

INVESTIGATING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF TEACHER-CHILD INTERACTION

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Abstract

Tailored professional development programs for early childhood educators aim to refine skills and pedagogical approaches, fostering comprehensive child development. Despite its recognized importance, understanding the precise impact of professional development on children's well-being requires exploration. In the Chinese early childhood education context, intricate relationships between teacher professional development, teacher-child interactions, self-efficacy, and preschoolers' well-being necessitate empirical investigation. Through quantitative analysis, this study explored correlations between early childhood education teacher professional development, teacher-child interactions, self-efficacy, and preschoolers' well-being. Results show enhanced relationships and self-efficacy due to professional development, with significant mediation through teacher-child interactions. The moderating role of instructor experience on development effects was highlighted. This research, involving 230 Chinese early childhood educators, underscores the importance of nurturing educators' growth. By unveiling connections between professional development, interactions, and well-being, the study offers insights for refining educational practices.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education; Teacher Professional Development; Preschool Children Well-Being; Teacher-Child Interaction; Teacher Self-Efficacy

1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECE) is important for children's improvement. In the area of ECE, educators keep a pivotal role in molding the educational encounters of young beginners and fostering their holistic welfare (Luo et al. 2021). The enhancement of knowledge, skills, and practices of ECE teachers has garnered significant attention as a viable approach to promoting professional development. This approach aims to benefit preschool children (Zhou et al. 2022). China has recognized the crucial significance of ECE and has implemented substantial measures to enhance the standard of ECE throughout the nation. The Chinese government has implemented several initiatives to improve the professional development opportunities available to ECE teachers, acknowledging their crucial role in the education system (Wang et al. 2020). These initiatives are designed to furnish educators with the requisite skills and materials to provide superior education and promote the welfare of young children in preschool (Dyonia et al. 2020). Numerous studies have shown that effective professional development

improves educational techniques, students' academic performance, and well-being. Targeted professional development initiatives, such as those centered on early literacy instruction, social-emotional development, and inclusive practices, have the potential to yield enhancements in pedagogy and students' academic performance (Hauerwas et al. 2023).

The quality of the relationships between teachers and students is another important factor in preschool education. Social competence, language development, and emotional regulation have all been linked to high-quality teacher-child interactions that are warm, responsive, and provide adequate scaffolding (Hu et al. 2020). Effective teacher training helps educators have meaningful conversations with children. Teachers' self-efficacy, or their confidence in their abilities to educate and influence their students' learning and development, is a crucial component in determining both teaching quality and student results (Melzi et al. 2023). Numerous studies have consistently shown that educators with greater levels of self-efficacy are more inclined to embrace inventive pedagogical approaches, persevere in the face of obstacles, and foster a conducive learning milieu (Davis et al. 2023).

ECE teachers who rate themselves highly are more likely to provide favorable outcomes for their students (Bosman et al. 2021). This study aims to build upon the previous research by examining how teacher professional development in ECE, teacher-child interaction, teacher self-efficacy, and the development of Chinese preschoolers are interrelated. This research looked into how preschoolers' happiness is related to their teachers' professional development in ECE. Specifically, it explored how teacher-child contact and teacher self-efficacy plays a role in this relationship.

2. REVIEW ON ECE'S TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Many studies have examined the impact of teacher professional development on children's social-emotional development, cognitive skills, and readiness for formal education. Yildirim and Roopnarine (2019) found high-quality teacher-child interactions are crucial, stressing the long-term benefits of teacher professional development. Positive and loving teacher-child relationships have been found to improve social skills, emotional regulation, and academic performance improve (Gardner-Neblett et al. 2012), with benefits often seen in children's well-being continued into later years. Based on above discussion, this hypothesis emerged:

H1: ECE's teacher professional development significantly and positively impacts preschool children's well-being.

Early childhood education teacher-child relationships depend on teacher professional development. Research has examined how professional growth affects teacher-child interactions. Segatto & Dal Ben (2019) examined how a comprehensive professional development program affected teacher-child interactions.

The program enhanced teachers' sensitivity, emotional support, and classroom control, indicating heightened sensitivity, responsiveness, and positive emotional support.

Based on above discussion, this hypothesis emerged:

H2: *ECE's teacher professional development has a significant and positive impact on teacher-child interaction.*

The self-efficacy beliefs of ECE teachers are significantly influenced by their professional development, which subsequently affects their instructional practices and overall effectiveness in the classroom. Aukerman & Chambers Schuldt (2021) examined how a professional development program affected early childhood teacher self-efficacy. The program enhanced educators' pedagogical skills by providing developmentally appropriate training. The study found that program teachers had stronger self-efficacy. They were more confident in their ability to help children learn and grow (Guo et al. 2021). Based on above discussion, this hypothesis emerged:

H3: *ECE's teacher professional development has a significant and positive impact on teacher self-efficacy.*

The interaction between teachers and children is a crucial element of ECE and has a notable influence on preschool children's well-being. Wilkinson (2020) underscored the significance of favorable and encouraging interactions between teachers and children. The study revealed that teacher-child interactions of superior quality, marked by traits such as warmth, sensitivity, and responsiveness, were linked to improved social-emotional and academic results for children. Pongutta & Vithayarungruang Sri (2023) conducted a study that specifically examined the impact of teacher-child interactions on the promotion of social competence and reduction of behavioral problems in ECE settings. Based on above discussion, this hypothesis developed:

H4: *Teacher-child interaction has a significant and positive impact on preschool children's well-being.*

The literature has investigated the correlation between teacher self-efficacy and diverse dimensions of children's well-being, such as social-emotional growth, scholastic accomplishment, and general school adaptation. Irgin & Erten (2020) study underscored the importance of teacher self-efficacy in shaping student outcomes. According to Taherkhani et al. (2022), instructors with high self-efficacy are more likely to set lofty goals, use effective methods, and assist students, resulting in positive student results. Low-self-efficacy educators may be less motivated and effective in improving children's well-being. Based on above discussion, this hypothesis was created:

H5: *Teacher self-efficacy significantly and positively impacts preschool children's well-being.*

ECE teachers' professional growth affects preschoolers' well-being. Scholars have studied teacher-child interaction mediating professional development and children's well-being. Mesa & Restrepo (2019) examined how teacher-child relationships mediate the effects of professional growth on child outcomes. The study found that professional development that improved teacher behaviors, including building positive relationships and using effective instructional strategies, improved teacher-child interactions (Christodoulakis et al. 2021).

Based on above discussion, this hypothesis was selected:

H6: *Teacher-child interaction mediates the relationship between ECE's teacher professional development and preschool children's well-being.*

Understanding the connection between ECE instructors' growth as professionals and their students' success in preschool depends on teachers' perceptions of their competence educators (Gutiérrez, 2019). Teachers' beliefs in their abilities and the effects of continuing their education on students' well-being have been the subject of substantial study. The function of teacher self-efficacy as a mediator between professional development and teacher practices was investigated in a study by Buffenn (2021). Based on above discussion, the hypotheses is:

H7: *Teacher self-efficacy mediates the relationship between ECE's teacher professional development and preschool children's well-being.*

Teacher experience moderates the relationship between ECE teachers' professional development and preschool children's well-being. Teacher experience and professional development's impact on children's well-being have been studied. Johnston & Dewhurst (2021) examined how teacher experience moderates the relationship between professional growth and child outcomes. The study found that novice teachers' professional growth had a greater impact on children's well-being. The study found that beginner teachers learning instructional skills and practices may benefit from professional development programs. Christodoulakis et al. (2021) studied how teacher experience moderates the relationship between professional growth and children's language and literacy outcomes. Wilkinson (2020) examined how teacher experience moderates the relationship between teacher-child contact and children's social competence. Children's social competence is most influenced by teachers with more years of experience because of the greater likelihood of positive teacher-child interactions (Johnston & Dewhurst, 2021). Yin et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between teacher experience in their competence inside the classroom and their students' academic success. Teachers with better levels of self-efficacy have been more likely to use proven instructional strategies, provide meaningful feedback and remarks to students, and create a supportive classroom environment (Yoon & Kim, 2022). Based on above discussion a hypothesis emerges:

H8a. *Teacher experience moderates the relationship between ECE's teacher professional development and preschool children's well-being.*

H8b. *Teacher experience moderates the relationship between teacher-child interaction and preschool children's well-being.*

H8c. *Teacher experience moderates the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and preschool children's well-being.*

A framework has been developed based on the above hypothesis, as shown in Figure 1.

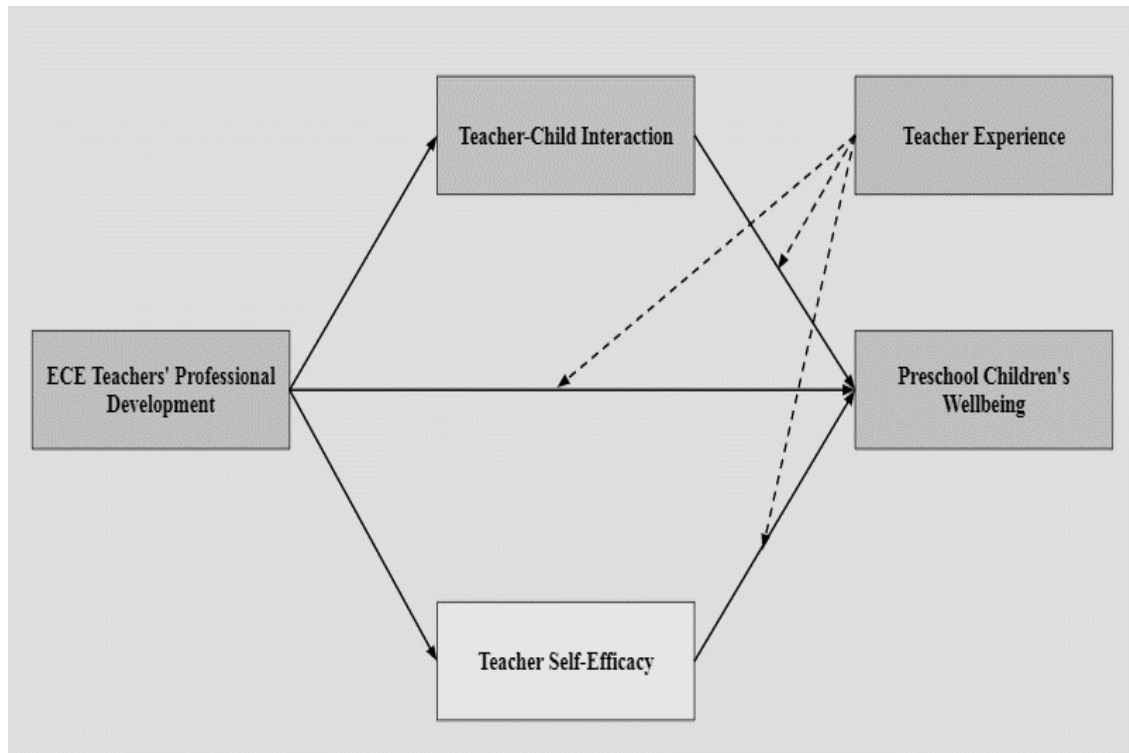


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. METHODS

This quantitative study's methodology was created to investigate the connection between preschoolers' welfare and professional development opportunities for ECE teachers. Special attention was given to examining the mediating effects of teacher-child interaction, teacher efficacy, and the moderating effects of teacher experience. A cross-sectional research strategy was used to examine the correlations between the variables. Connections between the professional growth of ECE teachers and the well-being of the children were examined, along with any potential mediating or moderating variables.

Data were collected from 230 ECE teachers from various educational institutes in China using a random sampling technique. Five items measured the teacher professional development adopted from Dynia et al. (2020). Items included. Five items adapted from Suteja et al. (2022) were utilized to measure Preschool Children's Well-being. Teacher-Child Interaction was assessed with five adapted items from Taylor et al. (2023). Teacher Self-efficacy was measured with five adapted items from Guo et al. (2021).

4. RESULTS

Table 1 offers a breakdown of the demographic traits of the sample of 230 individuals.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Item		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	120	52.17%
	Female	108	47.83%
Age	25-30 years	50	21.74%
	31-35 years	65	28.26%
	36-40 years	60	26.09%
	41-45 years	30	13.04%
	46+ years	25	10.87%
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	120	52.17%
	Master's Degree	90	39.13%
	Specialized Certification	15	6.52%
	Other	5	2.17%
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	40	17.39%
	5-10 years	80	34.78%
	11-15 years	65	28.26%
	16-20 years	30	13.04%
	More than 20 years	15	6.52%

Four variables – TPD (Teacher Professional Development); PSCWB (Preschool Children Well-being); TCI (Teacher-Child Interaction); TSE (Teacher Self-efficacy) - have their descriptive statistics listed in Table 2. Based on a total of 230 observations, the table gave significant information on these factors.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TPD	230	1	5	4.16	.893
PSCWB	230	1	5	4.18	.736
TSE	230	1	5	4.06	.750
TCI	230	1	5	4.03	.793

Table 3: Model Fit

Goodness of Fit Measure	Criteria	Values
CMIN/DF	>2 OR 3	2.22
TLI	>0.9	0.86
CFI	>0.9	0.884
RAMESA	>0.093	0.06
GFI	>0.9	0.81
PGFI	>0.5	

Using SEM, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses (hereafter CFA) on AMOS 24.0. SEM was applied to investigate convergent and divergent validity, model fitness for structural and measurement models and hypotheses testing. It (SEM) is considered a superior method for valid and reliable results compared to regression. Before SEM analysis, the CFA was initially carried out to analyze the model fitness statistics for the measurement model. Therefore, the measurement model was computed on AMOS based on the constructs and 230 responses. However, there was an issue with model fitness in the first attempt at CFA, mainly due to the low loadings of one item (see Table 3). This item was removed from the analysis to attain the model fitness. The item removal persisted within the suggested threshold of 20%, which is allowed to obtain model fitness. After that, the results of CFA revealed a good fit model based on the multiple indices, such as $\chi^2/df = 3.22$, GFI = 0.81, TLI = 0.86, IFI = 0.885, CFI = 0.884, and RMSEA = 0.299, reported by AMOS 24.0.

Table 4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variables	Items	Loading
Teacher Professional Development	TPD1	.840
	TPD2	.788
	TPD3	.821
	TPD4	.775
	TPD5	.846
Preschool Children Well-being	PSCWB1	.828
	PSCWB2	.811
	PSCWB3	.741
	PSCWB4	.633
	PSCWB5	.311*
Teacher Self-efficacy	TSE1	.758
	TSE2	.746
	TSE3	.744
	TSE4	.803
	TSE5	.827
Teacher-Child Interaction	TCI1	.796
	TCI2	.760
	TCI3	.763
	TCI4	.822
	TCI5	.730

The convergent validity of all variables (i.e., TPD, PSCWB, TSE, and TCI) was calculated. (See Table 4). The discriminant validity was also assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. To do so, the extent of mutual discrepancy among the latent constructs (i.e., TPD, PSCWB, TSE, and TCI) was evaluated based on the results of the CFA. The results revealed that the values representing the square root average variance extracted in Table 4 were higher than the correlation extracted between the latent constructs (i.e., TPD, PSCWB, TSE, and TCI) of this research (see Table 5).

Table 5: Convergent and discriminant Validity

Variables	α	CR	AVE	TPD	PSCWB	TSE	TCI
TPD	0.876	0.934	0.654	1			
PSCWB	0.823	0.923	0.734	0.234	1		
TSE	0.912	0.967	0.698	0.453	0.167	1	
TCI	0.933	0.987	0.734	0.285	0.276	0.154	1

After achieving validity, reliability, and measurement model fitness, the study moved on to the structural models' fitness. The findings were sound based on the indices used. The testing of hypotheses utilized the path analysis technique. The first hypothesis was that professional development for ECE teachers directly impacts the well-being of preschool children. The path analysis showed that ECE instructors' professional growth had a favorable and significant impact on preschool children's well-being ($\beta = 0.626$ and $p = 0.001$). As a result, H1 was validated (see Figure 3 and Table 5). Similarly, the second hypothesis was that professional development for ECE teachers directly impacted teacher-child interaction. The path analysis results showed that ECE instructors' professional development positively and substantially impacted teacher-child interaction ($\beta = 0.447$ and $p = 0.001$). As a result, H2 was validated (see Figure 3 and Table 5).

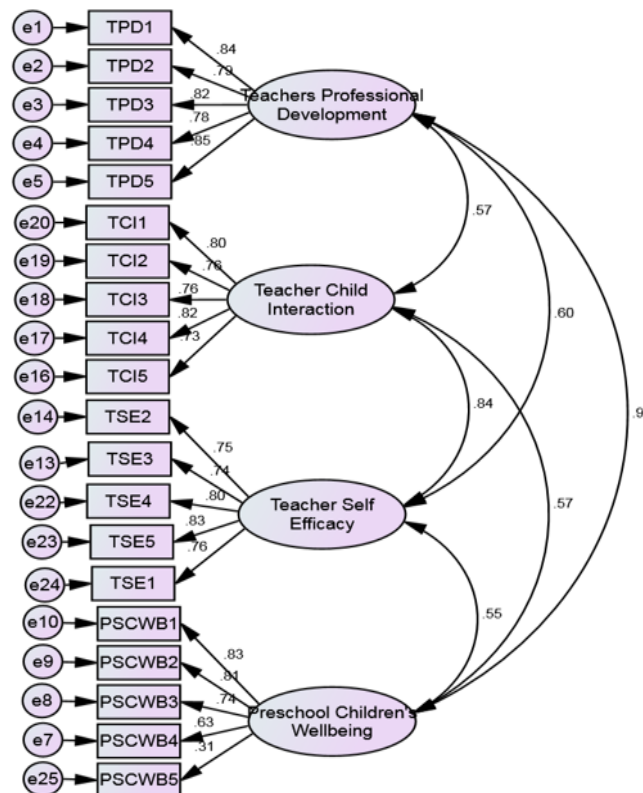


Figure 2: Measurement Model

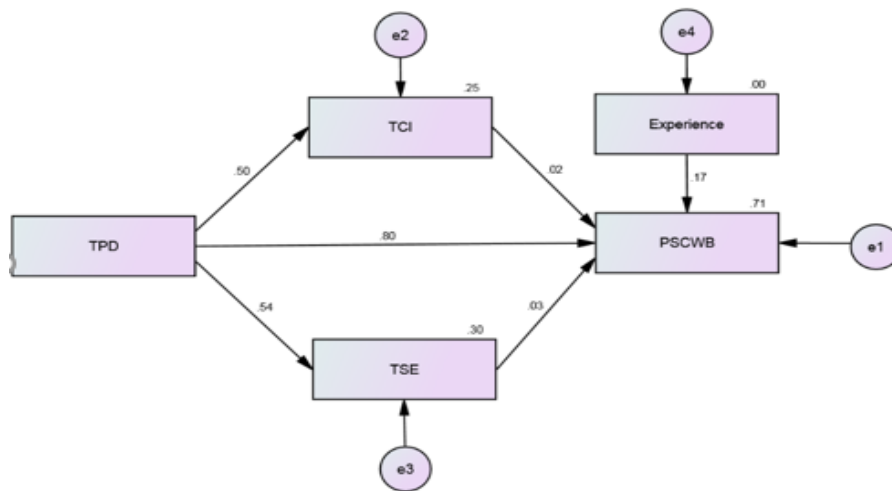


Figure 3: Structural Model

The third hypothesis proposed that professional development for ECE teachers significantly impacts teacher self-efficacy. The path analysis results showed that ECE teachers' professional development positively and substantially impacted teacher self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.456$ and $p = 0.001$). As a result, H3 was validated (see Figure 3 and Table 6). The fourth and fifth hypotheses proposed that teacher-child contact (H4) and teacher self-efficacy significantly impact the well-being of preschool children. The path analysis results showed that teacher-child contact ($\beta = 0.394$ and $p = 0.001$) and teacher self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.143$ and $p = 0.001$) positively impacted children's well-being. As a result, H4 and H5 were accepted (see Figure 3 and Table 6).

Table 6: Direct Path Analysis

Model	β	T value	P value	Decision
TPD -> PSCWB	0.626	16.846	0.001	Supported
TPD -> TCI	0.447	8.810	0.001	Supported
TPD -> TSE	0.456	9.790	0.001	Supported
TCI -> PSCWB	0.394	10.700	0.001	Supported
TSE -> PSCWB	0.143	4.852	0.001	Supported

The sixth hypothesis proposed that teacher-child interaction significantly mediates the relationship between ECE teachers' professional development and preschool children's psychological well-being. The path analysis showed that teacher-child interaction significantly mediates the relationship between ECE teachers' professional development and preschool children's psychological well-being. ($\beta = 0.384$ and $p = 0.001$). As a result, H6 was validated (see Table 7). The seventh hypothesis proposed that teacher self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between ECE teachers' professional development and preschool children's psychological well-being. The path analysis results showed that teacher-child interaction significantly mediates the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and preschool children's psychological well-being. ($\beta = 0.354$ and $p = 0.001$). As a result, H7 was validated (see Table 7).

Table 7: Mediation Analysis

Relation	B	T value	P value	Decision
TPD -> TCI-> PSCWB	0.384	1.943	0.001	Supported
TPD -> TSE-> PSCWB	0.354	2.983	0.001	Supported

To confirm the moderating role of teacher experience between ECE teacher's professional development and preschool children's well-being, teacher-child interaction and preschool children's well-being, and teacher self-efficacy and preschool children's well-being, this study utilized the stepwise approach recommended by Hayes. Another model was computed to test the moderating effect by including the interactional terms (TPD X Exp), (TCI x Exp), and (TSE x Exp), respectively. Table 8 shows that the teacher's experience has a positive and significant moderating effect on the relationship between ECE teachers' professional development, teacher-child interaction, teacher self-efficacy, and preschool children's well-being. The p-values for these relationships are 0.001. Therefore, the findings provided support for H8a, H8b, and H8c.

Table 8: Moderation Analysis

Relation	B	T value	P value	Decision
TPD x Exp -> PSCWB	0.246	4.321	0.001	Supported
TCI x Exp -> PSCWB	0.145	3.654	0.001	Supported
TSE x Exp -> PSCWB	0.215	2.184	0.001	Supported

Table 9: Hypothesis Validation

	Hypothesis	Testing
<i>H1</i>	ECE's teacher professional development significantly and positively impacts preschool children's well-being.	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H2</i>	ECE's teacher professional development significantly and positively impacts teacher-child interaction.	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H3</i>	ECE's teacher professional development significantly and positively impacts teacher self-efficacy.	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H4</i>	Teacher-child interaction has a significant and positive impact on preschool children's well-being.	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H5</i>	Teacher self-efficacy has a significant and positive impact on preschool children's well-being.	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H6</i>	Teacher-child interaction mediates the relationship between ECE's teacher professional development and preschool children's well-being	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H7</i>	Teacher self-efficacy mediates the relationship between ECE's teacher professional development and preschool children's well-being.	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H8a</i>	Teacher experience moderates the relationship between ECE's teacher professional development and preschool children's well-being.	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H8b</i>	Teacher experience moderates the relationship between teacher-child interaction and preschool children's well-being.	< 0.05 Approved
<i>H8c</i>	Teacher experience moderates the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and preschool children's well-being.	< 0.05 Approved

5. DISCUSSION

According to H1, ECE's Teacher Professional Development significantly and favorably impacts preschool children's well-being, which is consistent with earlier literature (Gardner-Neblett et al. 2012). Professional development courses of the highest caliber allow ECE teachers to advance their understanding, abilities, and teaching methods (Khamsuk & Whanchit, 2021). Teachers who participate in CPD get new instructional strategies, approaches, and ideas for promoting the well-being of their students. Through professional development, teachers improve their knowledge of child development, learning theories, and research-proven teaching techniques. They learn how to design stimulating and supportive learning settings that foster children's cognitive growth, social-emotional development, and overall academic success (Gross et al. 2022). The skills provided through professional development allow instructors to meet the diverse requirements of students, including those with special educational needs or come from various cultural backgrounds. Hence H1 is accepted. Teacher-Child Interaction is significantly and positively affected by ECE's Teacher Professional Development, According to H2. Teachers learn about efficient communication techniques, adaptable teaching methods, and building supportive learning environments through professional development (Hu et al. 2022). They learn to make friendly, trustworthy connections with children, pay attention to their needs, and offer support and direction. Professional development also emphasizes personalized instruction, which acknowledges and values each child's distinct skills and interests. The teacher-child interaction is improved when instructors take part in high-quality professional development and put the techniques they have learned into practice (Mandak et al. 2019). Positive teacher-student interactions characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and support produce a loving and secure learning environment. These encounters help children develop social and emotional skills, establish a sense of belonging and emotional control, and support healthy peer relationships. H2 is therefore supported.

Hypothesis H3 states that ECE's Teacher Professional Development positively and significantly impacts teacher self-efficacy. The literature review also supports this finding. Professional development programs assist instructors feel more secure in their skills while enhancing their knowledge and skills (McLeod & Giardiello, 2019). Teachers grow more assured of their capacity to influence student learning outcomes for the better. They better comprehend efficient teaching techniques, curriculum design, classroom management, and evaluation methods (Wang & Jia, 2023). Teachers gain confidence in their ability to satisfy students' various needs when they participate in high-quality professional development. The effectiveness of their instruction and general well-being are positively impacted by instructors' higher levels of self-efficacy. High self-efficacy teachers are more likely to establish demanding goals, persevere in the face of difficulties, and modify their teaching methods to suit the requirements of specific students (Ahmed et al. 2020). Their interactions with children demonstrate their enthusiasm and motivation about their employment. Hence H3 is accepted. According to H4, interactions between teachers and students significantly and favorably affect young children's well-being. The literature review provides support for the findings of this hypothesis. The interactions between instructors and students significantly affect how children

increase cognitively, emotionally, and psychologically (Sidi et al. 2023). Children thrive in nurturing environments, which can be characterized with the aid of warmth, responsiveness, and aid between teachers and college students. Teachers construct strong connections with college students built on mutual admiration, understanding, and meaningful interactions with them (Manuti et al. 2022). Children benefit from this by growing a sense of emotional safety and belonging, which can be crucial for their health. H4 is consequently supported.

According to H5, teacher self-efficacy has a considerable and positive impact on the well-being of preschool children. The literature supports the findings of this hypothesis. Teachers with robust self-efficacy are likelier to offer excellent and supportive faculty surroundings (Buffenn, 2021). They instill in youngsters a sense of safety, accept as true with, and recognize, all of which are essential for their nice behavior. Teachers who accept as true within their personal abilities are much more likely to provide emotional aid, encouragement, and individualized interest to their college students (Yin et al. 2022). This fosters a feeling of belonging, self-esteem, and usual emotional nicely-being in children. As a result, H5 is supported.

Hypothesis H6 stated that the association between preschool children's well-being and ECE teachers' professional development is mediated through interactions between teachers and their students. The literature supports the findings. ECE The information, abilities, and techniques teachers need to interact with children successfully are provided by teacher professional development (Rodriguez & McKee, 2022). In turn, these relationships enhance the general well-being of youngsters. Positive teacher-student interactions marked by warmth, responsiveness, and sensitivity have repeatedly been associated with greater cognitive development, social-emotional growth, and general well-being in preschoolers (Christodoulakis et al. 2021). Teachers can encourage students' academic success, cognitive development, and socio-emotional competency by having meaningful relationships with them. H6 is therefore supported. According to H7, the association between ECE and Teacher Self-Efficacy is mediated by the well-being of preschoolers and teachers' professional development: The literature review backs up these results. Teachers who have strong self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to establish ambitious goals, persevere in the face of challenges, and use powerful teaching techniques (Narea et al. 2022). To acquire quality gaining knowledge of and well-being effects for the students, they trade their coaching techniques to shape numerous necessities of the scholars. Teachers who have high stages of self-efficacy are more likely to foster welcoming surroundings in the classroom (Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2019). They build trusting relationships with children, provide emotional help, and foster an atmosphere wherein children sense loved, secure, and respected. These pleasing instructor-pupil interactions help preschoolers broaden a feeling of network, self-worth, and overall well-being (Ong'ayi et al. 2020). H7 is therefore supported.

The association between ECE Teacher Professional Development and Preschool Children's Well-being, according to H8a, is moderated by the teacher's experience. The literature supports the findings. Experienced teachers are more likely to successfully integrate their professional development experiences into classroom practices that positively influence children's well-being because they have been exposed to various teaching contexts, diverse student

demographics, and a range of problems (van Driel et al. 2023). They possess a deeper comprehension of child development, successful teaching techniques, and methods for developing welcoming learning environments (Heyd-Metzuyanim, 2019). Hence H8a is accepted. According to H8b, the association between teacher-child interaction and the well-being of preschoolers is moderated by the teacher's experience. The literature supports the findings. Teachers with more experience have had more opportunities to hone their abilities to form cordial and receptive relationships with children (Rancher & Moreland, 2023). They have advanced their ability to successfully respond to children's desires, feelings, and pursuits. As a result in their enjoyment, they better-know how to foster secure and supportive learning surroundings, provide the right guidance and interact with children in significant discourses (Byun et al. 2022). Hence H8b is accepted. According to H8c, the association between teacher efficacy and the well-being of preschoolers is moderated by teacher experience. The literature supports the findings. Teachers with more experience have had more opportunities to hone their pedagogical strategies, classroom management tactics, and instructional procedures (Taherkhani et al. 2022). Through their collective experiences, they have come across various educational scenarios and have learned how to successfully negotiate difficulties and cater to the varying requirements of children. Since experienced instructors have proof of their prior triumphs and are aware that they have overcome challenges in their teaching practice, these experiences help them feel more capable of achieving their goals (Buffenn, 2021). High self-efficacy teachers with expertise are likelier to use effective teaching methods, develop a fun and stimulating learning environment and encourage children's motivation and excitement for learning. Their confidence in their talents enables them to adjust to changing situations, make wise decisions, and offer the support and direction required to support children's well-being (Yin et al. 2022). H8c is therefore supported.

6. CONCLUSION

The links between ECE Teacher Professional Development, teacher-child contact, teacher self-efficacy, and the development of preschoolers were explored in this study. The results supported the hypothesized favorable effects of ECE's Teacher Professional Development on preschoolers' happiness, teacher-child interaction, and teacher confidence. Teacher-student contact and teachers' beliefs in their abilities were also found to moderate the connection between ECE's Teacher Professional Development and the happiness of preschoolers. This study has important theoretical consequences. Providing supporting data for the hypothesized connections helps deepen our comprehension of the intricate dynamics at play in ECE. This research added to the existing theoretical framework by focusing on the significance of teacher-related factors and their interaction in shaping the development and happiness of preschoolers. It emphasizes the need for professional development programs that foster positive teacher-child relationships, boost teachers' confidence, and expand instructors' pedagogical expertise. This all-encompassing strategy for enhancing teaching practices is in line with modern theories of ECE and is supported by substantial data. The results highlighted the importance of individualized professional development programs for early childhood educators to meet their unique demands. Teachers can grow and improve their connections with students if given the

tools, support, and training they need through these programs. Schools and educational institutions can use initiatives including peer observations, collaborative planning, and reflective practice to improve the quality of teacher-child interactions. The importance of teachers' beliefs in their abilities to improve the lives of their young charges is also emphasized. Teachers' confidence in their abilities can be boosted by offering them consistent encouragement, public praise, and opportunities for professional development.

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