

ASSESSING TEACHERS QUALIFICATION AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOLERS

SOUMYA HIRELINGANAVAR* and MANJULA PATIL

Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Community Science
University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad- 580005, Karnataka, India

Date of Receipt : 08-11-2025

Date of Acceptance : 23-01-2026

ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out in Dharwad taluk, Karnataka to examine the effect of teacher qualifications and professional experience in promoting the social and emotional development among preschool children. The sample comprised 208 children aged 3–6 years, attending various ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) centers in both rural and urban areas. The Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment-2 tool was employed to assess children's social and emotional development, while a general information questionnaire captured details about the children, schools, and teachers. A qualitative approach using naturalistic observation was adopted, wherein children's free play was video recorded and supported with participant observation through field notes. Findings revealed significant differences in children's social and emotional development based on teacher qualification and teaching experience across rural and urban settings. Children taught by teachers with a B.Ed. qualification scored significantly higher compared to those taught by teachers with D.Ed. or SSLC qualifications. Similarly, teachers with over 10 years of professional experience contributed more positively to children's social and emotional development than those with fewer years of experience.

Key words: Preschool children, Professional experience, Social and emotional development, Teacher qualification

INTRODUCTION

The preschool phase represents a critical period of rapid growth and development, during which the foundation of personality, character, and learning are established. At this stage, children are highly receptive to environmental influences and open to a wide range of learning experiences. They begin to talk about their own feelings as well as recognize the emotions of others, gradually

developing the ability to regulate emotions, build meaningful relationships and form a positive self-concept.

Preschoolers engage in a variety of social interactions, such as sharing toys and materials, taking turns, conversing with peers, and participating in cooperative play. They also learn to follow routine both at home and in educational settings, often with increasing independence. These experiences help them

*Corresponding Author Email: soumyafh8585@gmail.com

acquire essential social skills through direct interactions with peers and adults, as well as through observation and imitation of others' behaviour.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) plays a vital role during early childhood, as it equips preschoolers with the ability to identify and regulate their emotions, demonstrate empathy, build healthy relationships and work toward positive goals. According to Cohen *et al.*, (2005), social-emotional development encompasses children's capacity for emotional expression, self-regulation, and relationship building. Similarly, the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004) highlights core aspects of emotional growth, including the recognition of one's own emotions, accurate perception of others' emotional states, constructive management of intense feelings, empathy, and the ability to maintain positive social relationships.

While the importance of social and emotional learning in early childhood has been widely recognized, limited attention has been given to the role of teacher qualification and professional experience in shaping these developmental outcomes. Preschool teachers serve not only as educators but also as role models, caregivers, and facilitators of social interactions. The level of their educational qualification and professional training may significantly influence how effectively they foster children's social and emotional growth. However, empirical studies exploring this relationship remain sparse, particularly in the Indian context. Thus, a study was undertaken to examine the influence of teacher qualification and professional experience on the socio-emotional development of preschool children in rural and urban area.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Children's social and emotional development was analyzed through a mixed-

method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. A qualitative approach was employed using the naturalistic observation method to capture children's authentic behaviors in real-life contexts. Participant observation, which included taking detailed field notes, along with video recording of children engaged in unstructured play, was used to create comprehensive naturalistic observations. In addition to it, quantitative methods such as differential design and correlation design were applied to examine differences and relationships in the social and emotional development of children across rural and urban ECCE centers.

A total of eight anganwadis and two preschools in rural Dharwad, and six anganwadis and six preschools in urban Dharwad were initially surveyed to document the social and emotional development activities implemented. Based on this survey, a self-structured checklist was prepared to identify ECCE centers that were offering comparable play-based activities. From this process, eight ECCE centers were selected for the study — four from rural areas (two anganwadis and two preschools) and four from urban areas (two anganwadis and two preschools).

The **Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment-2 (TPBA-2)** developed by Linder (2008) was used to measure social and emotional development of children aged 0–6 years. The TPBA-2 assesses the following domains:

1. Emotional Expression: Communication of feelings or intentions through facial patterns, body posture, movements, gestures, and words, including overall mood or disposition.

2. Emotional Style/Adaptability: Typical affective responses to new situations or stimuli, adaptability to change, and ability

to regulate emotional and arousal states (e.g., sleep, crying, self-calming, impulse control).

3. Behavioural Regulation: Ability to control impulses, monitor actions, comply with adult requests, and demonstrate culturally appropriate behaviour.

4. Sense of Self: Understanding of self as an independent individual capable of influencing the environment, including the desire for independence and competence.

5. Emotional Themes in Play: Expression of inner feelings such as worries, fears, and traumas through symbolic or dramatic play.

6. Social Interactions: Ability to attend to and interpret social cues, communicate effectively, cooperate with others, and avoid conflict across different play roles (isolated, parallel, associative, cooperative, or complementary).

During unstructured play, children's social and emotional behaviours were observed and documented. Video recordings were taken alongside field notes to ensure reliability of observations. These observations were analysed using the **Child Abilities Scale**, which rates social and emotional skills on a **1–9 scale**. Based on the total scores, children were categorized into four developmental levels:

Score Range	Category
7–20	Concern
21–34	Watch
35–48	Typical
49–63	Above Average

The data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed to describe developmental outcomes. To determine associations and

differences in social and emotional development between children attending different ECCE facilities, statistical tests such as Chi-square, t-test, and one-way ANOVA were applied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Percentage distribution of children attending different ECCE centers in rural and urban areas of Dharwad taluk by child characteristics.

Table 1 displays the results of the distribution of children based on factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic position, and quality of home environment. In terms of age, 38.46 percent of children in the rural anganwadis area belonged to the 36–48 month age group, 32.69 percent to the 49–60 month age group and 28.85 percent to the 61–72 month age group. 34.62 percent of preschool-age children fell into the 36–48 month age group, 32.69 percent into the 49–60 month age group, and 32.69 percent into the 61–72 month age group.

Within urban areas, 34.62% of anganwadi children fall into the 36–48 month age group, 49.52% fall into the 49–60 month age group, and 30.76% fall into the 60–72 month age group. Preschoolers make up 40.38 percent of the 36–48 month age group, 32.69 percent of the 49–60 month age group, and 26.93 percent of the 61–72 month age group. In terms of gender, 46.16 percent of children in rural anganwadis were males and 53.84 percent of children were girls. In rural preschools, boys made up 55.76 percent of the student body, while girls made up 44.24 percent. In the urban area, 40.38 percent of children in anganwadis were boys while the majority, 59.62 percent, were girls. 51.92 percent of preschool-aged children were males and 48.08 percent were girls.

In terms of socioeconomic status, the majority (53.84%) of children in rural

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of anganwadi and preschool children in rural and urban areas (N=208)

Child characteristics	Categories	Rural (n=104)		Urban (n=104)	
		Anganwadi	Preschool	Anganwadi	Preschool
Age (months)	36-48	20 (38.46)	18 (34.62)	18 (34.62)	21 (40.38)
	49-60	17 (32.69)	17 (32.69)	18 (34.62)	17 (32.69)
	61-72	15 (28.85)	17 (32.69)	16 (30.76)	14 (26.93)
	Total	52 (100)	52 (100)	52 (100)	52 (100)
Gender	Boys	24 (46.16)	29 (55.76)	21 (40.38)	27 (51.92)
	Girls	28 (53.84)	23 (44.24)	31 (59.62)	25 (48.08)
	Total	52 (100)	52 (100)	52 (100)	52 (100)
SES	Upper high	-	-	-	-
	High	-	-	-	-
	Upper middle	-	32 (61.54)	-	36 (69.23)
	Lower middle	24 (46.16)	20 (38.46)	35 (67.30)	16 (30.77)
	Poor	28 (53.84)	-	17 (32.70)	-
	Very poor	-	-	-	-
Total	52 (100)	52 (100)	52 (100)	52 (100)	

anganwadis have a low socioeconomic status, while 46.16 percent have a lower medium socioeconomic position. In preschools, 61.54% of children are from the upper middle class, while 38.46% are from the lower middle class. In metropolitan areas, the majority of children in anganwadis (67.30%) are from the lower middle class, while 32.70 percent are from the impoverished class. In preschools, 69.23% of children are from the upper middle socioeconomic class, while 30.77% are from the lower middle socioeconomic class.

Distribution of anganwadi and preschool teachers in rural and urban areas by qualification and experience

Table 2 depicts the results of the distribution of children based on factors such as teacher qualification and experience. With respect to teacher qualification in both rural and urban areas, all the teachers were found

to have qualification of SSLC. In case of preschool, 66.66 percent of teachers had qualification of Degree/B.Ed and 33.34 percent of teachers had qualification of P.U.C/ D.Ed. With regard to teacher experience in teaching in both rural and urban areas, all the teachers were found to have experience of more than 10 years in teaching. In case of preschool, 66.66 percent of teachers had experience of 5-10 years and 33.34 percent of teachers had experience <5 years in teaching.

Influence of teacher qualification on social and emotional development of anganwadi and preschool children in rural and urban areas

Findings from table 3 to 4 b depict the association between teacher qualification, teaching experience and social and emotional

Table 2. Distribution of anganwadi and preschool teachers in rural and urban areas by qualification and experience (N=16)

ECCE characteristics	Categories	Rural (08)		Urban (08)	
		Anganwadi (02)	Preschool (06)	Anganwadi (02)	Preschool (06)
Teacher qualification		ECCE	-		
	Degree/B.Ed	-	04 (66.66)	-	04 (66.66)
	P.U.C/D.Ed	-	02 (33.34)	-	02 (33.34)
	10 th	02 (100)		02 (100)	
	Total	02 (100)	06 (100)	02 (100)	06 (100)
Teacher experience		>10 years	02 (100)		02 (100)
	5-10 years		04 (66.66)		04 (66.66)
	<5 years		02 (33.34)		02 (33.34)
	Total	02 (100)	06 (100)	02 (100)	06 (100)

development of children in rural and urban areas.

The analysis of association of teacher qualification and social and emotional development of children in rural and urban areas showed that in rural areas teacher qualification and levels of social and emotional development of children was significantly associated with each other ($\chi^2=78.10$) at 1 per cent level of significance. It was observed that among children in rural areas, 88.23 per cent of the children in B.Ed qualification of teacher to typical category and 11.76 per cent of children belonged to watch category of social and emotional development. In case of D.Ed qualification of teacher 66.66 per cent of children belonged to watch category and 33.33 per cent of children belonged to typical category of social and emotional development. Whereas in case of SSLC qualification of teacher, 65.38 per cent of children belonged to watch category and 34.62 per cent of children belonged to concern category of social and emotional development.

In case of urban locality, teacher with B.Ed qualification, cent percent of the children belonged to typical category. In case of D.Ed qualification of teacher majority (95.24 %) of the children belonged to watch category and 4.76 percent of the children belonged to typical category and teacher with SSLC qualification 73.07 percent of children belonged to watch category and 26.92 percent of children belonged to concern category and levels of social and emotional development of children was significantly associated with each other ($\chi^2=85.83$) at 1 per cent level of significance.

Results in table 3 depict that the comparison of social and emotional development of children by teacher qualification in rural and urban areas. The difference value explained that children with teacher qualification B.Ed had significantly higher scores than teacher qualification with D.Ed and SSLC on social and emotional development in both rural and urban areas. With regard to rural and urban children, teacher with B.ED qualification scored higher mean scores on social and emotional

development (38.08) followed by teacher qualification with D.Ed (32.44) and SSLC (22.03) and the difference between teacher qualification with B.ED, D.Ed and SSLC was found significant at 1 per cent level.

Influence of teacher professional experience on social and emotional development of anganwadi and preschool children in rural and urban areas

Results from table 4 to 4 b depict the association between teacher’s professional

experience and social and emotional development of rural and urban areas. The analysis of association between teacher’s professional experience and social and emotional development of children in rural and urban areas showed that in rural areas teacher experience and levels of social and emotional development of children was significantly associated with each other ($\chi^2= 28.10$) at 1 per cent level of significance. It was observed that among children in rural areas, 88.23 per cent of the children with teacher’s professional

Table 3. Association of mean scores of social and emotional development of children in rural area by teacher qualification (N=208)

Categories of social and emotional development	Rural (n=104)			Modi- fied χ^2	Urban (n=104)			Modi- fied χ^2
	SSLC (02)	D.Ed (02)	B.Ed (04)		SSLC (02)	D.Ed (02)	B.Ed (04)	
Typical	-	06 (33.33)	30 (88.23)	78.10**	-	01 (4.76)	31 (100)	85.83**
Watch	34 (65.38)	12 (66.66)	04 (11.76)		38 (73.08)	20 (95.24)	-	
Concern	18 (34.62)	-	-		14 (26.92)	-	-	
Total	52 (100)	18 (100)	34 (100)		52 (100)	21 (100)	31 (100)	

Figure in parentheses indicates percentage

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 a. Comparison mean scores of social and emotional development of children in rural and urban area by teacher qualification

Qualification of teacher	Rural (08)		Urban	
	Mean ± S.D	f-value	Mean ± S.D	f-value
SSLC (02)	28.03 ± 3.44	25.30*	26.38 ± 6.42	26.79*
D.ed (02)	30.44 ± 3.56		27.42 ± 2.71	
B.ed (04)	32.08 ± 2.94		28.41 ± 3.25	

*Significant at 0.05 level

ASSESSING TEACHER QUALIFICATION AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN PROMOTING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

experience in teaching 5-10 years belonged to typical category and 11.76 per cent of children belonged to watch category of social and emotional development. In case of teacher's professional experience in teaching with <5 years majority (66.66%) percent of children belonged to watch category and 33.33 percent of children belonged to typical category of social and emotional development. Whereas in case of teacher's professional experience in teaching >10 years (65.38) per cent of children belonged to watch category

and 34.62 percent of children belonged to concern category of social and emotional development and levels of levels of social and emotional development of children was significantly associated with each other ($\chi^2 = 28.10$) at 1 per cent level of significance.

In case of urban locality, teacher's experience in teaching 5-10 years, cent per cent of the children belonged to typical category. In case of teacher's professional experience <5 years, majority (95.24 %) of the children belonged to watch category and 4.76

Table 4. Association of mean scores of social and emotional development of children in rural and urban area by teacher experience (n=08)

Categories of social and emotional development	Rural	Urban	<5 years	Modified χ^2	>10	5-10	<5	Modified χ^2
	>10 years	5-10 years			>10 years	5-10 years	years	
Typical (Average)	-	30 (88.23)	06 (33.33)	28.10**	-	31 (100)	01 (4.76)	29.83**
Watch (Below Average)	34 (65.38)	04 (11.76)	12 (66.66)		38 (73.08)	-	20 (95.24)	
Concern (Poor)	18 (34.62)	-	-		14 (26.92)	-	-	
Total	52 (100)	34 (100)	18 (100)		52 (100)	31 (100)	21 (100)	

Figure in parentheses indicates percentage
 **Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 a. Comparison mean scores of social and emotional development of children in rural and urban area by teacher experience

Teaching experience	Rural		Urban	
	Mean ± S.D	t-value	Mean ± S.D	t-value
>10 Years	32.08 ± 2.94	25.30*	30.38 ± 6.42	28.30*
5-10 years	28.03 ± 3.44		28.41 ± 3.25	
<5 years	30.44 ± 3.56		26.41 ± 3.25	

*Significant at 0.05 level

per cent of the children belonged to typical category. Teacher's experience in teaching 5-10 years, majority (73.07%) of children belonged to watch category and 26.93 percent of children belonged to concern category and levels of social and emotional development of children was significantly associated with each ($\chi^2 = 29.83$) at 1 percent level of significance.

Findings in table 4 a depicts that the comparison of social and emotional development of children by teacher's professional experience in teaching in rural and urban areas. The difference value explained that children with teacher's experience in teaching between 5-10 years had significantly higher mean scores than teacher's experience in teaching with < 5 years and > 10 years on social and emotional development in both rural and urban areas. With respect to rural and urban children, teacher's professional experience in teaching with 5-10 years scored higher mean scores on social and emotional development (38.08) followed by teacher's experience in teaching with < 5 years (32.44) and > 10 years (22.03) and the difference between teacher's experience in teaching with 5- 10years, < 5years and > 10 years experience in teaching found to significant at 1 per cent level.

The findings (tables 3&4) suggest that teacher qualification and professional experience significantly influence the social and emotional development of preschool children. Children taught by B.Ed.-qualified teachers demonstrated higher developmental outcomes compared to those guided by D.Ed. and SSLC qualified teachers. This finding supports earlier research indicating that teachers with advanced qualifications possess stronger pedagogical knowledge, better classroom management skills. The study also highlights the role of teaching experience in shaping developmental outcomes. Teachers

with more than 10 years of experience facilitated significantly stronger social and emotional growth in children. This aligns with prior studies showing that experienced teachers are better equipped to handle classroom dynamics, respond to children's emotional needs, and create supportive peer interactions. However, long-term experience (> 10 years) enables teachers develop greater empathy and adapt their teaching to diverse learner needs rather than to refine their instructional strategies. Notably, the influence of teacher qualification and professional experience was consistent across rural and urban ECCE centers.

Olabisi Adedigba and Abubakar Abdullahi (2023) indicated a significant influence of teachers' area of specialization, working experience, and qualification on the socio-emotional developmental skills of children. Lei Wang *et al.* 2020, showed that, teacher qualifications (education level, specialization in early childhood education, professional ranking, experience and training) were significantly associated with preschool-age child developmental outcomes. Teacher professional ranking and educational attainment were positively and significantly correlated with two measures of child language development, but a degree specialized in early childhood education was negatively related to vocabulary acquisition. Filgona, J. and Sakiyo, J. (2020) revealed that teachers' academic qualifications significantly predicted students' academic achievement in Geography, with an R^2 value of 0.666, indicating that 66.6% of the variance in students' academic achievement could be explained by teachers' academic qualifications. Muhammad, L. (2021) studied the effects of teachers' academic qualification and experience on students' achievement and interest in accounting in Kaduna State. The results showed that teachers' academic qualifications and professional experience

significantly influenced students' academic achievement in accounting.

CONCLUSION

The study compared the social and emotional development of preschool children in rural and urban ECCE centers with respect to teacher qualification and professional experience. The findings revealed that children taught by teachers with B.Ed. qualifications consistently demonstrated higher scores in social and emotional development compared to those guided by teachers with D.Ed. or SSLC qualifications, across both rural and urban contexts. Similarly, teachers with 5 to 10 years of professional experience contributed more positively to children's social and emotional development than those with fewer years of experience. This indicates that higher qualification is strongly associated with better social and emotional growth in preschoolers. The results emphasize the importance of advanced teacher training and education in promoting children's holistic development. Strengthening qualification requirements and professional development opportunities, particularly in early childhood education, can therefore contribute to building stronger social-emotional foundations among young learners in both rural and urban settings.

REFERENCES

- Adedigba, O. and Abdullahi, A. 2023. Influence of preschool teachers' characteristics on children's socioemotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Emerging Issues in Social Science, Arts, and Humanities*, 1(2), 55–68.
- Cohen, J., Ngozi, O., Steffanie, C. and Julie, P., 2005, Helping young children succeed strategies to promote early childhood social and emotional development. National Conference of State legislatures, Washington D. C., pp. 01-20.
- Filgona, J. and Sakiyo, J. 2020. Teachers' academic qualification as a predictor of attitude and academic achievement in geography of senior secondary school students in Adamawa State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Review*, 7(11), 190–215.
- Linder, T. 2012. Transdisciplinary play based assessment and intervention in the primary years. Wiley publishing company, New Jersey, United States, pp.123-141.
- Muhammad, L. 2021. The effects of teachers' academic qualification and experience on students' achievement and interest in accounting in Kaduna State. *Global Journal of Education, Humanities and Management Sciences*, 3(1), 242–252.
- Wang, L., Dang, R., Bai, Y., Song, C., Zhang, S. and Rozelle, S. 2020. Teacher qualifications and development outcomes of preschool children in rural China. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 53, 355–369.
- Soumya Hirelingannavar and Manjula Patil. 2026. Examining the role of teacher qualification and professional experience in promoting social and emotional development among preschool children. *The Journal of Research ANGRAU*, 54(1): 70-78.