Contributions and Limitations**

In summary, the theoretical contributions of this research mainly include the following three points:

Firstly, clarifying the impact of occupational stigma, especially the perception of occupational stigma, on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers. Previous studies have focused on the influence of work stress, salary factors, social support, and other factors on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers [20,21]. Although it has been mentioned before that occupational stigma will increase the turnover intention of practitioners, the relationship between these two in the kindergarten teacher population is lacking, which is one of the theoretical contributions of this study.

Secondly, moving beyond the individual perspective, this study explores the impact of occupational stigma on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers from the perspective of their families. Previous studies on the turnover intention and behavior of kindergarten teachers often focused on their personal perspective and investigated their turnover psychology and behavior based on their professional identity. Obviously, this ignores the multiple identity cognitions of kindergarten teachers, especially in the influence of Chinese family culture, lacking of the perspective of families may be difficult to fully show the inner mechanism of occupational stigma affecting the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers.

Thirdly, this study explores the possibility of occupational stigma spreading to practitioners' families. Previous studies on occupational stigma often focused on its impact on practitioners' emotions, attitudes, behaviors, and other aspects. However, under the influence of

family involvement and unique Chinese family culture, this study considers the possibility of this negative impact spreading to practitioners' families. This provides new ideas for research on occupational stigma, especially in the context of Chinese culture.

In addition, there are some limitations in this study that deserve further attention from subsequent studies: Firstly, as a cross-sectional study, the conclusions based on questionnaire data cannot be generalized to infer causal relationships between variables. That is to say, the proposed moderated mediation model in this study is only a possible relationship path between occupational stigma, turnover intention, and family factors. Whether it is a clear causal relationship needs to be verified by subsequent experimental research or longitudinal follow-up studies. Secondly, although this study goes beyond the individual perspective to explore the impact of occupational stigma on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers from the perspective of their families, in the end it still focuses on individual psychology and behavior, namely, the turnover intention and behavior of kindergarten teachers. What impact has occupational stigma had on practitioners' families? This requires further exploration in subsequent studies. Finally, identity boundary theory explores not only occupational identity and family identity but also individuals' identities in social and peer groups. Whether the interaction between these identities is consistent with occupational identity and family identity remains to be studied around identity boundary theory.

#### **5. Recommendations**

##### **5.1 Social Level: Eliminate Stigma and Fundamentally Resolve the Crisis**

The root cause of the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers and the stigma associated with their families in this study is the negative stereotype and occupational stigma perceived by this group. Therefore, to resolve this crisis, fundamentally speaking, it is necessary to eliminate the negative stereotype and occupational stigma of kindergarten teachers at the social level. Xu and Wang (2019) pointed out that to resolve the occupational stigma of kindergarten teachers at the social level, it is necessary to improve social inclusivity [1], including accepting the normal care behavior of

kindergarten teachers, accepting the "imperfections" of the preschool education profession, and accepting the faulty behavior of kindergarten teachers (referring to the behavior of kindergarten teachers who make mistakes in preschool education practice due to lack of experience or other reasons, which can be solved through practical experience and accumulation of experience). The other hand, social media also exerts an influence on the occupational stigma of kindergarten teachers. For example, some studies have pointed out that social media reports of family-kindergarten conflict incidents and related online comments will significantly affect parents' trust in kindergartens [22]. Therefore, social media should not only avoid deliberately exaggerating conflicts and manufacturing stigmas in order to attract attention and increase traffic, but also should pay attention to the true, good, and beautiful aspects of the preschool education industry, help the preschool education industry resolve stigmas through positive and positive reports.

### **5.2 Kindergarten Teacher Level: Face Stigma and Resolve Stigma**

As kindergarten teachers, on one hand, they should face the existence of occupational stigma, view it rationally, because occupational stigma not only exists in the preschool education industry, but also exists in almost all industries. As preschool educators, we should know that this occupational stigma is a negative stereotype of a specific occupation. It is not only one-sided but also not targeted at an individual. We should not give up our ideals of working in the preschool education industry because of this; on the other hand, kindergarten teachers should also "start with themselves", improve professional cultivation, correct professional attitude, keep professional ethics first, adhere to cultivating people with integrity, constantly improve professional ability, so as to establish a positive image of kindergarten teachers and resolve the occupational stigma of the preschool education industry.

### **5.3 Families of Kindergarten Teachers Level: Strengthen Counseling and Positive Guidance**

This study found that family factors played an important role in the influence of occupational stigma on the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers. Therefore, while paying attention to individual kindergarten teachers, their families

should also be paid attention to. Families of kindergarten teachers should be strengthened for counseling, changing their negative perception of occupational stigma in the preschool education industry, guiding them to view the occupation of kindergarten teachers from a positive perspective, and recognizing the importance and necessity of developing the preschool education industry. Families should enhance their recognition and pride in kindergarten teachers' choice to work in this occupation so as to provide understanding and support for kindergarten teacher groups. Families' understanding and support are important buffering factors for kindergarten teachers' decision to leave their jobs.

### **6. Conclusion**

This study found that the perception of occupational stigma can not only directly predict the turnover intention of kindergarten teachers, but also mediate the influence of family stigma. In addition, the three paths of the mediation are all moderated by family involvement variables: when the family involvement is high, occupational stigma can significantly and positively predict kindergarten teachers' involvement in family stigma and turnover intention, and involvement in family stigma can also positively predict turnover intention; On the contrary, when the degree of family involvement is low, occupational stigma has no significant predictive effect on kindergarten teachers' family stigma and turnover intention, and family stigma has no significant predictive effect on turnover intention. In order to avoid the impact of professional stigma on kindergarten teachers' turnover tendency, it is necessary to eliminate stigma from the three levels of society, kindergarten teachers and kindergarten teachers' families, and resolve the kindergarten teachers' turnover crisis.

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