

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE): THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

AKSHAYA E.

St Teresa's College (Autonomous), Mahatma Gandhi University, Ernakulam, Kerala, 682 011

Date of Receipt : 17-03-2025

Date of Acceptance : 18-06-2025

ABSTRACT

This study conducted in the year 2022, investigates Anganwadi teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Kerala, India, focusing on the influence of teachers' age and years of experience on parental involvement. Using a self-designed rating scale, responses from 225 teachers were analysed through one-sample Z-tests and ANOVA to evaluate perceptions and demographic variations. The findings revealed a generally positive perception of parental involvement, with a mean perception score of 71.7% ($z = 36.005$, $p < 0.001$). Older teachers (mean = 22.25, SD = 2.70) and those with more experience (mean = 22.81, SD = 2.63 for 25-35 years) exhibited significantly more favourable attitudes toward parental involvement ($p < 0.05$). While most teachers (96.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that both parents and teachers should collaborate to enhance children's readiness skills. Gaps in parental awareness were evident, with 73.3% of teachers perceiving a lack of awareness about ECCE. The study emphasises the need of professional development programs to strengthen teacher-parent collaboration, including training sessions, enhanced communication tactics, and active parental participation in decision-making.

Keywords: ECCE, ICDS, Parental Involvement, Teaching experience, Teachers Perceptions

INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement is key to children's growth in education, both academically and emotionally. While its importance is well known, little attention has been given to how teachers see and experience parental participation, especially in varied cultural settings. Recent research emphasises the significance of active parental involvement in preparing children for formal schooling. Trivedi (2023) in his study showed that a loving home atmosphere rich in activities such as reading and interactive play considerably improves children's school readiness. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of structured

parental assistance, as parents became more involved in their children's education amid school closures. Vernekar *et al.*, (2022) found that structured programs meant to empower parents significantly reduced possible learning deficits in early childhood settings.

Understanding the dynamics of parental involvement is critical in developing effective ECCE programs in India. Cultural and social influences have a significant impact on parental attitudes and practices, affecting their level of engagement. Swargiary and Roy (2023) performed a survey and discovered that parents' views and opinions about preschool

education strongly influence their involvement in their children's early learning experiences. These findings indicate that culturally sensitive practices are critical to developing effective parent-teacher relationships. For instance, a meta-analysis by Castro *et al.*, (2015) demonstrated that parental involvement is positively associated with children's academic achievement, social skills, and self-esteem.

Socio-economic status (SES) affects how much parents can be involved in early education. Families with higher SES often have more time, resources and awareness to support their children. In contrast, those with lower SES may face challenges like busy work schedules or limited access to information, making it harder to participate in ECCE (Gokturk and Dinckal, 2017). When parents are involved in early childhood education, a child's classroom experiences can extend to incorporate real-world activities that occur within the home environment. A parent can better assess their child's competency and identify areas for improvement to boost confidence and ability if aware of what their preschooler activity (Spreeuwenberg, 2022). This research explores teachers' perspectives on the influence of parental engagement in ECCE.

HYPOTHESIS

H_0 : The level of Perception on ECCE and parents is = 50 percent of total score (H_0 :MPS=50%)

H_1 : The level of Perception on ECCE and parents is > 50 percent of total score (H_1 :MPS>50%)

H_2 : The mean Score of Perception on ECCE and parents is consistent across different age groups.

H_3 : mean Score of Perception on ECCE and parents is the same for different years of experience

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study conducted in 2022 employed a straightforward yet effective approach to explore Anganwadi teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Kerala, India. The aim of the study was to understand the influence of factors like age and years of experience influence these perceptions.

The research used a cross-sectional survey design, targeting 225 Anganwadi teachers working in both urban and rural areas under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme. A stratified sampling method was adopted to ensure the inclusion of teachers across diverse age groups and varying levels of experience. The data collection tool consisted of a self-designed questionnaire divided into two sections. The first section gathered basic demographic details such as age and years of teaching experience. The second section focused on teachers' perceptions of parental involvement, utilizing a five-point Likert scale. The questions addressed critical aspects like the quality of teacher-parent collaboration, communication practices and the role of parents in supporting their children's education.

The collected data were analysed using various statistical methods to answer the research questions. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and percentage scores, were calculated to gauge teachers' perceptions. A one-sample Z-test was employed to determine whether the overall perception score exceeded the hypothesized threshold of 50%. Additionally, one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare perception scores across different age groups and years of experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers Perception on Parental Involvement on ECCE

To gauge teachers' perception of early childhood care and education (ECCE) and

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Z-Test for Perception on ECCE and Parents

Sl.No	Variable	N	SD	Mean	Mean %	CV	z	p
1	Perception on ECCE and parents	225	2.71	21.51	71.70	12.61	36.005	<0.001

parental involvement, questions were asked using a five-point Likert scale. Responses were scored from 1 to 5. The combined score of all questions for the 225 respondents was calculated. Subsequently, the mean percentage score for extent of teachers' perception on ECCE and parents was determined.

The mean percentage score of 71.70% for perception on ECCE and parents suggests that the extent of perception falls within the range of good to medium. The coefficient of variation indicates stability since its value is below 20%. To determine if the observed sample information accurately represents the population and to confirm whether the extent of perception on ECCE and parental involvement is indeed medium, hypothesis H_0 and H_1 has developed.

The hypothesis was evaluated using a one-sample Z test, the results are illustrated

in Table 1. The p-value obtained using the table 1 was lower than 0.05, and the z-value is positive, indicating statistical significance. Consequently, the rejection of the null hypothesis led to the inference that the level of perception on ECCE and parents exceeds 50%, suggesting a good level. The results show that Anganwadi teachers perceive parental involvement as crucial to early childhood education.

According to Gokturk and Dinckal (2017), teachers define parental involvement as the support parents offer their children during homework or project work at home, whereas parents desire involvement in decisions regarding their children's education. They suggest that when there's a discrepancy between parents' and teachers' viewpoints, collaboration becomes less effective. Wu and Hindman (2024) emphasised the importance

Table 2. Teachers' perception on parents involvement in ECCE

n=225						
Sl.No	Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1	Parents prefer Anganwadi	6.7	30.2	4.9	44	14.2
2	Preschools should discuss readiness	0.9	0	0	56	43.1
3	Parents have no influence on readiness	17.3	73.3	2.2	4.9	2.2
4	Parents and teachers should collaborate on readiness	0.4	2.7	0.4	42.7	53.8
5	Parental education impacts readiness	5.3	40	2.7	36.9	15.1
6	Inform teachers about parental learning issues	0.9	4	0.9	66.2	28

of parental participation in children's school preparedness, particularly the function of activities such as home reading in supporting cognitive and emotional development. Their findings are consistent with the positive attitudes teachers in this study have towards family engagement.

Perception on ECCE and Parents

Teachers predominantly agreed that parents prioritize their child's early education, with 44.0% agreeing and 14.2% strongly agreeing. However, a notable percentage disagreed (30.2%) or strongly disagreed (6.7%), while 4.9% remained neutral. This reveals a mixed perception, suggesting that while many parents are seen as prioritizing ECCE, some teachers perceive otherwise. Concerning the role of preschools in enhancing children's readiness, many teachers strongly agreed (43.1%) and agreed (56.0%), with no disagreements or neutral responses. This indicates unanimous support for the importance of preschools in preparing children for school.

When asked about parents' awareness of ECCE, 73.3% of teachers disagreed and 17.3% strongly disagreed, reflecting a widespread perception of insufficient parental awareness. Only 4.9% agreed, 2.2% strongly agreed, and 2.2% were neutral, emphasizing the need for greater parental education and awareness about ECCE. The statement regarding shared parental responsibility in ECCE received strong support. Many teachers strongly agreed (53.8%) and agreed (42.7%), with only a small percentage disagreeing (2.7%), strongly disagreeing (0.4%), or remaining neutral (0.4%). This highlights a strong consensus on the importance of both parents' involvement in ECCE.

Regarding the impact of parental education on children's readiness, 40.0% disagreed, and 5.3% strongly disagreed. Conversely, 36.9% agreed, 15.1% strongly

agreed, and 2.7% were neutral, reflecting varied opinions. While many teachers acknowledge the influence of parental education, others perceive its impact as less significant. Finally, when considering the influence of socio-economic status on parental involvement in early education, 66.2% agreed and 28.0% strongly agreed. Only a small proportion disagreed (4.0%) or strongly disagreed and remained neutral (both 0.9%). This suggests that teachers generally associate higher socio-economic status with increased parental involvement in ECCE.

Influence of Teachers' age on perception on parental Involvement on ECCE

Considering the age of the participants, and to investigate the hypothesis H_2 , a one-sample analysis of variance was employed where three or more independent variables are involved. In this scenario, the independent variable was the age group (yrs.), consisting of four groups: 18-28, 29-39, 40-50, and 51-62. ANOVA was employed to differentiate the mean scores of the different age groups, and the results are presented in the table 3.

The findings of the test presented in Table 3 indicate that the p-value is lower than 0.05 for perception on ECCE and parents. Consequently, the analysis concluded that there the mean score of perception on ECCE and parents varies across age groups. Thus, hypothesis H_2 was rejected.

Aleman-Falcon *et al.*, (2023) found that teachers aged 53 years or older perceive greater participation from families in school decision-making compared to teachers aged between 24 and 44. The median score for teachers aged 24-44 years old was 4.29, while for teachers aged 53 years or older, it was 4.63, with a significance level $p = 0.012$. The correlations were found to be statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, indicating that teachers' positive attitude towards parental involvement increased with age ($r = 0.829^{**}$, $p < 0.01$)

Table 3. Mean, Standard deviation and F value for Age

Sl.No	Variable	Age	N	Mean	S.D	F	p
1	Perception on ECCE and parents	18-28	3	21.33	0.58	5.192	0.002
		29-39	24	21.04	2.61		
		40-50	93	20.81	2.61		
		51-62	105	22.25	2.70		

(Alzaidiyeen, 2016). Winder and Corter (2016) discovered that early childhood educators' projected that work with families is shaped by earlier experiences, which are commonly accumulated with age.

Influence of years of experience on Teachers' Perception on Parental Involvement on ECCE

Considering the years of experience of the participants, and hypothesis H_3 , evaluated using one-sample ANOVA test. In this instance, years of experience were regarded as independent variable, encompassing five groups: (a) Below 5 years, (b) 5-15 years, (c) 15-25 years, (d) 25-35 years, and (e) 35 years and above. ANOVA has employed to collate the mean scores of years of experience, and the outcome is depicted in Table 4.

The outcomes of the test displayed in Table 4 indicate that the p-value is lesser than 0.05 for perception on ECCE and parents. Therefore, it is ferred that mean score on perception on ECCE and parents varies with years of experience. Hence, the hypothesis H_3 , was rejected. Teachers with more experience demonstrated stronger perceptions of parental involvement's importance, likely reflecting their deeper understanding of its impact on

children's learning and development. With experience teachers also perceived parents to have a significant role in the overall wellbeing of the children.

The findings indicate that teachers with more years of experience have a greater appreciation for parental involvement in ECCE. Winder and Corter (2016) found that prior experiences influence early childhood educators' projected work with families, meaning that experienced instructors may place a higher priority on parental involvement. Research done by Alzaidiyeen (2016), found that a positive correlation ($r = 0.863^{**}$, $p < 0.01$) between the attitudes of teachers towards parental participation and their experience.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that most (71.7%, $z = 36.005$, $p < 0.001$) of the Anganwadi teachers have a positive view of parental engagement in early childhood education. Older teachers (mean = 22.25, SD = 2.70) and those with more years of experience (mean = 22.81, SD = 2.63 for 25-35 years) expressed stronger positive perceptions of parental involvement ($p < 0.05$). Teachers emphasized the critical role of collaboration, with 96.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing that both parents and teachers are

Table 4. ANOVA for years of experience as an Anganwadi Teacher

Sl.No	Variable	Experience	N	Mean	S.D	F	p
1	Perception on ECCE and parents	Below 5 years	21	21.57	2.40	3.206	0.014
		5-15 years	76	21.39	2.62		
		15-25 years	86	20.99	2.79		
		25-35 years	36	22.81	2.63		
		35 years and above	6	22.50	2.07		

responsible for improving children's readiness skills. However, significant gaps were noted, with 73.3% of teachers perceiving a lack of parental awareness about ECCE, and socio-economic disparities were identified as influencing parental involvement. The study suggests two vital areas for improvement: Teachers should receive periodical training to enhance their skills in leveraging parental involvement for students' benefit. Improving communication, organizing seminars on home-based learning support for parents, and actively seeking their opinions can strengthen the collaboration between educators and parents.

REFERENCES

- Aleman-Falcon, J.A., Martín-Quintana, J.C., Alonso-Sanchez, J.A and Calcines-Piñero, M.A. 2023. Teacher perception about the families' participation at school – Factors predicting participation. *Educacao&Sociedade*. (44):e259456. Retrieved from (<https://doi.org/10.1590/ES.259456>) on 2.1.2025.
- Alzaidiyeen, N. 2016. An investigation of teachers' attitudes towards parental involvement. Retrieved from (<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.2551.0806>) on 2.1.2025.
- Castro, M., Exposito-Casas, E., López-Martín, E., Lizasoain, L., Navarro-Asencio, E and Gavia, J. L. 2015. Parental involvement on student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*. 14: 33-46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2015.01.002>.
- Gokturk, S. and Dinckal, S. 2017. Effective parental involvement in education: Experiences and perceptions of Turkish teachers from private schools. *Teachers and Teaching*. 24(2): 183-201.
- Spreeuwenberg, R. 2022. Why parent involvement is so important in early childhood education. *HiMama Blog - Resources for Daycare Centers*. Retrieved from (<https://www.himama.com/blog/why-parent-involvement-is-important-in-preschool/>) on 1.1.2025.
- Swargiary, K and Roy, K. 2023. Exploring parental perspectives on preschool education in India: A survey study. Retrieved from (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377852336_Exploring_Parental_Perspectives_on_Preschool_Education_in_India_A_Survey_Study) on 1.1.2025.
- Trivedi, C.M. 2023. The role of parental involvement in early childhood education and school readiness. Retrieved from (https://www.raijmr.com/ijrhs/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/IJRHS_2023_vol11_issue_09_09.pdf) on 1.1.2025.
- Vernekar, N.P., Pandey, P., Singhal, K., Rai, A.N and Reddy, A. 2022. Parental engagement in early childhood education during COVID-19: Learning from structured tech and teacher support programs in urban Maharashtra. Retrieved from <https://iariw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Vernekar-et-al-IARIW-2022.pdf>.
- Winder, C. and Corter, C. 2016. The influence of prior experiences on early childhood education students' anticipated work with families. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 55: 133-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.005>.
- Wu, Q. and Hindman, A.H. 2024. The relations between parents' beliefs, parents' home reading practices, and their children's literacy development in kindergarten. *Child Youth Care Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-024-09813-9>.

Akshaya, E. 2025. Influence of Parental Involvement on ECCE: The Teachers' Perspectives. *The Journal of Research ANGRAU*, 53(2), 84-89. <https://doi.org/10.58537/jorangrau.2025.53.2.10>