



Leadership in Early Childhood Education: How Head-Start Directors Influence Quality

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Leadership in Early Childhood Education: *How Head-Start Directors Influence Quality*

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Overview

- **Background/Rationale**
- **Current Study**
- **Results**
- **Discussion**

Background/ Rationale

Benefits of ECE

Preschoolers who attend high-quality ECE programs receive positive benefits

(Lieberman, 2017; Mims, Scott-Little, Lower, Cassidy, & Hestenes, 2008; Wechsler, M., Melnick, H., Maier, A., & Bishop, J. 2016)

Children's developmental outcomes (Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997)

- Receptive language abilities
- Pre-academic skills
- Classroom behaviors



Quality Indicators

Structural Indicators (Ishimine & Tayler, 2014)

- Group size, teacher to child ratios, teacher qualifications

Process Indicators (Ishimine & Tayler, 2014)

- Focus on the nature of the interactions in the classroom between the teacher and the students

Leadership as a Quality Indicator

Leaders have been shown to be influential on quality

(Ang, 2011; Bloom & Abel, 2015; Dennis & O'Connor, 2013; Liberman, 2017; Talan, et al., 2014)

Teaching quality (Bloom & Abel, 2015)

- Leaders make major decisions that directly affect teachers' access to instructional supports and resources which impacts educators overall teaching quality

Climate (Bloom & Abel, 2015)

- Staff's collective perceptions of the policies, practices, procedures, and routines of the organization
- Leadership and management practices directly impact the climate of the early childhood program

Leadership as a Quality Indicator

Across decades of ECE research, a leader's role is often overlooked as an indicator of quality.

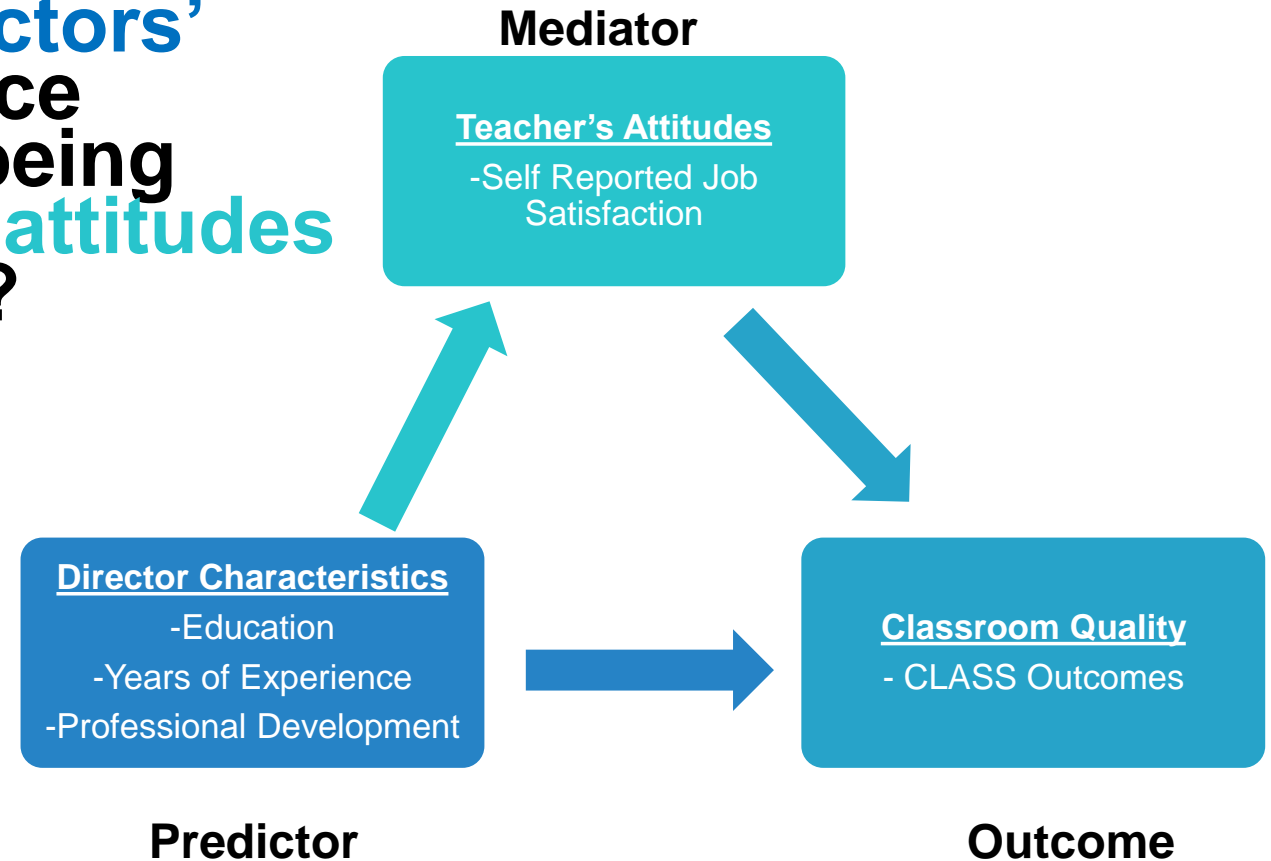
(Douglass, 2019; Klevering & McNae, 2018)

**There is a need to further
examine ECE leaders as
quality indicators.**

Current Study

Study Aims

To what extent do **directors' characteristics** influence **classroom quality** by being mediated by **teachers' attitudes** about job satisfaction?



Research Questions

- 1. To what extent do directors' characteristics predict classroom quality?**
- 2. To what extent do directors' characteristics predict teachers' job satisfaction?**
- 3. To what extent does teachers' job satisfaction predict classroom quality?**
- 4. Is teacher job satisfaction a mediator between director characteristics and classroom quality?**

Participants

2017 Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)

- 648 Head Start teachers
- 350 Head Start directors

Data

Teacher Attitudes

- Teacher Survey

Director Characteristics

- Center Director Survey

Classroom Quality

- Teachers were observed with CLASS observational tool

Director Characteristics

Education

- What is the highest grade or year of school that you completed?
 - Some college but no degree
 - Associate's Degree
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Graduate/professional but no degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctorate Degree
 - Professional Degree

Years of Experience

- In total, how many years have you been a director in any early childhood program?

Professional Development

- Select yes or no. In the past 12 months, have you participated in the following kinds of professional development?
 - College/university course(s) related to your role as a leader
 - Visits to other Head Start or ECE programs to improve you own work as a director
 - A network of ECE program leaders organized by someone outside of your program
 - Leadership institute offered by Head Start
 - Leadership institute offered by an organization other than Head Start
 - Training/conferences related to your role as a leader

Teacher Attitude's

How much do you agree with the following statements about teaching?

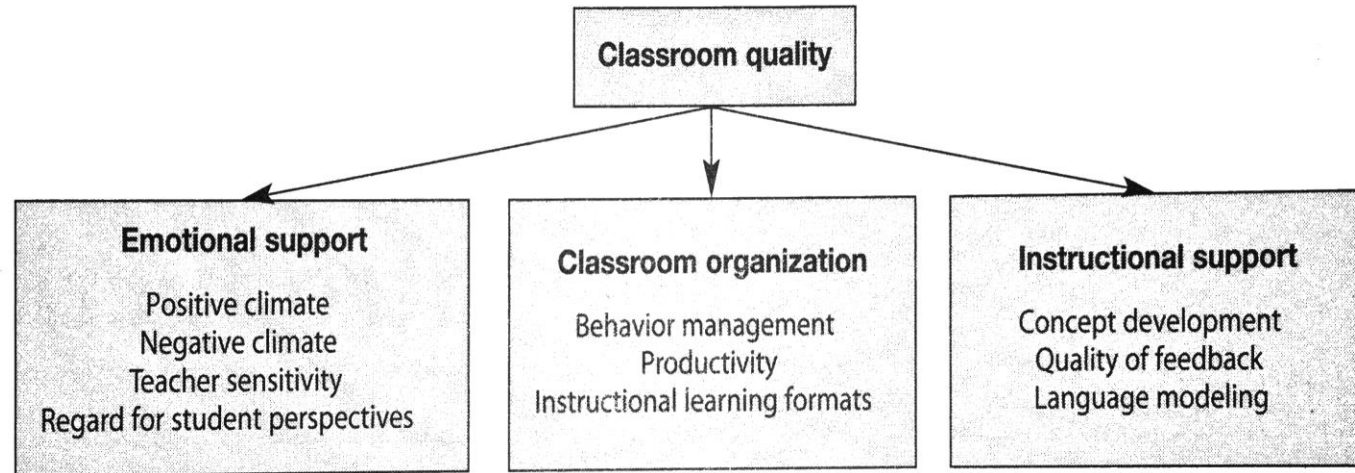
1. I really enjoy my present teaching job
2. I am certain I am making a difference in the lives of the children I teach
3. If I could start over, I would choose teaching again as my career

5 point-Likert scale

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree/disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

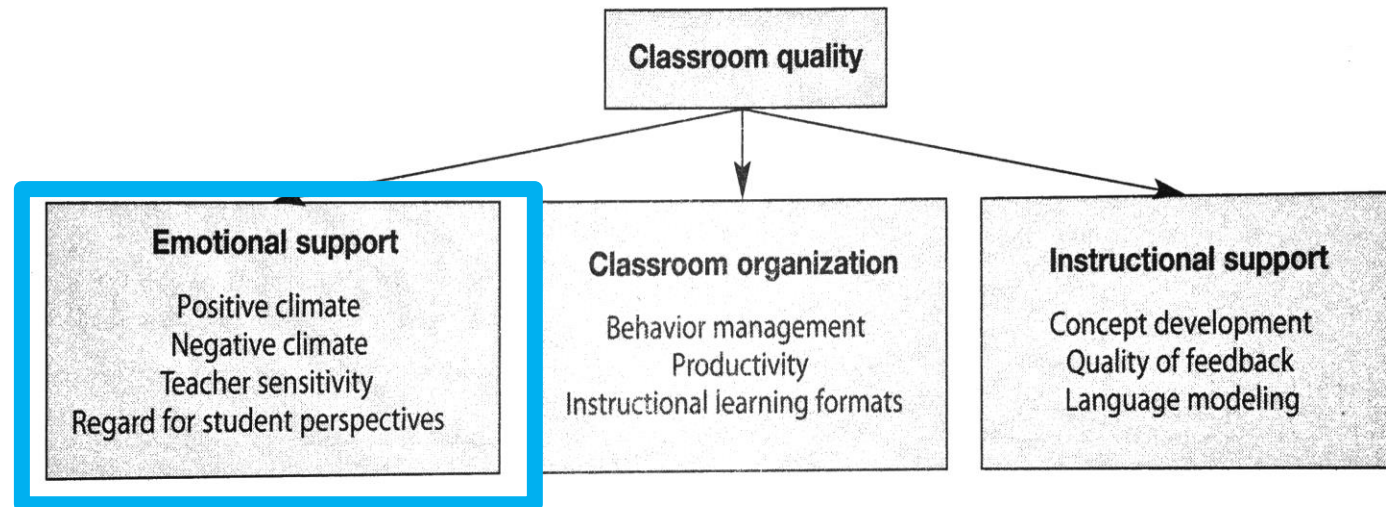
Classroom Quality

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)



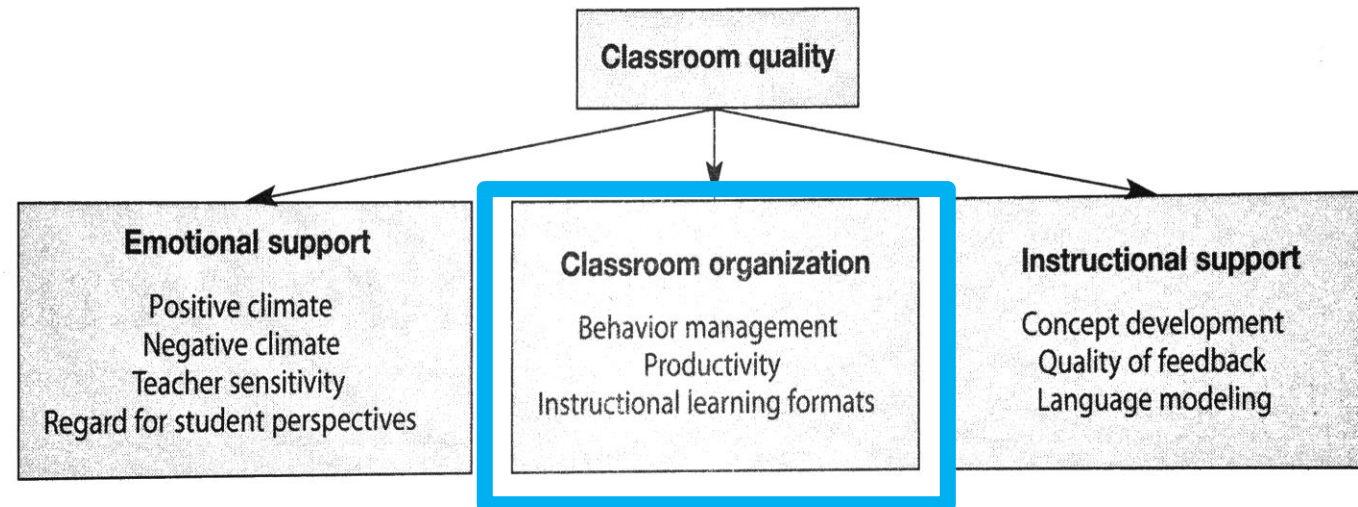
Classroom Quality

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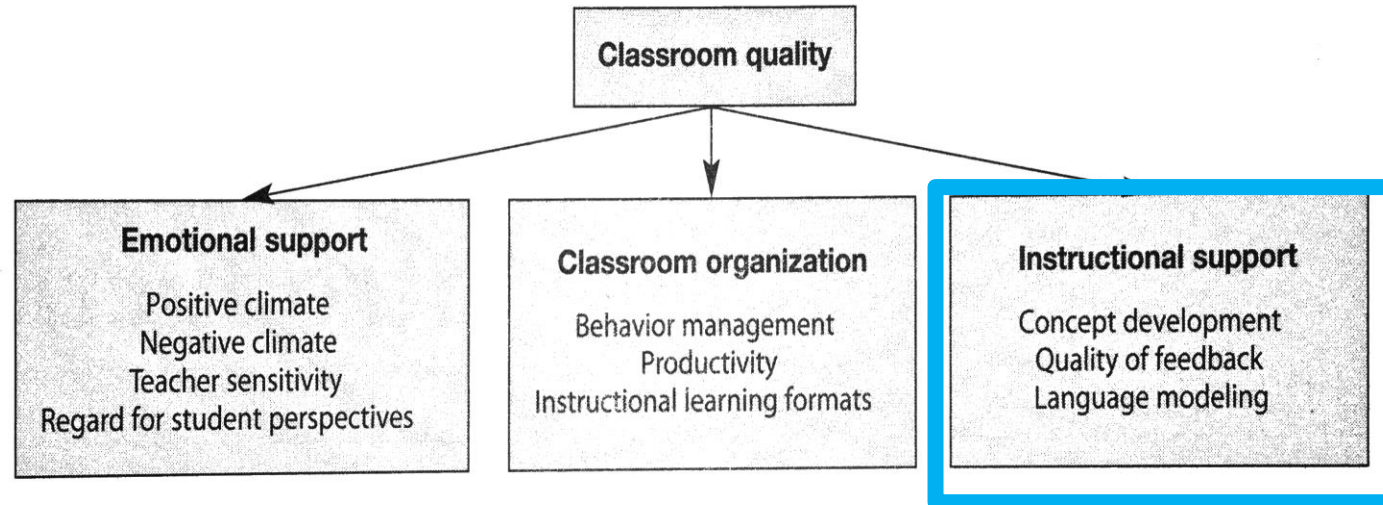
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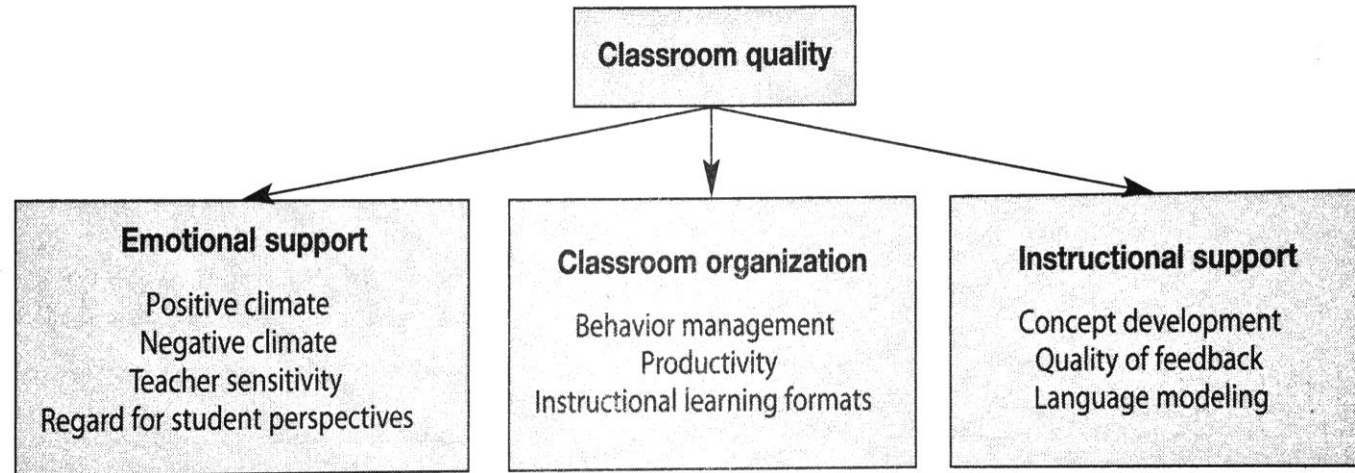
Classroom Quality

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Classroom Quality

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)



Results

Results

1. Directors' characteristics (education, professional development, years of experience) did not predict with classroom quality

2. Teachers' attitudes about job satisfaction have a significant relationship with classroom quality

Teacher Attitudes: Job Satisfaction	CLASS: Classroom Organization Score	CLASS: Emotional Support Score	CLASS: Instructional Support Score
I really enjoy teaching at my present job	0.82*	0.71	0.13**
I am certain I am making a difference in the lives of the children I teach	0.10*	0.82*	0.13**
If I could start over, I would choose teaching again as my career	0.20	0.01	0.11**

* Significant at the 0.05 level

** Significant at the 0.01 level

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Discussion

Limitations

Center directors can carry out different roles

- Administrative Leadership Role
 - Ex: Balancing budget, hiring staff
- Instructional Leadership Role
 - Ex: coaching teachers, facilitating professional development

Future Research

1. Examine how do leaders who have an instructional role relate to classroom quality
2. Explore factors that influence teachers' attitudes around job satisfaction

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Thank you!