

# The influence of principal's service quality and teachers' self-concept on emotional regulation in preschool teachers

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of the quality of service of school principals and self-concept on the emotional regulation of preschool teachers. The research employs a quantitative approach using a relational survey model to examine the relationships between principal service quality, teachers' self-concept, and emotional regulation. The research utilized instruments based on the SERVQUAL model, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), and Emotion Regulation Theory (ERT), which were adapted to the Indonesian preschool context. The adaptation process included translation, expert review, and pilot testing to ensure the cultural relevance and reliability of the instruments. The results showed that the quality of the principal's services (tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) and teachers' self-concept (physical, social, academic, spiritual aspects) had a significant effect on the regulation of emotions ( $t$ -statistic  $> 1.96$ ;  $p < 0.06$ ). An  $R$ -squared value of 0.736 indicates that the independent variable explains 73.6% of the variance in emotion regulation. The validity and reliability test showed that all indicators met the criteria ( $> 0.5$ ). These findings underscore the importance of principal leadership and positive self-concept in supporting teachers' emotional stability. This study provides strategic recommendations for education managers to improve teachers' professionalism and emotional well-being.

**Keywords:** Principal Service Quality, Self-Concept, Emotional Regulation

## INTRODUCTION

One of the key components of education is emotional regulation, particularly for teachers who must be able to control their own emotions in order to foster positive learning environments (Greenier et al., 2021; X. Zhang and Wang, 2024). Emotional regulation plays a significant role in both the quality of instruction and teachers' emotional stability, particularly when faced with challenges such as difficult student behavior or demanding curricular requirements (Cheng, 2021; Qu and Wang, 2024). According to James Gross's 1998 model of the emotion regulation process, teachers can use techniques like attentional deployment to maintain focus on elements that promote a positive

learning environment or reappraisal to constructively reassess difficult situations in order to manage their emotions in the classroom (Berkovich and Eyal, 2021; H. Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, a key component of professional development in education should be improving teachers' emotional management.

The goal of the principal's quality services leadership component is to establish a work environment that encourages and supports teachers in their job performance (Hyseni Duraku and Hoxha, 2021; Yalçinkaya et al., 2021). The ability of the administrator to set an example, communicate clearly, and foster an open connection with teachers is all components of leadership (Corrigan and Merry, 2022; Pardosi and Utari, 2022). How a teacher views their abilities, potential, and role as an educator in the educational field is just as significant as their self-concept (Ahmad et al., 2023; Fernández-Arias et al., 2021). Therefore, teachers with a positive self-concept will be better equipped to handle pressure and be more confident when confronted with a learning difficulty. The work environment, including interactions with principals and their professional and personal experiences, significantly impacts this self-perception (Cece et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2021). It is founded on the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1969), which holds that people's emotional conduct can be influenced by the interplay between their components of self-concept and their surroundings, particularly the principal's support (Pekrun, 2024; Shengyao et al., 2024). Therefore, a teacher's capacity to control their emotions when working with pupils with a range of emotional requirements is directly influenced by the principal's level of service quality and the teacher's perception of themselves.

The study highlights that teachers' self-perception and the quality of principal service are essential factors in fostering emotional regulation (H. Zhang, 2024). Kindergarten teachers face unique emotional challenges due to their close interaction with young children, which adds complexity to their emotional regulation (Levine Brown et al., 2023; Liu and Wang, 2022). A competent and sympathetic principal can foster a more favorable work environment, enhancing teachers' emotional health (Kilag et al., 2023). Furthermore, instructors who have a favorable view of themselves are better equipped to handle the demands of their jobs and deliver high-quality instruction to their pupils (Clem et al., 2021; Hollenstein et al., 2024). A more comprehensive strategy that considers the socio-emotional components of kindergarten education can foster positive relationships between principals, teachers, and kids.

Mayer and Salovey (1990) highlighted that effective emotional management heavily relies on the support of the workplace, particularly the principal's leadership, based on the findings of earlier studies (Al Shehhi et al., 2021; Arslan et al., 2021). Furthermore, studies by Zainal and Mohd Matore, (2021) demonstrate how school principals can boost teachers' motivation and emotional stability by implementing transformational leadership. However, Y. Wang, 2021 found that teachers' capacity to handle work pressure at school closely correlates with their positive self-concept. The findings of the study by Gómez-Leal et al., 2022 also underlined how principals and teachers working together can foster an environment at work that encourages healthy emotional control. In order to generate favorable conditions in the school environment, particularly when it comes to teaching young children, this study focuses on evaluating the quality of school principals' services and teachers' self-concepts in tandem.

Even while emotional regulation has been the subject of numerous prior research, the majority of them have only examined specific facets of principal or teacher leadership in isolation (Y. Wang, 2021). This study closes the gap by demonstrating how teachers' capacity to identify, comprehend, and control their emotions can be impacted by the relationship between their self-concept and competent principal leadership. This study examines how early childhood teachers' emotional regulation is impacted by their self-concept and the quality of their principal services. This study examines how teachers' self-concept, including their sense of competence, potential, and self-worth, influences their capacity to identify, comprehend, and control emotions. The study also looked at how instructors' self-perception and principals' service quality interacted to enhance emotional intelligence in general.

In order to promote a supportive and emotionally healthy learning environment, it is anticipated that this research will offer valuable suggestions for the professional growth of educators and the enhancement of school principals' leadership abilities. The first hypothesis states that school principals' leadership abilities improve emotional control. Hypothesis 2: Emotional Regulation Benefits from Self-Concept

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

### 2.1 Materials

The research method uses a quantitative approach with a relational survey model (Abdelrazek et al., 2023). This study used a relational survey model to examine the relationships between principal service quality, teachers' self-concept, and emotional regulation. This model analyzes how the independent variables (principal service quality and teachers' self-concept) influence the dependent variable (emotional regulation). Using this approach, the study aims to identify and understand the interconnectedness of these variables in preschool education. The relational survey model tests the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables and provides a framework for interpreting the impact of principal leadership and teachers' self-concept on emotional regulation.

### 2.2 Data Collection Procedures

Teachers enrolled in three Bondowoso kindergarten schools—Kindergarten Kemala Bhayangkari 25, Kindergarten Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 01, and Kindergarten Ar-Rohman—were chosen for the convenience sampling technique. The following is the demographic data of the respondents in this study, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Data of the Respondents

Characteristic	School 1 (Kemala Bhayangkari 25)	School 2 (Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 01)	School 3 (Ar-Rohman)	Total (%)
<b>Total Participants</b>	30	35	35	100
<b>Gender</b>				
- Female	24 (80%)	27 (77%)	26 (74%)	75%
- Male	6 (20%)	8 (23%)	9 (26%)	25%
<b>Age Range</b>				
- 25 to 35 years	15 (50%)	17 (49%)	18 (51%)	50%
- 36 to 45 years	15 (50%)	18 (51%)	17 (49%)	50%
<b>Teaching Experience</b>				
- 5 to 10 years	18 (60%)	20 (57%)	22 (63%)	60%
- 11 to 15 years	12 (40%)	15 (43%)	13 (37%)	40%

### 2.3 Data Analysis Procedures

Following acquiring a permit, this study was conducted with consent from the principals of three Bondowoso schools. Teachers at the school were the subjects of the scale utilized to apply this research. SmartPLS was chosen for data analysis due to its suitability for small sample sizes, non-normal data, and formative constructs. Given that our study involves latent variables and a relatively small sample size ( $n = 100$ ), SmartPLS provides a more robust method compared to covariance-based SEM approaches, such as AMOS or LISREL, which are less effective with small samples or non-

normal distributions (Iqbal et al., 2021). Every item on the ServQual, Social Cognitive Theory, and Emotion Regulation Theory instruments is shown to appropriately assess the relevant dimensions by the validity test. Overall, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient scores of 0.797 for SCT, 0.767 for the ERT emotion regulation subscale, and 0.724 illustrate the instrument’s reliability, and the reliability test demonstrated the instrument’s internal consistency. While the influence of the ServQual dimension and Social Cognitive Theory on the variables of Emotion Regulation Theory was tested using linear regression analysis, correlation was used to examine the relationship between the ServQual dimension and self-concept and the teacher’s emotion regulation. The findings demonstrate that ServQual is a sound theoretical framework for assessing the caliber of educational services and instructors’ attitudes toward emotional control.

The SERVQUAL model hypothesis, created by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1994, was applied in the study to gauge the caliber of services provided by school principals.

**Table 2.** Service Quality Instruments

Indicator	Statement
Tangible	Appearance of the principal
Reliability	Clarity of information
Responsiveness	Ability to answer questions
Insurance	A sense of security and comfort
Empathy	Understanding needs

Self-Concept Instrument Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) states that the interaction between the principal’s support environment and personal factors of self-concept affects the emotional behavior of individuals.

**Table 3.** Self-Concept Instrument

Indicator	Statement
Physical Aspects	Confidence in my appearance when dealing with the surrounding environment.
Social Aspects	The school environment values feeling.
Academic/Professional Aspects	The ability of teachers to provide clear and correct information to students and guardians.
Spiritual/Moral Aspects	The ability to act in the service of parents and students reflects the moral values I believe in.

Emotion Regulation Theory by Gross (1998)

**Table 4.** Instruments of Emotion Regulation

Indicator	Statement
Cognitive Restructuring	Teachers can change their perspective on a situation to see it more positively and reduce negative emotional impacts.
Aspects of Emotional Control	Teachers can restrain, manage, and control the expression of emotions consciously in various social situations.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Result

The ServQual, SCT, and ERT instruments were completed by 100 preschool instructors, who provided the primary data for the test outcomes in this study. SmartPLS 4 with two testing phases—the Outer Model and Inner Model testing—was used to examine the results. In order for Table 4's loading factor to demonstrate the connection between indicators and latent variables.

**Table 5.** *Convergent Validity and Reliability Test Results*

Variable	Loading Factor	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
KL 1	0.814	0.553	0.797	0.860
KL 2	0.764			
KL 3	0.707			
KL 4	0.716			
KL 5	0.711			
KSP 1	0.777	0.519	0.767	0.843
KSP 2	0.664			
KSP 3	0.678			
KSP 4	0.740			
KSP 5	0.738			
RE 1	0.744	0.540	0.724	0.829
RE 2	0.790			
RE 3	0.699			
RE 4	0.726			

The loading factor (>0.50), the Average Variance Extracted value (AVE >0.50), and the internal reliability with Composite Reliability (CR >0.7) in the measurement model above are used to assess the validity of convergence. According to the analysis's findings, the loading factor and AVE values are beyond the minimal threshold, indicating that all aspects of service quality, self-concept, and emotion regulation satisfy the requirements for validity and reliability. The AVE value is also over 0.5.

**Table 6.** *Results of Cross-Loading Discrimination Validity Test*

	KL	KSP	RE
KL 1	<b>0.814</b>	0.640	0.686
KL 2	<b>0.764</b>	0.617	0.574
KL 3	<b>0.707</b>	0.547	0.562
KL 4	<b>0.716</b>	0.602	0.627
KL 5	<b>0.711</b>	0.625	0.607
KSP 1	0.576	<b>0.777</b>	0.588
KSP 2	0.640	<b>0.664</b>	0.568
KSP 3	0.596	<b>0.678</b>	0.631
KSP 4	0.545	<b>0.740</b>	0.559
KSP 5	0.576	<b>0.738</b>	0.555
RE 1	0.624	0.601	<b>0.744</b>
RE 2	0.620	0.575	<b>0.790</b>
RE 3	0.569	0.654	<b>0.699</b>
RE 4	0.629	0.565	<b>0.726</b>

The findings of the validity of the discrimination test, which determines how much a variable differs experimentally from other variables in the structural model, are displayed in Table 5. As can be observed, the cross-loading value shows that the measured indicator's value is higher than the values of the other indicators, demonstrating that every variable satisfies the criteria for discrimination validity. The latent independent variable's capacity to explain the latent dependent variable's variability is gauged by the PLS-SEM's R-Square. The R2 score indicates the model's overall predictive ability. A better model in explaining variation is indicated by a higher R2 value, which goes from 0 to 1. The results of the estimated output of smartPLS version 4.0 are examined in the following R-squared analysis, which is conducted using the fit model test:

Table 7. Uji Goodness of Fit R-Squares

	R-square	R-square adjusted
RE	0.736	0.731

According to the analysis's findings, emotion regulation had a variable R-Square value of 0.736, indicating that 731% of the variation in the principal's leadership style and teachers' self-perception can be accounted for by emotion control, placing it in the strong group. Figure 1 is shown here. The PLS SEM Algorithm makes R and the original sample visible in the research model.

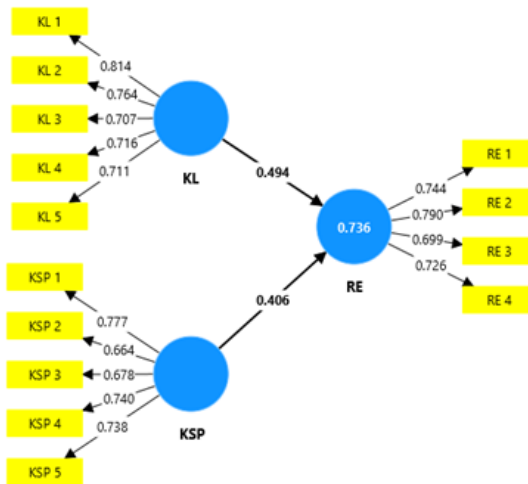


Figure 1. Path diagram with t-coun

Table 8. Uji Goodness of Fit R-Squares

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
KL RE →	0.494	0.507	0.104	4.765	0.000
KSP RE →	0.406	0.400	0.106	3.836	0.000

H1—that self-concept influences emotional regulation—is accepted based on the preceding computation's results, which show that the service quality variable obtained a statistical t value of

4,765 > 1.96 or a p value of 0.00 < 0.05. Similarly, if a statistical t value of 3,836 > 1.96 or a p value of 0.00 < 0.05 is found for the self-concept variable, then H2—that is, that service quality influences emotional regulation—is accepted—PLS-Algorithm evaluation of the structural model. The linear relationship between one or more exogenous variables and one or more endogenous variables is examined using the regression-based SEMPLS method.

**Table 9.** Fit Test SRMR and NFI

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.071	0.071
NFI	0.767	0.767

According to the computation findings, the model is deemed FIT when the SRMR value is 0.071 < 0.08 and the NFI value, 0.767, is near 1. Overall, this study demonstrates that self-concept and service quality significantly influence emotional control development. The most important factors in raising the caliber of educational services are responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles. In order to promote the best possible development of emotional control, educators, school officials, and legislators must consider these factors. These results offer tactical recommendations for developing and executing higher-quality preschool instruction.

Teachers' emotional regulation in education is greatly influenced by their self-perception and the caliber of principal services (Da'as, 2023; Xu and Yang, 2024). Both elements foster a supportive and favorable learning atmosphere and aid the educational process. The ability of the principal to offer guidance, policies, and support that enhance teacher performance is referred to as the quality of the principal's service (Karacabey, 2021; Zubaidah et al., 2021). Good principal services can inspire teachers to grow and foster a positive work environment (Amelia et al., 2022; Anselmus Dami et al., 2022). Leaders who can motivate and provide individualized attention to their subordinates will enhance their performance and mental health, according to Bass and Avolio's (1994) transformational leadership theory (Li Nasir, 2024; Stanescu, 2021). Principals who use this leadership style can support teachers in managing work-related stress and preserving their emotional stability when it comes to education.

The study's findings confirm how crucial high-quality principal services are for assisting educators in controlling their emotions. Using ServQual, SCT, and ERT instruments, as well as SmartPLS 4 analysis, data analysis of 100 preschool instructors revealed that the principal's service quality against emotional regulation had a t-statistical value of 4.765 with a p value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that the two variables have a substantial link. Furthermore, it has been shown that the most important factors in raising the caliber of educational services are responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles. Teachers' emotional control is also greatly influenced by their self-concepts, which are their views of themselves, including their confidence in their skills and morals. Carl Rogers' self-concept theory (1959) states that people with a positive self-concept are generally better able to control their emotions and confront difficulties with courage (Rizeakou and Kefalopoulou, 2023). Highly self-confident teachers are typically better equipped to handle the demands and difficulties of the classroom (Samfira and Paloş, 2021; Yuda et al., 2022). With a t-statistical value of 3.836 and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), the test findings in this study demonstrated that teachers' emotional control was significantly impacted by their self-concept.

These results lend credence to the idea that teachers with a positive self-concept can better control their emotions and remain composed under pressure (Beuchel et al., 2022). The loading factor value (>0.50), average variance extracted (AVE >0.50), and internal reliability with composite reliability (CR >0.7) were used to test the validity of convergence in this investigation. According to the results of the analysis, all aspects of self-concept, emotion control, and service quality meet high levels of validity

and reliability. Each variable's AVE and CR values are above the minimal cutoff, demonstrating the model's sufficient validity and dependability. The way instructors regulate their emotions is influenced by the relationship between their self-concept and the quality of the principal's services. By offering suitable support and incentives, principals who deliver high-quality services can improve teachers' perceptions of themselves. Conversely, instructors with a favorable view of themselves are more likely to be given guidance and assistance by the principal. Consequently, constructive interactions between principals and teachers produce a work environment that promotes emotional well-being (Marsh et al., 2023; Pagán-Castaño et al., 2021). Teachers with strong emotional control are more equipped to handle work-related stress, keep cordial relationships with students and coworkers, and foster a positive learning environment.

The study's inner model for emotion regulation had an R-Square value of 0.736, meaning that the principal's service quality and the teacher's self-perception account for 73.6% of the variability in emotion control. These results demonstrate the high predictive power of the study model. The structural model was deemed fit after the PLS-Algorithm evaluation revealed that the SRMR value of 0.071 ( $< 0.08$ ) and NFI of 0.767 were near the ideal value. The consequences for the evolution of education are obvious. First, for school principals to better serve teachers, their leadership must be strengthened through effective leadership development and training. Second, teacher self-development programs should be enhanced to support the development of a positive self-concept, for example, by providing training in emotion management and interpersonal skills. Third, principals and teachers must work harmoniously to create a supportive school climate. Therefore, a teacher's self-perception and the quality of the principal's services are critical in assisting instructors in controlling their emotions. Education is believed to function more efficiently and offer the most significant advantages to students and the school community if these two elements work well together.

These findings underscore the importance of principal leadership and teachers' self-concept in promoting emotional regulation, essential in creating a positive learning environment for preschool children. In the context of early childhood education, teachers who are emotionally regulated are better equipped to handle the challenges posed by young children's emotional and behavioral needs. The quality of the principal's leadership, including their ability to provide emotional support, clear communication, and empathy, directly impacts teachers' emotional well-being. Moreover, teachers with a positive self-concept who view themselves as competent are likelier to employ effective emotional regulation strategies in their interactions with children. This highlights the critical role of the principal's leadership and teachers' personal development in fostering a supportive and emotionally stable environment for young learners. Therefore, educational leaders must focus on fostering a positive work culture, supporting teachers' emotional well-being, and enhancing teachers' self-concept to ensure the emotional success of both educators and children in early childhood education settings.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the control of teachers' emotions in the preschool setting is significantly influenced by the principal's leadership style and the teachers' perception of themselves. It has been demonstrated that principal leadership traits, including tangibles, dependability, responsiveness, certainty, and empathy, foster a positive work atmosphere, increase self-assurance, and assist educators in better controlling their emotions. Furthermore, a positive teacher's self-concept encompasses moral, academic, social, and physical elements that support the development of strong emotional control abilities, particularly while dealing with various work-related difficulties. The analysis's findings demonstrated that the variables of self-concept and principal service quality could account for 73.1% of the variation in emotional regulation, and the model was deemed fit (SRMR = 0.071; NFI = 0.767).

This study highlights the crucial relationship between the teacher's self-concept and the principal's

leadership style in promoting the best possible emotional control. School principals should prioritize service quality factors like responsiveness and empathy, while professional development and social support are necessary to help teachers develop a positive self-concept. These results offer policymakers and education management strategic suggestions to enhance service quality and increase teachers' ability to foster a positive learning environment and encourage healthy emotional growth.

#### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**

This research is a collaboration between Abu Hasan Agus R, Hasan Baharun, Alda Novita Rahmatillah, and Sri Astutik Andayani, each of whom made significant contributions. Abu Hasan Agus R played a role in data analysis, as well as writing the initial draft of the article, while Hasan Baharun was responsible for designing the research concept, data collection, in-depth editing of the manuscript. Alda Novita Rahmatillah compiled the literature review and research methodology, provided in-depth theoretical insights, while Sri Astutik Andayani collected data, data analysis and compiled the research conclusions. All authors worked collaboratively to ensure this research was conducted with scientific integrity, and have read and approved the final manuscript of this article, fully responsible for the content and findings presented.

#### **DECLARATION**

The authors declare that they have NO affiliation or involvement in any organization or entity with financial interests (such as honorariums, education grants, consulting, shareholding, etc.) or non-financial interests (personal relationships, affiliations, or trusts) related to this manuscript.

#### **DATA AVAILABILITY**

The results of the data used and/or analyzed during this study are available from the authors of the correspondence upon reasonable request.

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