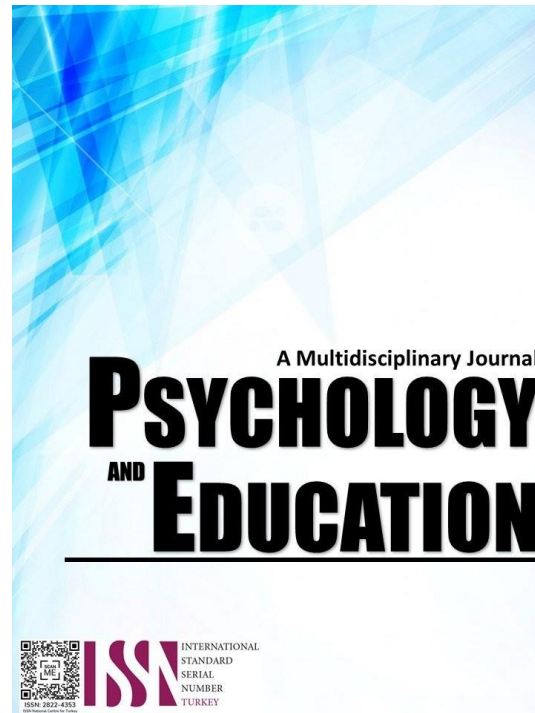


EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS



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Emotional Intelligence, Classroom Management, Competencies and Performance of Kindergarten Teachers

Ananias T. Clarido Jr.,* Ma. Fe D. Opina

For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

Abstract

This study aimed to assess the emotional intelligence, classroom management, competencies, and performance of teachers in kindergarten. In this study, descriptive-correlational and causal-comparative research designs were employed. A sample of 226 kindergarten teachers was selected based on a proportionate stratified random formula from the DepEd- Divisions of Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City, Northern Mindanao, Philippines. The instruments used were adopted questionnaires from the London Leadership Academy for emotional intelligence level, Martin and Sass (2010) for classroom management, and Bernat (2007) for teachers' competencies. Kindergarten teachers demonstrated high levels of emotional intelligence, classroom management, competencies, and outstanding performance based on their IPCRF. Multiple linear regression showed that Providing Opportunity, Task Orientation, and Variability of Techniques and Materials significantly influenced the performance of kindergarten teachers. Finally, Causal Model 4 provides the most comprehensive and accurate representation of the relationships among variables, making it the best fit among the four causal models evaluated in this study. The study recommends that the DepEd design and support development strategies, policies, objectives, and initiatives that emphasize the development of the emotional intelligence, classroom management, and teaching competencies of kindergarten teachers.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, classroom management, competencies, kindergarten teachers, teaching performance*

Introduction

In the kindergarten educational landscape, the pivotal role of the kindergarten teacher extends far beyond mere classroom teaching; it extends into cultivating emotional intelligence, managing the classroom effectively, and enhancing teachers' competencies and performance. The teacher's significant impact on the holistic development of learners underpins the nature of understanding the intricate synergy between the kindergarten teacher's emotional intelligence, classroom management, competencies, and performance. All these factors weave the tapestry of the early childhood development services that the government of the Philippines has diligently worked to enhance. Despite the substantial investments made by the government, strengthened by various stakeholders, to improve teacher performance, proof to confirm the success of these efforts remains scarce.

A study by Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts (2017) delved into the significant connection between teacher emotional intelligence (EI) and the quality of teacher-child relationships within kindergarten settings. Their study revealed that educators having high EI levels foster markedly more positive and supportive relationships with their pupils. Consequently, this leads to an observable surge in student engagement and academic drive.

This also gives teachers a weight to understand learning and its emotional side. Emotional intelligence is a tool that will, exceptionally, help in teaching. A study by Abdullah, Dur-e-Sameen, and Aslam (2020) elucidated the achievements attained by both teachers and students through enhanced personal and social life skills. They discovered that improving these skills accelerated progress in the academic realm for students and in the professional field for teachers. This notion also supports the study of Denham, S. A., Bassett, H. H., and Zinsser, K. (2014), which specifically focused on kindergarten teachers, highlighting how the emotional intelligence of a teacher profoundly influences the emotional growth and classroom behavior of the students.

In line with Teacher Academy (2022), teacher performance alludes to a collection of behaviors, attitudes, and actions within the learning environment that are adapted toward attaining learners' educational targets. Essentially, the teacher's behavior impacts greatly on how well students progress in their cognitive journey. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the significant impact of a teacher's effectiveness on the student's academic achievements.

Amidst the dynamic systems of educational environments, the professional competencies of the teachers are instrumental in promoting kindergarten education and services to create an environment that is secure, stimulating, or engaging and brimming with opportunities for holistic development (Arace et al., 2021).

Central to effective work performance of a kindergarten teacher's duties is the mastery of classroom management and competencies. The ability to establish routines, manage behavior, and create a nurturing environment conducive to learning not only sets the stage for academic achievement but also cultivates socio-emotional development in young learners. Comprehending how emotional intelligence relates to classroom management skills offers valuable perspectives on enhancing teaching methods and creating positive learning atmospheres.

With the vast number of things to learn from, classroom management also plays a role, especially with young children on the line. In

kindergarten, classroom management is more than managing young children, instead, it is more about setting the classroom culture and environment. This encompasses not only managing the behaviors of the young learners but also establishing a framework for how teachers respond to and regulate their actions.

Amidst the evolving landscape of educational paradigms, the correlation between the emotional intelligence, classroom management, and competencies of kindergarten teachers and their overall performance warrants a comprehensive investigation. By elucidating the intricate connections between these variables, teachers can identify strategies to enhance teacher preparation programs, refine professional development initiatives, and ultimately bolster the quality of kindergarten education.

In the context of kindergarten education, teachers are perceived as significant and stimulating educational leaders because they perform as key educators in stirring up children to achieve classroom learning. According to Bandura (1997), the result of an individual's cognitive processes in the struggle to build beliefs about an individual's abilities to perform tasks at a certain level of competence is self-efficacy. This theory illuminates the studies of Agbaria (2021) and Shafinaz (2017), etc., that effective teachers are associated with their level of self-efficacy. Moreover, Agbaria (2021) highlights the inherent challenges faced by kindergarten teachers, acknowledging the demanding nature of their roles.

Taken from the observations in this domain, the researcher recognizes the imperative to delve into the more profound look at the interplay between emotional intelligence, classroom management, and the competencies of kindergarten teachers toward their performance. Supplementary to this, the data drawn from the pursuance of the study became the basis for policies and the construction of different programs to benefit the Department of Education, kindergarten teachers, and young learners. It is for this purpose that this study is pursued.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the researcher used two methods to examine how kindergarten teachers' characteristics influence their performance namely, descriptive – correlational and causal-comparative methods of research. First, the researcher employed a descriptive-correlational approach to identify the levels of emotional intelligence, classroom management skills, and overall competence among the teachers, and how these factors relate to each other provide static pictures of situations as well as establish the relationship between different variables (McBurney et al, 2009 cited in Ivypana, 2022). Second, a causal-comparative design was used to explore whether these characteristics (independent variables) cause a difference in teacher performance (dependent variable). This comparison helped to determine which factors have the strongest influence on kindergarten teacher effectiveness. Causal-comparative research is a method utilized to identify the cause-effect relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In a causal-comparative research design, the researcher compares two groups to explore which independent variable affected the outcome of the dependent variable (Harappa, 2021). This study was conducted to identify the most effective predictors of kindergarten teachers' performance, including factors like emotional intelligence, classroom management, and competencies.

Respondents

The researcher used a two-pronged approach to investigate how kindergarten teachers' characteristics influence their performance. This method also helped them identify any potential connections between these factors. The participants of the study are all Kindergarten teachers of the two divisions- Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City. From the total population of five hundred forty-three (543) Kindergarten teachers of the two divisions, sample size two hundred six (226) was determined through the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator. The participants are selected based on a proportionate stratified random formula. Hayes (2023) explains that stratified random sampling is a sampling method where a population is divided into smaller groups called strata. In stratified random sampling, strata are created according to common attributes or characteristics of group members. In a proportional stratified approach, the sample size for each stratum is directly related to the population size of that stratum. This type of stratified random sampling is often a more precise metric because it's a better representation of the overall population. The computation must be 153 Kindergarten teachers from Cagayan de Oro City and 73 Kindergarten teachers from Iligan City. These respondents were given the Google form link for those who have internet access and those who do not were given hard copies of the survey questionnaires, after prior approval from the Regional Director of the Department of Education of Region X and the two Division Superintendents of Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City.

Instrument

This study primarily utilized standardized survey questionnaires that were composed of three (3) parts of questionnaires. The first step in evaluating the emotional intelligence of kindergarten teachers was utilizing a pre-established questionnaire created by the London Leadership Academy. The researcher used a questionnaire based on Martin and Sass's (2010) research, known as the Behavioral and Instructional Management Scale, to assess the classroom management abilities of kindergarten teachers. Third, to gauge the kindergarten teachers' overall competencies, the researchers utilized a questionnaire based on the work of Bernat (2007). This questionnaire is called the Competencies Development questionnaire. Also, a researcher-made questionnaire for profiling was supplemented in the beginning part of the test. Since all questionnaires are standardized, pilot testing is not needed. All of the authors of the questionnaires were given letters of request for approval that the research utilized their standardized instruments in this study.

The approved letters were attached hereunto the appendices of this study.

This study also requires the performance rating of the respondents; this can have viewed in the uppermost portions of Part I of the instrument. The said rating is based on the Individual Performance Commitment Review Form (IPCRF) for the school year 2022-2023 with the approval from the two (2) division superintendents of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City and the consent from the process owner of the data.

Procedure

The data for the study observed the research ethics protocol from the Liceo de Cagayan University, School of Teacher Education, and Department of Education authorities in Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City Divisions. The respondents were informed thoroughly about the purpose of the study and the data collection process. All the data gathered are treated with utmost confidentiality and the respondents' willingness to participate was sought before they answered the questionnaires. In the event of doubts or discomfort, the respondents may withdraw anytime from her/his participation. Further, this study was not funded by any organizations thus, there was no compensation or incentives was given to the respondents.

Furthermore, the data were gathered in the following manner: First, the researcher applied for research certification to the university's director of the Research Ethics Board (REB), together with the proposal, the instrument, and the minutes of the dissertation proposal defense. The Research Ethics Board provided nine LREB forms to fill out according to PHREB guidelines and LREB policy. When the researcher completes the forms, they are returned to LREB for approval. Following a thorough investigation and assessment of the research report, the chair of the study's ethics board sent an email certification letter to the researcher. This entailed determining if the primary researcher followed the study's ethical research guidelines.

Then, a letter of recommendation to conduct the study was taken from the Dean of the Graduate School, Liceo de Cagayan University, Cagayan de Oro City by the researcher. With the letter, the researcher asked permission from the office of the Divisions of Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City for him to conduct the study on the Kindergarten teachers of the divisions. When the permission was granted, the invitation letter, informed consent form, and link to the Google Form survey were emailed to Kindergarten teachers through their official school Gmail accounts by the school administrators. During the study, the researcher emailed each school a unique link to a Google Form questionnaire to guarantee that the desired participants from each school participated. The researcher collected and arranged the data before presenting it for statistical analysis to the statistician. The researcher interpreted the findings after data analysis.

Data Analysis

To process the data, the researcher used the following formula:

For problems 1, 2, 3, and 4, the researcher used descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation to determine the level of emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and social skills. The mean represents the average value in a dataset and the standard deviation represents how spread out the values are in a dataset relative to the mean (Zach, 2022)

For problem 5, the researcher used Pearson Product - Moment Correlation to correlate between the performance of Kindergarten teachers and emotional intelligence, classroom management styles, and competencies of Kindergarten teachers. Building on Turney's (2022) work, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation helps us understand the bigger picture within a dataset. Specifically, it describes the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two quantitative variables.

For problem 6, the researcher used Multiple Regression to identify which of the variables, singly or in combination, best influence the performance of the early childhood educators. Bevans (2020) explained that multiple linear regression is a statistical technique used to understand how changes in two or more independent variables affect a single dependent variable.

For Problem 7, the researcher used path analysis to estimate causal relationships and test the independent variables on the performance of kindergarten teachers by combining qualitative causal assumptions with statistical data. Researchers use a statistical method to assess and investigate links between variables. As Pahayag (2022) mentions, citing Valenzuela and Bachmann (2017), it can also explore more complex scenarios where variables might influence each other indirectly. The indices were considered while assessing the model's adequacy of fit: Chi-square/degrees of freedom χ^2/df , Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Normal Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

Results and Discussion

Problem 1: What is the level of emotional intelligence of Kindergarten teachers in terms of: self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, and empathy

Table 1 summarizes the results on emotional intelligence levels among Kindergarten teachers in different areas. These results provide an important understanding of their overall emotional intelligence.

In terms of self-awareness, educators exhibit a high level of self-awareness, with a mean score of 4.08, falling within the "Often

Applies" category. This indicates that they are generally adept at recognizing and understanding their own emotions, which is essential for effective self-regulation and interpersonal interactions.

Table 1. *Summary of Findings of the Level of Emotional Intelligence of Kindergarten teachers*

<i>Emotional Intelligence</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Self-Awareness	4.08	.65	Often Applies	High
Managing Emotion	3.33	.67	Applies Half of the Time	Moderately High
Motivating Oneself	3.95	.54	Often Applies	High
Empathy	3.77	.80	Often Applies	High
Social Skill	4.05	.74	Often Applies	High
Total Measure	3.84	.51	Often Applies	High

Regarding the management of emotions, educators display a moderately high level of emotional regulation skills, with a mean score of 3.33, falling within the "Applies Half of the Time" category. While there is room for improvement in this area, they still demonstrate a reasonable ability to manage their emotions effectively.

In motivating oneself, educators exhibit a high level of motivation, with a mean score of 3.95, falling within the "Often Applies" category. This indicates they possess strong self-motivation and time management skills, which can enhance their efficiency and achievement in their positions.

In terms of empathy, educators display a high level of empathy, with a mean score of 3.77, falling within the "Often Applies" category. They are generally proficient at understanding and empathizing with the emotions and perspectives of others, which is crucial for building positive relationships.

Finally, in social skills, educators excel with a mean score of 4.05, also falling within the "Often Applies" category. They are highly skilled in listening, adapting to diverse social situations, and building strong relationships with colleagues, children, and families.

Thus, the total measure of emotional intelligence among Kindergarten teachers is 3.84, indicating a high level of emotional intelligence. While there are areas where improvement is possible, such as emotional regulation, educators demonstrate strong emotional competencies that are valuable for their profession. These findings suggest that they are well-equipped to create positive and nurturing environments for children and maintain productive relationships within their professional communities.

Problem 2. What are the classroom management of Kindergarten teachers in terms of: Behavior Management, and Instructional Management?

Table 2. *Summary of Findings of the Classroom Management of Kindergarten teachers*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Behavioral Management	3.97	.47	Agree	High
Instructional Management	4.27	.38	Agree	High
Total Measure	4.12	.36	Agree	High

Table 2 condenses the findings regarding the classroom management of Kindergarten teachers, considering both behavioral management and instructional management. In terms of behavioral management, kindergarten teachers demonstrate a mean score of 3.97, falling within the "Agree" category and instructional management, kindergarten teachers display a mean score of 4.27, also falling within the "Agree" category.

The total measure of classroom management for Kindergarten teachers is 4.12, indicating an overall "Agree" category. This suggests that educators strike a balance between maintaining discipline and promoting interactive learning experiences. They value structure, routine, and rule enforcement while also emphasizing adaptability and engagement in their teaching approach.

In summary, Kindergarten teachers tend to adopt a balanced classroom management that combines structured behavioral management with interactive instructional management. This approach is likely to contribute to effective classroom environments that support both discipline and active learning experiences for young children.

The teachers generally agreed on practices reflecting Yussif's (2023) interventionist management style. This teacher-centered approach prioritizes the instructor's role, with less emphasis on student input. In this style, student ideas may be minimized or even disregarded, and students are expected to follow the teacher's directions.

Problem 3. What is the level of competencies of Kindergarten teachers in terms of: Providing Opportunity, Task Orientation, and Variability of Techniques and Materials?

Table 3 sum up the findings regarding the level of competencies of Kindergarten teachers across various dimensions: task orientation, providing opportunity, and variability of techniques and materials.

Table 3. *Summary of Findings of the Level of Competencies of Kindergarten teachers*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Task Orientation	4.38	.47	Competent	High
Providing Opportunity	4.40	.52	Competent	High
Variability of Techniques and Materials	4.26	.50	Competent	High
Total Measure	4.35	.44	Competent	High

The total measure of competencies across these dimensions is 4.35, indicating an overall "Competent" level of competence among early childhood educators. These findings suggest that Kindergarten teachers possess a well-rounded set of competencies that contribute to their effectiveness in providing high-quality education and support to young children.

Fauth et al. (2019) found that effective teachers (those with strong knowledge of the subject matter, confidence in their teaching abilities, and a passion for teaching) have students who are more interested in the subject. Additionally, teachers who are confident in their abilities (high self-efficacy) tend to have students with higher academic achievement.

Problem 4: What is the performance of Kindergarten teachers?

The fourth problem statement in this study is to determine the performance of Kindergarten teachers.

Table 4. *Distribution of the Performance of Kindergarten teachers*

<i>Range</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
4.51-5.00	Outstanding	Exceptional Performance
3.50-4.50	Very Satisfactory	High Performance
Total		

Note: Mean (SD) = 4.47 (.41)

Table 4 presents the distribution of the performance of Kindergarten teachers based on their scores across various ranges. These ranges reflect the assessment of their performance in the areas of competencies, classroom management, and emotional intelligence.

According to Martin (2018), teacher performance is described as a combination of attitudes and behaviors that lead to children's learning. The better the performance of the teacher is judged, the more children learn.

Based on the findings shown above, most Kindergarten teachers have scores between 4.50 and 5.00. This category is marked as "Outstanding," indicating outstanding performance. These teachers have shown exceptional skill in teaching, managing the classroom, and understanding emotions.

In summary, the majority of the kindergarten teachers in the sample have demonstrated outstanding in their roles. These findings reflect their high levels of competency in teaching, classroom management, and emotional intelligence, indicating a strong foundation for providing quality education and support to young children.

According to Ortiz, et al., (2022), the IPCRF of the teachers signifying exceptional performance represents an extraordinary level of achievement and commitment.

Problem 5: Is there a significant relationship between the performance of Kindergarten teachers and emotional intelligence, classroom management, and competencies?

Table 5. *Relationship between the Performance of Kindergarten teachers and Emotional Intelligence, Classroom Management, and Competencies*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Teaching Performance</i>		<i>Interpretations</i>
	<i>r-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	
Emotional Intelligence	.460***	.000	Significant
Emotional Awareness	.087ns	.195	Not significant
Managing Emotion	.262***	.000	Significant
Motivating Oneself	.333***	.000	Significant
Empathy	.503***	.000	Significant
Social Skill	.491***	.000	Significant
Classroom Management Styles	.266***	.000	Significant
Behavioral Management	.057ns	.390	Not significant
Instructional Management	.431***	.000	Significant
Teaching Competencies	.771***	.000	Significant
Task Orientation	.484***	.000	Significant
Providing Opportunity	.907***	.000	Significant
Variability of Materials and Techniques	.658***	.000	Significant

Note: ***significant at .001 level ns-not significant means p-value > .05

The correlation analysis in Table 5 explores the relationships between the performance of Kindergarten teachers and their emotional intelligence, classroom management, and teaching competencies. Notably, emotional intelligence exhibited a significant positive

correlation with teaching performance ($r=0.460$, $p<0.001$), emphasizing the importance of educators' ability to understand and manage their emotions in enhancing overall teaching effectiveness. Among the specific components of emotional intelligence, managing emotion ($r=0.262$, $p<0.001$), motivating oneself ($r=0.333$, $p<0.001$), empathy ($r=0.503$, $p<0.001$), and social skill ($r=0.491$, $p<0.001$) all show significant positive correlations, underscoring their relevance to teaching performance.

Furthermore, the correlation between classroom management and teaching performance is also noteworthy, with a significant positive association ($r=0.266$, $p<0.001$). This indicates that effective classroom management, as reflected in the educators' styles, contributes to higher teaching performance. Notably, instructional management ($r=0.431$, $p<0.001$) emerges as a particularly influential component within classroom management, emphasizing its role in positively impacting teaching effectiveness.

Moving on to teaching competencies, a robust and highly significant positive correlation is observed between overall teaching competencies and teaching performance ($r=0.771$, $p<0.001$). Examining specific competencies, task orientation ($r=0.484$, $p<0.001$), providing opportunity ($r=0.907$, $p<0.001$), and variability of materials and techniques ($r=0.658$, $p<0.001$) all display strong positive correlations with teaching performance. These results suggest that educators who excel in task orientation, provide ample opportunities for student engagement, and employ diverse materials and techniques are likely to exhibit higher overall teaching performance.

Therefore, the results highlighted the importance of the strong positive relationships between emotional intelligence, teaching competencies, classroom management styles, and the overall performance of early childhood educators. The practical implications of these findings for schools and professional development programs underscore the significance of promoting emotional intelligence, successful classroom management strategies, and various teaching skills to improve the overall effectiveness of Kindergarten educators.

Teacher Academy (2022) states that successful students rely on effective teachers. A highly effective teacher helps achieve successful academic results.

According to Siri, et al., (2020), the research findings indicated that the competence and dedication of teachers had a notable positive impact on the performance of professional educators. The dedication of the teacher serves as a link between their abilities and their success in the classroom.

Problem 6: Which variables, singly or in combination, best influence the performance of Kindergarten teachers?

Table 6. Predictors of the Performance of Kindergarten Teachers

Predictors	Regression Coeff., B	S.E.	Stand. Coeff.	t-value	p-value	Remarks
(Constant)	1.459	.183	--	7.983	.000	Significant
Self-awareness	.051	.030	.081	1.676	.095	Not significant
Managing emotion	-.042	.028	-.071	-1.536	.126	Not significant
Motivating oneself	-.043	.060	-.058	-.729	.467	Not significant
Empathy	-.024	.025	-.048	-.959	.339	Not significant
Social skill	.085	.045	.155	1.889	.060	Not significant
Behavioral management	-.029	.035	-.034	-.820	.413	Not significant
Instructional management	.062	.047	.058	1.330	.185	Not significant
Task orientation	.202	.043	.237	4.688***	.000	Significant
Providing opportunity	.685	.039	.881	17.514***	.000	Significant
Variability of materials and techniques	.140	.051	.175	2.741**	.007	Significant

Note: Adjusted R2 = .836 ANOVA for Regression: $F=115.727$, $p<.001$ *** $p<.001$ ** $p<.01$

Table 6 presented the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the predictors of teaching performance, including emotional intelligence, classroom management styles, and competencies.

As can be shown in the results, the regression model demonstrated a significant overall fit ($F=115.727$, $p<0.001$), indicating that the combined predictors significantly contribute to explaining the variance in teaching performance. The constant term in the model is statistically significant ($B=1.459$, $SE=0.183$, $t=7.983$, $p<0.001$), suggesting that there is a baseline level of teaching performance that is significantly different from zero.

Examining the individual predictors, task orientation emerges as a significant positive predictor of teaching performance ($B=0.202$, $SE=0.043$, $t=4.688$, $p<0.001$). This implies that educators with a strong focus on task orientation tend to have higher teaching performance. Similarly, providing opportunity ($B=0.685$, $SE=0.039$, $t=17.514$, $p<0.001$) and variability of materials and techniques ($B=0.140$, $SE=0.051$, $t=2.741$, $p=0.007$) are also significant positive predictors, suggesting that educators who create opportunities for student engagement and employ diverse materials and techniques are associated with higher teaching performance.

On the other hand, none of the components of emotional intelligence or specific classroom management individually emerge as significant predictors of teaching performance in this model. While self-awareness, managing emotion, motivating oneself, empathy, social skills, behavioral management, and instructional management do not reach statistical significance, their combined contribution to the model should not be overlooked.

Thus, the regression analysis highlights the importance of task orientation, providing opportunity, and variability of materials and techniques as significant predictors of teaching performance. These findings can inform educational practices and professional development programs by emphasizing the cultivation of specific competencies and instructional strategies that positively impact the overall performance of Kindergarten teachers.

Studies highlight the importance of both effective instructional materials and teacher competency. The study of Portana, et al., (2021), illuminated that effective instructional materials are designed to instigate, ignite, and bring desirable changes in the students' learning abilities, attitudes, and behavior in more interesting and meaningful classroom settings.

Hermoso, et al., (2023), emphasized the importance of teachers' personal and professional skills. Hermoso, et al., (2023), emphasized that teachers must possess the personal and professional competencies needed to become effective facilitators of learning. Their study showed that the personal and professional competencies of teachers are significantly associated with their teaching performance. The higher the personal and professional competencies, the higher the teaching performance.

Problem 7: What causal model best fits the performance of Kindergarten teachers?

Table 7. *Summary of Goodness-of-Fit Measures of the Four Structural Models*

Model	CMIN/DF	P-value	NFI	TLI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
1	29.412	<.001	.657	.315	.657	.996	.355
2	20.930	<.001	.755	.576	.755	.998	.297
3	12.700	<.001	.898	.776	.898	.999	.227
4	1.605	.267	.998	.996	.998	1.000	.035
Standard	0<CMIN/DF<2	>.05	>.95	>.95	>.95	>.95	<.05

The goodness-of-fit measures provide valuable insights into the adequacy of the structural models proposed in the study. Among the four models evaluated, Causal Model 4 emerges as the best fit based on various criteria. Model 4 exhibits the lowest CMIN/DF ratio of 1.605, indicating a very close alignment between the proposed model and the observed data. Model 4 demonstrates excellent incremental fit, with NFI, TLI, and CFI values all exceeding 0.95, indicating a robust model that explains a substantial proportion of the variance in the outcome variable. Additionally, the GFI value of 1.000 underscores the model's ability to account for the observed data's variance. Furthermore, the RMSEA value of 0.035 for Model 4 falls well below the threshold of 0.05, indicating a good fit with minimal discrepancy between the proposed model and the observed data. Overall, considering the combination of these goodness-of-fit measures, it is evident that Causal Model 4 provides the most comprehensive and accurate representation of the relationships among variables, making it the best fit among the four causal models evaluated in this study.

Conclusions

The following are conclusions drawn from the findings of the study:

Kindergarten teachers possess a high level of emotional intelligence in the five components - self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and social skills - in their teaching profession. This clearly shows that they are well-equipped to create positive and nurturing environments for children and maintain productive relationships within their professional communities.

The kindergarten teachers demonstrate high levels of classroom management. It suggests that Kindergarten teachers tend to adopt balanced classroom management that combines structured behavioral management with interactive instructional management. This approach is likely to contribute to effective classroom environments that support both discipline and active learning experiences for young children.

The level of competencies of kindergarten teachers is high. It implies that Kindergarten teachers possess a well-rounded set of competencies that contribute to their effectiveness in providing high-quality education and support to young children.

Kindergarten teachers' performance is excellent. It shows their high proficiency in teaching, managing classrooms, and emotional intelligence, showcasing a solid base for delivering quality education and support to young kids.

The performance of kindergarten teachers has a strong correlation with their emotional intelligence, classroom management, and teaching competencies. Therefore, the null hypothesis suggests that there is no meaningful correlation between the abilities of kindergarten teachers and their emotional intelligence, classroom management, and teaching skills.

Finally, when looking at all the goodness-of-fit measures together, it is clear that Causal Model 4 offers the most thorough and precise depiction of the connections between variables, making it the top choice among the four causal models analyzed in this research.

The following recommendations are proposed considering the abovementioned findings and conclusions. These recommendations may help the Department of Education, school administrations, educators, and other research scholars conduct programs that specifically address emotional intelligence, classroom management, and teaching competencies, which detrimentally impact the performance of kindergarten teachers.

The Department of Education may create and endorse strategies, policies, goals, and initiatives that focus on improving the emotional

intelligence, classroom management styles, and teaching competencies of Kindergarten teachers, due to the clear evidence that their performance greatly influences these areas. The DepEd should include Emotional Wellness and Personality Development in their program to help teachers improve their teaching performance by understanding how their emotional intelligence impacts their work.

To the School Principals. Now more than ever, school heads and principals are encouraged to create a mentoring program where expert teachers share their best practices with their co-teachers regularly, particularly in the area of classroom instruction and classroom management. To address educators' emotional intelligence, they may promote a supportive and inclusive work environment where teachers feel cherished and appreciated. More concretely, they may provide opportunities for teachers to engage in activities outside of work to increase their overall emotional well-being.

Teachers. It is high time for teachers to engage in activities that increase their emotional intelligence, classroom management, and teaching competence to have excellent performance as Kindergarten teachers. Teachers also are encouraged to upgrade with new trends, techniques, and strategies for managing instruction and their understanding of the nature of work, knowing the different classroom management styles and how to be competent educators by enrolling in graduate studies and similar activities.

Learners. They are urged to take advantage of the chance to listen to conversations among teachers with strong emotional intelligence, classroom management, and skills, as these are vital for not just their academic success but also their overall health.

Parents. They are encouraged to strongly support the school's initiatives, especially when they observe their children being well cared for by teachers who possess high emotional intelligence, effective classroom management, and competence.

Teacher-training Institutions. The researcher recommended that the training institution create a curriculum centered on emotional intelligence, classroom management, and skills for future educators.

Future Researchers. Future studies could investigate the emotional health of educators. Additional research should be carried out to determine the reasons behind the poor performance of Kindergarten teachers to create and execute effective solutions. Additional factors that may influence the teaching and learning process and the effectiveness of Kindergarten teachers should be examined.

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Affiliations and Corresponding Information

Ananias T. Clarido Jr.

Angelico J. Medina Memorial School – Philippines

Ma. Fe D. Opina

Liceo de Cagayan University – Philippines