

# THE EFFECTS OF PRINCIPALS' EMOTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHERS' EMPOWERMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: FOCUSED ON INSTITUTIONS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

Organizational effectiveness has been regarded as a vital factor of success in organizations. Especially, in the school system, the principals' leadership and teachers' perception of empowerment have been reported as the important variables affecting organizational effectiveness (Sin, 2008). However, few study has investigated organizational effectiveness and related factors in the setting of early childhood education. Therefore, we examined the effects of principals' emotional leadership and early childhood teachers' empowerment on organizational effectiveness in kindergartens and childcare centers. The sample comprised 250 early childhood teachers in South Korea. The empirical data were collected by administering the Organizational Effectiveness Scale for Early Childhood Teachers (Lee, 2016), an Emotional Leadership Scale for Early Educational Program Directors (Kwon & Kim, 2014), and School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short & Rinehart, 1992). The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 with the descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation analysis, and the analysis of multiple regression. The results revealed that principals' emotional leadership and early childhood teachers' empowerment positively affected organizational effectiveness. Moreover, teachers' empowerment had more impact than principal's emotional leadership on organizational effectiveness. The finding of this study suggest that principals' emotional leadership and early childhood teachers' empowerment should be improved to increase organizational effectiveness in early childhood educational institutions. Practical implications and directions for further research are discussed.

## Keywords:

Organizational effectiveness, Emotional leadership, Empowerment, Early childhood teachers.

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## 1. Introduction

Organization refers to a social unit that is purposely constructed with common goals. Early childhood educational institutions including kindergartens and childcare centers are also organization in that they have common educational goals for organizational members such as principals and teachers to achieve. In the 1980s, organizational effectiveness became more prominent and switched to being a concept from the status of a construct (Henry, 2011). As McCann (2004) suggested, organizational effectiveness is the criterion of the organization's successful fulfillment of their purposes through core strategies. Since the success of organization depends on its effectiveness in achieving goals, organizational effectiveness is also the main

concern of early childhood educational institutions (Kim & Kwon, 2012). Organizational effectiveness refers to the degree of achieving goals of organization via organizational members' satisfaction with their roles, engagement with a sense of mission and belonging to the organization, and adaption to various changes while achieving goals (Lee, 2012). The previous research showed that early childhood teachers who perceived organizational effectiveness in high level became proud of their jobs and satisfied with teaching vocation, thus they could achieve excellent performance in education (Park, 2010). Therefore, we focused on the organizational effectiveness perceived by early childhood teachers and examined the related factors.

On the other hand, unlike other educational institutions such as elementary school, early childhood educational institutions are unique in that they have relatively small numbers of faculty members, and faculty members are females in most cases. Based on these characteristics, principals play a key role in affecting early childhood teachers' organizational performance (Cho, 2005).

In terms of principals' impact on organizational effectiveness, their leadership perceived by early childhood teachers is reported as one of the critical factors (Kim, 2018). That is, when the principals show high level of leadership, early childhood teachers would perform their roles with job satisfaction, which lead to high organizational effectiveness (Kim, 2018).

In addition, early childhood institutions ask for teachers to play various roles including both care giving and educating for young children as well as for their parents. Thus, the emotional leadership has been proposed as an appropriate type of principals' leadership to support early childhood teachers who need to adapt various roles (Ko, 2015). Emotional leadership means the ability for leaders to increase organizational performance by understanding their mind and considering to organizational members' emotion and needs (Kwon & Kim, 2014). Emotional leadership is closely related to emotional intelligences (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) and plays a crucial role in the efficient operation of work performance and organization.

Several Korean studies reported that principals' emotional leadership moves teachers' emotions in positive ways and as a result increases organizational effectiveness in educational organizations such as elementary schools (Sin, 2008), private kindergartens (Cho, 2016), and childcare centers (Park & Hee, 2016). Seo and Song (2010) recently conducted a study using early childhood teachers as subjects, but they examined only a relationship between principals' emotional leadership and organizational effectiveness. Although the results of related

research showed the need of verifying the effect of principal's emotional leadership, no study has tried. Therefore, we investigated the effect of principals' emotional leadership on organizational effectiveness in early childhood education.

Organizational effectiveness is also influenced by teacher empowerment. Empowerment refers to an intentional ongoing process involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). It was reported that early childhood teachers who are empowered have more creativity, autonomy, and positive attitude at work (Kim & Moon, 2010). Empowerment in early childhood educational institutions provides teachers with many opportunities of developing their knowledge and skills so that they are actively involved in educational decision-making and become to have more ownership at work (Kim & Kwon, 2012). Based on previous researchers' suggestion, we inferred that early childhood teachers with high perception of empowerment would highly evaluate organizational effectiveness.

Although a few studies have examined the effects of teachers' empowerment on organizational effectiveness in early childhood educational settings in South Korea, they used the samples of kindergarten teachers only (Kim & Kwon, 2012), (Kim & Moon, 2010) or childcare center teachers only (Lee, 2018), (Song, 2012). There was one study (Kwak, 2017) using the subjects working at both kindergartens and childcare centers, but it had sampled the subjects from Kyoung-nam province only. Therefore, there is a need of further investigation on the mechanisms between teachers' empowerment and organizational effectiveness with various samples.

Based on the literature reviews above, we propose that not only principals' emotional leadership but also empowerment affect early childhood teachers' perception on organizational effectiveness. The primary focus in previous

studies has been on the effects of either principals' emotional leadership or empowerment. Because of the lack of research using two variables simultaneously in examination of organizational effectiveness, in this study we focus on the relative impact of principals' emotional leadership and empowerment. For this purpose, we devised the following research questions:

**[Research question 1]** What are relations between principals' emotional leadership, early childhood teachers' empowerment, and organizational effectiveness?

**[Research question 2]** How do principals' emotional leadership and early childhood teachers' empowerment affect organizational effectiveness?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants and Procedure

We distributed self-report questionnaires from December 20, 2019-February 14, 2020 to 280 early childhood teachers who were working at childcare centers or kindergartens in South Korea. After we had eliminated those that showed unusual patterns in the reply (such as repeating the same numbers throughout the questionnaire) or many unanswered items, 250 valid questionnaires (89.3%) remained and utilized in the data analyses. Of the participants, 58.8% ( $n = 147$ ) were singles and 41.2% ( $n = 103$ ) were married. We recruited the participants from both kindergartens and childcare centers so that the ratio of two became similar: 45.6% ( $n = 112$ ) were working at kindergartens and 54.45% ( $n = 138$ ) were working at childcare centers. In terms of the teaching experiences, 29.2% ( $n = 73$ ) were under 3 years, 24.8% ( $n = 62$ ) were 3-7 years, 25.6% ( $n = 64$ ) were 7-10 years, and 20.4% ( $n = 51$ ) were over 11 years. In terms of participants' age, 18.8% ( $n = 47$ ) were under 25, 27.2% ( $n = 68$ ) were 25-29 years, 29.6% ( $n = 74$ ) were 30-39 years, and 24.4% ( $n = 61$ ) were over 40 years.

### 2.2. Measures

**Organizational Effectiveness.** We measured organizational effectiveness using the Scale of

Organizational Effectiveness developed by Lee (2012) and revised for early childhood teachers by Lee (2016). The scale consists of 24 statements (e. g., "Job descriptions are properly defined for teachers to display their abilities.") and four subcategories: job satisfaction (7 statements), organizational adaptability (7 statements), organizational performance (5 statements), and organizational commitment (5 items). The questionnaires were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The higher the score is, the higher the level of organizational effectiveness perceived by early childhood teacher is. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in this study were .90 for job satisfaction, .87 for organizational adaptability, .81 for organizational performance, .88 for organizational commitment, and .96 for the total.

**Emotional Leadership.** We measured principals' emotional leadership using the Scale of Principals' Emotional Leadership developed by Kwon and Kim (2014). The scale consists of 36 statements (e. g., "The principal thinks positively about his/her values.") and four subcategories: Self-recognition (5 statements), self-management (7 statements), social recognition (7 statements), and social management (14 items). The questionnaires were rated by teachers on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The higher the score is, the higher the level of principals' emotional leadership perceived by early childhood teacher is. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in this study were .87 for self-recognition, .96 for self-management, .94 for social recognition, .97 for social management, and .99 for the total.

**Empowerment.** We measured empowerment using the Korean version of School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) developed by Short and Rinehart (1992). SPES was translated into Korean by Kim and Moon (2010) and then revised for early childhood teachers with validation through factor analysis by Kim and Kwon (2012). The scale consists of 33 statements (e. g., "The principal thinks positively about his/her values.") and three subcategories: Decision-making and

affecting (11 statements), professional development and autonomy (12 statements), and self-efficacy and rank (10 items). The questionnaires were rated by early childhood teachers on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The higher the score is, the higher the level of empowerment perceived by early childhood teacher is. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  in this study were .93 for decision-making and affecting, .95 for professional development and autonomy, .93 for self-efficacy and rank, and .97 for the total.

**2.3. Data Analysis**

All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 22.0. Descriptive analyses such as frequencies (%) and means (*SD*) were calculated to figure out participants’ background information of the participants and tendencies of the main variables, and Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for a reliability of measurement used in this study. To answer the first research question and test the statistical significance, we conducted Pearson’s correlation analysis. Also, in order to answer the second research question and determine whether principals’ emotional leadership and teachers’

empowerment on organizational effectiveness, we conducted multiple regression analyses.

**3. Results**

**3.1. Correlations between Principals’ Emotional Leadership, Early Childhood Teachers’ Empowerment, and Organizational Effectiveness**

Descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables are shown in Table 1. The means and standard deviations for the study variables were as follows: principals’ emotional leadership ( $M = 3.90, SD = .74$ ), teachers’ empowerment ( $M = 3.75, SD = .60$ ), and organizational effectiveness ( $M = 4.03, SD = .51$ ). The skewness (-.88~ -.02) and kurtosis (-.31~1.10) of the main variables indicated no violations of the normality of distribution assumption. The results showed the statistically positive relationships between principals’ emotional leadership, teachers’ empowerment, and organizational effectiveness ( $r = .51-.74, p < .01$ ). A higher level of principals’ emotional leadership ( $r = .59, p < .01$ ) and a higher level of teachers’ empowerment ( $r = .74, p < .01$ ) were associated with a higher level of organizational effectiveness.

**Table 1: Correlations Between Principals’ Emotional Leadership, Teachers’ Empowerment and Organizational Effectiveness (N = 250)**

Variables	①	②	③
① Emotional Leadership	-		
② Empowerment	.51	-	
③ Organizational Effectiveness	.59	.74	-
<i>M (SD)</i>	3.90 (.74)	3.75 (.60)	4.03 (.51)
Skewness	-.88	-.02	-.05
Kurtoses	1.10	-.26	-.31

\*\* $p < .01$

**3.2. The Effects Principals’ Emotional Leadership and Early Childhood Teachers’ Empowerment on Organizational Effectiveness**

Before conducting the multiple regression analyses, we checked the multicollinearity. As the variance inflation factor (1.35) as well as tolerance limit (.74) were within acceptable limits, multicollinearity was not an issue. As shown in Table 2, the e multiple regression model with predictors of principals’ emotional leadership and teachers’ empowerment produced the following

results:  $F = 188.35, p < .001$ . Both principals’ emotional leadership ( $t = 6.17, \beta = .61, p < .001$ ) and teachers’ empowerment  $t = 12.70, \beta = .24, p < .001$ ) in the regression model positively affected organizational effectiveness. Together, the independent variables accounted for 60.1% ( $Adj.R^2 = .60$ ) of the variance in the organizational effectiveness. In terms of relative impact size, teachers’ empowerment ( $\beta=.59$ ) had larger effect than principals’ emotional leadership ( $\beta=.29$ ) on organizational effectiveness.

**Table 2: The Effects Principals’ Emotional Leadership and Teachers’ Empowerment on Organizational Effectiveness (N=250)**

Independent Variables	Organizational Effectiveness			
	B	S.E.	B	t
(Constant)	1.37	.14	-	9.92***
Emotional Leadership	.20	.03	.29	6.17***
Empowerment	.50	.04	.59	12.70***
$F=188.35^{***} (R^2=.60, Adj.R^2=.60)$				

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

**4. Discussion**

We investigated the effects of principals’ emotional leadership and teachers’ empowerment on organizational effectiveness in Korean early childhood educational institutions. We found that both principals’ emotional leadership and teachers’ empowerment were positively correlated with organizational effectiveness. The finding of positive correlation between principals’ emotional leadership and organizational effectiveness is consistent with one of (Seo & Song, 2010). This result also supports the previous findings with samples of kindergarten teachers (Cho, 2016) and childcare center teachers (Park & Hee, 2016). The finding of correlations between teachers’ empowerment and organizational effectiveness was consistent with those of previous researchers, who examined samples of kindergarten teachers (Kwon & Kim, 2014), (Kim & Moon, 2010) and childcare center teachers (Lee, 2018), (Song, 2012).

The result of multiple regression analysis showed that both principals’ emotional leadership and teachers’ empowerment affected organizational effectiveness. This finding extends results obtained from the previous research conducted with limited samples so that we can generalize the effects of principals’ emotional leadership and teachers’ empowerment on organizational effectiveness in early childhood settings. Moreover, we found that teachers’ empowerment had stronger effect than principals’ emotional leadership on organizational effectiveness.

Our results have some practical implications that highlight the importance of principals’ emotional leadership and empowerment for teachers in early childhood settings as predictors for enhancing organizational effectiveness. Principals need to acknowledge that their abilities to recognize and to manage one’s own emotion along with faculty members’ emotion are the bases for enhancing organizational effectiveness.

In addition to developing emotional leadership, our results suggest that the principals need to facilitate and to support teachers' empowerment. For instance, teachers might be more empowered when they have right to actively participate in decision-making processes in organization. That would be solid considering the fact that early childhood teachers are not only members under control of principals but also leaders for young children in their classrooms.

Although meaningful results have been obtained, there are some limitations in this study. First, we used a Likert scale, rather than objective criteria, to measure organizational effectiveness; thus, our finding may be less convincing. All the data in our study were obtained via the same source, which may have caused common method bias. To address these points, future research could use objective measures of organizational effectiveness from different sources. Second, even though we draw results through multiple regression model, using a cross-sectional design did not allow us to verify the causality for the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. Future researchers should adopt a longitudinal design to verify causality. Third, we measured perceived, rather than actual, level of emotional leadership and empowerment. The assessment of perceived level by the participants may be biased, and this limitation needs to be considered when the results are interpreted and generalized.

## NOTES

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