

Teaching Performance, Classroom Climate and Learning Progress of Public Kindergarten Pupils

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated teaching performance, classroom climate, and learning progress among public kindergarten pupils in the Negros Island Region ($N = 67$ teachers) during the 2025–2026 school year. Using a descriptive-correlational design and structured survey instruments, findings revealed Very High levels across all three main variables: teaching performance ($M = 4.85, SD = 0.28$), classroom climate ($M = 4.89, SD = 0.18$), and pupil learning progress ($M = 4.56, SD = 0.44$). Spearman's rank correlation demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship between teaching performance and learning progress ($r_s = .365, p = .002$), rejecting the null hypothesis. However, no significant relationship was found between classroom climate and learning progress ($r_s = .215, p = .081$). The study concludes that high instructional quality directly drives early childhood learning outcomes and recommends targeted professional development in positive discipline and scaffolded learning.

Keywords: Teaching Performance, Classroom Climate, Pupil Learning Progress, Early Childhood Education, Public Kindergarten Teachers, Instructional Quality, Academic Achievement, Descriptive-Correlational Study, Department of Education (DepEd), Negros Island Region

INTRODUCTION

Teaching performance stands as the primary driver of quality early childhood education. Competent kindergarten teachers do not only deliver lessons; they build relationships, adapt to diverse learner needs, and uphold professional standards as outlined in Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST, DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2016). Equally important is the classroom climate, which encompasses the emotional, social, and physical environment where learning takes place. A positive classroom climate fosters respect, cooperation, and a sense of belonging, making children feel safe and motivated to participate. Conversely, a negative climate may hinder learners' confidence and slow down their progress.

Given the developmental sensitivity of kindergarten learners, examining the relationship between teaching performance, classroom climate, and learning progress is essential. Understanding this connection can provide insights into how educators can enhance teaching practices and create supportive environments that maximize learning outcomes.

This study seeks to assess the teaching performance in early childhood education and contributing to the improvement of teaching and learning in kindergarten settings in a division within Negros Island Region and learning progress of kindergarten pupils such as: Cognitive, Language skills, Social development, and Motor skill/s.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the levels of teaching performance, classroom climate, and learning progress among public kindergarten pupils, as well as to

examine the relationships among these variables. The study was conducted among public kindergarten teachers in a division within the Negros Island Region during the School Year 2025–2026. The design allowed the researcher to describe the current status of early childhood educational practices and evaluate how instructional quality and classroom conditions relate to pupil developmental outcomes.

The participants of the study were 67 public kindergarten teachers officially assigned during School Year 2025–2026. A total population sampling technique was employed, involving all kindergarten teachers across the division to ensure comprehensive coverage and accurate representation of the population. The demographic profile of the respondents indicated that the vast majority were female, with a substantial proportion possessing 11 to 15 years of teaching experience and holding either a bachelor's degree or graduate-level units.

Data were gathered through a structured, highly reliable survey questionnaire adapted from official Department of Education (DepEd) frameworks, specifically the Classroom Observation Tool (COT) and the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). The assessment instrument measured teaching performance across key instructional domains, evaluated classroom climate across safety and learning environment dimensions, and assessed pupil learning progress across cognitive, language, social, and motor domains.

The research instrument underwent rigorous validation by education program supervisors and early childhood education experts to ensure alignment with DepEd standards and developmental benchmarks. The assessment materials were based on established national frameworks and official assessment rubrics rather than a newly constructed researcher-made questionnaire. For data collection, the researcher first secured permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and subsequently obtained approval from school heads to administer the study across the participating public elementary schools. The structured questionnaires were distributed and collected following standardized protocols to ensure data integrity and confidentiality.

The data collection procedure consisted of administering the survey instruments to assess the three primary variables for the 2025–2026 school year. Teachers evaluated their institutional practices, classroom management strategies, and the overall developmental progress of their enrolled kindergarten pupils based on standardized assessment records. Following data gathering, the results were compiled to obtain the overall mean ratings and standard deviations for teaching performance, classroom climate, and pupil learning progress. The relationship between teaching performance and learning progress, as well as between classroom climate and learning progress, was evaluated to determine which factors significantly influence early childhood outcomes.

The collected data were systematically organized, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical procedures. The mean and standard deviation were used to describe the levels of teaching performance, classroom climate, and learning progress. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (r_s) was employed to determine whether significant relationships existed between teaching performance and learning progress, as well as between classroom climate and learning progress, tested at a designated significance level ($p < .05$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Profile.

Profile	Category	f	%
Sex			
	Male	2	2.99
	Female	65	97.01
	Total	67	100.00
Length of Service			
	1 – 3 years	13	19.40

	4 – 6 years	4	5.97
	7 – 10 years	15	22.39
	11 – 15 years	24	35.82
	16 years and above	11	16.42
	Total	67	100.00
Educational Attainment			
	Bachelor's Degree	26	38.81
	With Master's Units	23	34.33
	Master's Degree	14	20.90
	With Doctoral Units	3	4.48
	Doctoral Degree	1	1.49
	Total	67	100.00

Table 1 shows that the respondents were predominantly female, comprising 65 or 97.01 percent of the total sample, while only 2 or 2.99 percent were male. In terms of length of service, the largest group consisted of respondents with 11–15 years of teaching experience, accounting for 24 or 35.82 percent. This was followed by those with 7–10 years of service at 15 or 22.39 percent, 1–3 years at 13 or 19.40 percent, and 16 years and above at 11 or 16.42 percent. The smallest group was composed of respondents with 4–6 years of service, with 4 or 5.97 percent. Regarding educational attainment, 26 or 38.81 percent were bachelor's degree holders, 23 or 34.33 percent had earned master's units, 14 or 20.90 percent held a master's degree, 3 or 4.48 percent had doctoral units, and 1 or 1.49 percent had completed a doctoral degree. These results indicate that most respondents were experienced female teachers, while a substantial proportion had pursued or completed graduate-level education.

The findings may be viewed in relation to Hao et al. (2024), who emphasized that teachers' professional learning contributes to the improvement of their instructional practices and professional competence. Zhang et al. (2024) similarly found that teaching efficacy supports teachers' capacity to innovate and improve their instructional approaches. In the Philippine setting, Neiz (2024) reported that teachers' classroom practices are strengthened through continuous professional development, adaptability, communication, and the application of child-centered strategies. These studies suggest that professional experience and continuing education may provide teachers with greater opportunities to develop the knowledge and competencies needed in kindergarten instruction.

From the researcher's perspective, the profile of the respondents reflects a teaching workforce with substantial classroom exposure and a generally strong educational foundation. The concentration of respondents within the 11–15-year service category suggests that many participants have already accumulated sufficient experience in managing kindergarten learners and implementing developmentally appropriate practices. However, the predominance of female respondents also indicates limited male representation in kindergarten teaching. Moreover, although many respondents had pursued master's units, fewer had completed advanced degrees, suggesting that schools may further encourage graduate education and sustained professional development to strengthen teachers' expertise and instructional leadership.

Level of Teaching Performance

Table 2. Level of Teaching Performance as a whole when Measured using the Classroom Observation Tool

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Apply knowledge of content within and across curriculum teaching areas.	4.87	.34	Very High
2. Apply a range of teaching strategies to develop critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills. "	4.85	.36	Very High

3. Manage learner behavior constructively by applying positive and non-violent discipline to ensure learning focused environments."	4.79	.41	Very High
4. Use differentiated, developmentally appropriate learning experiences to address learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences.	4.87	.34	Very High
5. Plan, manage and implement developmentally sequenced teaching and learning processes to meet curriculum requirements and varied teaching contexts.	4.88	.33	Very High
Teaching Performance using the Classroom Observation Tool as a Whole	4.85	.28	Very High

Legend: (4.21-5.0)-Very High; (3.41 – 4.20)-High; (2.61-3.40) Moderate (1.81 – 2.60)-Low; (1.00 – 1.80)-Very Low

Table 2 reveals that the respondents demonstrated a very high level of teaching performance, with an overall mean of 4.85 and a standard deviation of 0.28. The highest-rated indicator was planning, managing, and implementing developmentally sequenced teaching and learning processes, which obtained a mean of 4.88 and a standard deviation of 0.33. This was followed by applying content knowledge across curriculum areas and using differentiated, developmentally appropriate learning experiences, both of which obtained a mean of 4.87 and a standard deviation of 0.34. The use of teaching strategies for developing critical, creative, and higher-order thinking skills registered a mean of 4.85 and a standard deviation of 0.36. Although still interpreted as very high, constructive management of learner behavior received the lowest mean of 4.79 and the highest standard deviation of 0.41. The results indicate that the teachers consistently demonstrated effective planning, content integration, instructional differentiation, and learner-centered teaching practices.

The findings support Hao et al. (2024), who reported that professional learning and collective teacher efficacy contribute to stronger instructional practices among kindergarten teachers. Zhang et al. (2024) likewise found that teaching efficacy positively influences teaching innovation, allowing educators to adopt more responsive and effective instructional strategies. Neiz (2024) further emphasized that self-regulation, communication, child-centered activities, and instructional adaptability are essential features of effective teaching in the Philippine context. Together, these studies affirm that teachers who possess strong professional competence, confidence, and adaptability are more capable of delivering organized, developmentally appropriate, and engaging instruction.

As interpreted by the researcher, the very high teaching performance suggests that the respondents are generally capable of translating curriculum expectations into appropriate learning experiences for kindergarten learners. Their strongest performance in planning and sequencing instruction indicates that lessons are systematically organized according to developmental needs and curriculum requirements. Nevertheless, the comparatively lower rating for learner-behavior management suggests that this aspect remains an area for continuous enhancement. Kindergarten classrooms involve diverse behavioral, emotional, and developmental needs; therefore, teachers may benefit from further training in positive discipline, behavior support, and inclusive classroom-management strategies.

Level of Classroom Climate

Table 3. Level of Classroom Climate as a Whole and in Terms of Teacher- Student Relationship, Peer Interaction, Classroom Safety and Learning Support Environment.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretatio
Teacher- Student Relationship	4.92	.18	Very High
1. Learners are treated with respect and fairness.	4.97	.17	Very High
2. A supportive atmosphere is maintained in the classroom.	4.88	.33	Very High

3. Learners feel comfortable approaching the teacher for help.	4.91	.29	Very High
4. Efforts are made to understand learners' individual needs.	4.93	.26	Very High
5. Positive interactions between teacher and learners are observed daily.	4.91	.29	Very High
Peer Interaction	4.86	.24	Very High
1. Learners are encouraged to cooperate during group activities.	4.94	.24	Very High
2. Respectful behavior among learners is promoted.	4.94	.24	Very High
3. Conflicts among learners are resolved constructively.	4.88	.33	Very High
4. Opportunities are provided for collaborative play and learning.	4.87	.34	Very High
5. Learners demonstrate supportive behavior toward classmates.	4.67	.47	Very High
Classroom Safety	4.93	.18	Very High
1. The classroom environment is physically safe for young learners.	4.94	.24	Very High
2. Learning materials are arranged to prevent accidents.	4.93	.26	Very High
3. Learners are supervised during activities.	4.97	.17	Very High
4. Emergency procedures are known and practiced.	4.87	.34	Very High
5. Emotional safety is promoted by preventing teasing or bullying.	4.96	.21	Very High
Learning Support	4.83	.27	Very High
1. Learning materials are accessible to learners.	4.82	.39	Very High
2. The classroom displays support learning (e.g., charts, student work).	4.90	.31	Very High
3. The classroom is organized to support different types of activities.	4.81	.40	Very High
4. Time is allocated appropriately for play and structured learning.	4.84	.37	Very High
5. The environment encourages curiosity and exploration.	4.79	.41	Very High
Classroom Climate as a whole	4.89	.18	Very High

Legend:(4.21-5.0)-Very High;(3.41 – 4.20)-High;(2.61-3.40) Moderate (1.81 – 2.60)-Low;(1.00 – 1.80)-Very Low

Table 3 shows that the classroom climate was rated very high, with an overall mean of 4.89 and a standard deviation of 0.18. Among the four dimensions, classroom safety obtained the highest mean of 4.93, followed by the teacher–student relationship with 4.92, peer interaction with 4.86, and learning support with 4.83. Under the teacher–student relationship dimension, treating learners with respect and fairness received the highest mean of 4.97. In classroom safety, learner supervision also obtained a mean of 4.97, while promoting emotional safety received 4.96. In peer interaction, encouraging cooperation and promoting respectful behavior both registered a mean of 4.94. Under learning support, classroom displays that support learning received the highest mean of 4.90. Although all indicators were interpreted as very high, learners' supportive behavior toward classmates obtained the lowest mean of 4.67, while encouraging curiosity and exploration recorded 4.79. These findings indicate that the classrooms were generally respectful, safe, collaborative, and supportive of learning.

The results are consistent with Khalfaoui et al. (2021), who found that supportive teacher–child interactions, peer friendships, child engagement, and trusting relationships contribute to a positive early childhood classroom climate. Portelli (2021) likewise emphasized that teacher empathy, warmth, sensitivity, and emotional responsiveness create inclusive and psychologically safe learning environments. Natale et al. (2025) further reported that classroom safety practices support children's initiative, self-regulation, and positive behavioral outcomes. These studies reinforce the importance of interpersonal warmth, physical and emotional safety, and structured support in creating classroom conditions that are conducive to learning.

From the researcher's standpoint, the very high classroom climate reflects the teachers' strong commitment to maintaining respectful relationships, close supervision, and safe learning conditions. The high ratings for respect, fairness, supervision, and emotional safety are particularly important because kindergarten learners require secure and predictable environments to participate confidently in classroom activities. However, the

relatively lower means for supportive peer behavior and curiosity-driven exploration suggest opportunities for improvement. Teachers may provide more cooperative tasks, peer-helping routines, inquiry-based play, and exploratory learning experiences to strengthen children's social support, independence, and active engagement.

Learning Progress of Students

Table 4. Learning Progress of Students as a Whole and in Terms of Cognitive, Language Skills, Social Development and Motor Skills.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Cognitive Development	4.53	.52	Very High
1. Learners demonstrate improvement in recognizing letters and numbers.	4.60	.55	Very High
2. Learners show progress in problem-solving activities.	4.49	.56	Very High
3. Learners can follow simple instructions independently.	4.48	.68	Very High
4. Learners demonstrate improved attention during tasks.	4.51	.61	Very High
5. Learners show increasing ability to complete assigned activities.	4.57	.56	Very High
Language Skills	4.57	.46	Very High
1. Learners show improvement in vocabulary use. "	4.51	.56	Very High
2. Learners are able to express ideas in simple sentences. "	4.48	.59	Very High
3. Learners participate in storytelling;/ or discussions.	4.76	.46	Very High
4. Learners demonstrate improved listening skills.	4.54	.59	Very High
5. Learners respond appropriately to questions.	4.58	.53	Very High
Social Development	4.55	.48	Very High
1. Learners demonstrate improved cooperation with peers.	4.55	.53	Very High
2. Learners show respect for classroom rules.	4.48	.61	Very High
3. Learners manage emotions more appropriately over time.	4.51	.56	Very High
4. Learners participate willingly in group activities.	4.63	.52	Very High
5. Learners demonstrate empathy toward classmates.	4.58	.53	Very High
Motor Skills	4.61	.44	Very High
1. Learners show improvement in fine motor tasks (e.g., drawing, cutting).	4.63	.52	Very High
2. Learners demonstrate improved hand-eye coordination.	4.60	.52	Very High
3. Learners participate actively in physical activities.	4.75	.44	Very High
4. Learners show better control of movements during tasks.	4.52	.59	Very High
5. Learners complete age- appropriate motor activities successfully.	4.55	.53	Very High
Learning Progress as a whole	4.56	.44	Very High

Legend:(4.21-5.0)-Very High;(3.41 – 4.20)-High;(2.61-3.40) Moderate (1.81 – 2.60)-Low;(1.00 – 1.80)-Very Low

Table 4 indicates that the kindergarten learners demonstrated a very high level of learning progress, with an overall mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.44. Among the four developmental dimensions, motor skills obtained the highest mean of 4.61, followed by language skills with 4.57, social development with 4.55, and cognitive development with 4.53. In motor development, active participation in physical activities received the highest individual mean of 4.75. In language skills, participation in storytelling or discussions obtained a mean of 4.76, the highest among all learning-progress indicators. In social development, willingness to participate in group activities received a mean of 4.63. In cognitive development, improvement in recognizing letters and numbers registered the highest mean of 4.60. The lowest-rated indicators, although still interpreted as very high, were the ability to follow simple instructions independently, express ideas in simple sentences, and show respect for classroom rules, each with a mean of 4.48. These results indicate substantial progress across

cognitive, language, social, and motor domains, with particularly strong performance in storytelling, physical participation, and group activities.

The findings agree with Fan et al. (2024), who found that structured early childhood programs, family engagement, and transition experiences contribute to children's readiness and progress in literacy, mathematics, and social development. Incognito and Pinto (2021/2023) similarly reported that consistent and high-quality instruction improves children's phonological awareness, textual competence, and other emergent literacy skills. Vazou and Mavilidi (2021) further demonstrated that cognitively engaging physical activities enhance children's attention, motor competence, and readiness for learning. These studies support the present finding that kindergarten learning progress is multidimensional and develops through a combination of quality instruction, active participation, communication opportunities, and structured physical experiences.

The researcher interprets the very high learning progress as an indication that the kindergarten program effectively supports the learners' holistic development. The strong performance in storytelling and physical activities suggests that young learners respond particularly well to interactive, expressive, and movement-based learning experiences. However, the comparatively lower ratings in independent instruction-following, sentence construction, and adherence to classroom rules show that some children may still require guided practice in self-direction, expressive language, and behavioral regulation. Therefore, teachers should continue using scaffolded instruction, oral-language activities, routine reinforcement, and developmentally appropriate opportunities for independent work.

Relationship Between Teaching Performance and Learning Progress

Table 5. Relationship Between Teaching Performance and Learning Progress.

Variable	Test Statistics	P-value	Decision for Ho	Interpretation
Teaching Performance Vs Learning Progress	.365**	.002	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 5 shows that teaching performance had a test statistic of 0.365 and a p-value of 0.002 in relation to learning progress. Since the p-value was lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, a statistically significant relationship existed between teaching performance and the learning progress of kindergarten learners. The positive coefficient of 0.365 indicates a low-to-moderate positive relationship, suggesting that higher levels of teaching performance were associated with higher levels of learning progress. However, the result should not be interpreted as proof that teaching performance alone caused the learners' progress, since correlational analysis establishes association rather than causation.

The result supports Incognito and Pinto (2021/2023), who found that consistent and high-quality instruction contributes to improvements in children's literacy and related learning competencies. Yang et al. (2021) similarly reported that classroom management and instructional support significantly predict children's vocabulary and communication development. Fan et al. (2024) also emphasized that structured educational experiences contribute to kindergarten readiness and progress in literacy, mathematics, and social foundations. These studies support the position that effective planning, instructional support, classroom organization, and developmentally appropriate teaching are meaningfully connected with children's learning outcomes.

From the researcher's perspective, the significant positive relationship confirms that teachers' instructional competence is an important factor associated with the holistic progress of kindergarten learners. Effective teachers are more likely to provide sequenced lessons, differentiated activities, positive behavior guidance, and appropriate learning opportunities that respond to children's developmental needs. Nevertheless, the coefficient indicates that teaching performance explains only part of the variation in learning progress. Other factors, including family support, learner readiness, health, attendance, socioeconomic conditions, and access to learning materials, may also contribute to children's development. Thus, efforts to improve learning progress should strengthen teaching practices while also addressing the broader conditions surrounding the learners.

Relationship Between Classroom Climate and Learning Progress

Table 6. Relationship Between Classroom Climate and Learning Progress.

Variable	Test Statistics	P-value	Decision for Ho	Interpretation
Classroom Climate vs Learning Progress	.215	.081	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 6 presents a test statistic of 0.215 and a p-value of 0.081 for the relationship between classroom climate and learning progress. Since the p-value exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that no statistically significant relationship was established between classroom climate and the learning progress of kindergarten learners within the sample. Although the positive coefficient suggests that better classroom climate tended to correspond with higher learning progress, the relationship was weak and insufficient to reach statistical significance. Therefore, the observed association may have occurred by chance and should not be treated as conclusive evidence of a systematic relationship.

As analyzed by the researcher, the absence of statistical significance does not necessarily mean that classroom climate has no value in kindergarten education. The classroom-climate scores were uniformly very high and showed limited variability, as indicated by the low overall standard deviation of 0.18. Because most respondents gave similarly high ratings, there may have been insufficient variation to establish a stronger statistical relationship with learning progress. Moreover, classroom climate may exert indirect effects by influencing motivation, emotional security, participation, attendance, and self-regulation rather than directly determining academic or developmental progress. The findings therefore suggest that classroom climate should continue to be strengthened, while future studies may examine its specific dimensions, indirect effects, and interaction with teaching performance, family support, and learner characteristics.

The finding differs from Khalfaoui et al. (2021), who concluded that positive classroom climates strengthen child engagement, peer interaction, emotional support, and learning processes. It also contrasts with Coelho et al. (2026), who found that emotional support and classroom organization contribute to children's self-regulation, prosocial behavior, and peer relationships. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2025) reported that warm, close, and predictable classroom environments foster attention, cooperation, persistence, and stronger learning behaviors. These contrasting studies suggest that classroom climate may still be educationally important even when its direct statistical relationship with overall learning progress is not significant in a particular sample.

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