USING AN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CAREGIVERS' JOB PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements of the degree of

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTORIS

in the subject of

PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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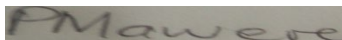
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DECLARATION

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I declare that the thesis, *Using an Emotional intelligence Framework to enhance Early Childhood caregivers' Job Performance* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

PMawere

Mrs. Phylis Mawere

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this thesis to

My Lord God, who is the Lord of my life, for the protection and strength to complete this research.

My late father, who laid the foundation and importance of education in my life,

My mother for instilling in me the importance of hard work and perseverance

and

my beloved children for their unwavering support and encouragement.

I thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the Almighty who gave me health, life and energy.

This research journey could not have been possible without numerous individuals' never-ending assistance and encouragement. First and foremost, my sincere gratitude is extended to my only PhD supervisor, Prof. Vanessa Scherman. Without her guidance, assistance and suggestions, this research would have never have come to fruition. I admit that I benefited immensely from her rich knowledge coupled with her intellect, experience, and expertise in research. Your encouraging comments on feedback were a source of motivation and drive to complete the thesis. Thank you, Prof. Scherman!

A word of great appreciation to all heads, teachers-in-charge and early childhood development teachers who welcomed my research. My heartfelt thanks are extended to all the informants who participated in this research though I will not mention them by name for confidentiality's sake. You are truly appreciated for the valuable time you offered for the interviews and observations during your practice.

I am also indebted to my beloved family for their love, encouragement and unwavering support throughout my PhD journey. To my loving husband, thank you for your patience, advice and endurance as I laboured through this programme, culminating in this piece of work. You are my source of inspiration.

My lovely children, sons-in-law and grandchildren, thank you for being there for me, your prayers, support and advice. I hope that my journey inspires you to continue with your education to higher levels.

My dear mother, for the patience endured during the period of my study, I honour and thank you.

Finally, a special thanks to my friends and colleagues for their assistance and moral support during times of stress.

ABSTRACT

The case study explored how Early Childhood Development caregivers utilise emotional intelligence framework competences to enhance their job performance. The caregivers have a central and significant role in education given that they are leaders, role models and parents. Their emotional intelligence affects their teaching procedures and supports their educator duties. Goleman's mixed and Mayer and Salovey's emotional intelligence ability models served as the framework for this study. The qualitative approach, embedded in interpretivism, was utilised to explore behaviour, perspectives, experiences and feelings of participants on their use of emotional intelligence framework competences. An explanatory case design was employed to explain the link between ECD caregivers' emotional intelligence and what transpired in the classroom environment. Nine schools with ECD centres from Gweru urban in Zimbabwe were purposefully sampled resulting in eighteen purposefully sampled female, qualified, experienced ECD caregivers aged between twenty- five and fifty- two years and nine female experienced teachers-in-charge aged from fifty years and above. Data generation methods included in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups and unstructured observations. A research dairy to record details of events and researcher's views was used. Thematic analysis was applied to analyse the data for patterns and relatedness of participants' lived experiences.

The findings reveal that emotional intelligence framework dimensions of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and the competencies within them, are useful to caregivers. Caregivers utilise competences to understand their own strengths and shortcomings, create environments conducive to learning, promote learner engagement, motivate and reduce absenteeism in children, develop competences in children, facilitate attachment between them and learners, allow effective teaching and learning enabling them to achieve their goals. The diverse emotional competencies were utilised to improve their teaching methods and in turn their job performance. Teachers-in-charge found several emotional intelligence framework competences to be useful in creating relations between caregivers and learners. However, high teacher pupil ratio affected utilisation of the competences.

The study recommends incorporating emotional intelligence topics in in-service and pre-service teacher training and development to equip caregivers with expertise and ability to utilise emotional competences for the success of their teaching profession. Emotional intelligence competencies need to be given due consideration during recruitment and selection of ECD

teachers. The 1: 20 policy on the teacher pupil ratio needs to be maintained and enforced to facilitate utilisation of emotion competences effectively to benefit children under caregivers' care.

KEY TERMS: early childhood caregiver; early childhood centre; early childhood development; emotion regulation; emotional competences; emotional intelligence, emotional perception, emotional intelligence framework, emotional labour, job performance

ACRONYMS

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
CCT	Connect Common Core of Teaching
CEM	Construction Engineering Management
CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire
EC	Emotional Competence
ECCRN	Early Child Care Research Network
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECI	The Emotional Competence Inventory
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EIC	Emotional Intelligence Competence
ELA	English – Language Arts
ER	Emotion Regulation
ESAP	Emotional Skills Assessment Process
ESQ	Emotional Skills Questionnaire
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IQ	Intelligent Quotient
JP	Job Performance
L.S.E	London School of Economics
MoESAC	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
NICHD	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PED	Provincial Education Director
REDI	Research – based, Developmentally Informed
RULER	Recognising, Understanding, Labelling, Expressing and Regulating emotions

SEC	Social Emotional Competence
SEI-YV	Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment for Youth
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SES	Socio Emotional Skills
SI	Statutory Instrument
TIC	Teachers in Charge
UNISA	University of South Africa
WEIT	Web- based emotional intelligence training
WILC	Work-Incorporated Learning Competencies

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

This study explored early childhood development (ECD) caregivers or teachers' use of the emotional intelligence (EI) framework to enhance their capacities in working with children. The teachers' role is central and significant in education because they are leaders, role models, as well as parents for learners in the school and, as such, their EI affects learning procedures and enables them to fulfil their duties appropriately as educators (Ergur, 2009; Wahyuddin, 2016).

Daily pressures of accountability, challenging student behaviour and overload of work make teaching a highly challenging career (Forcina, 2012; Kebbi, 2018). Teaching is stressful as high levels of pressure and emotional reactivity lead to burnout with adverse consequences (Darwin et al., 2018). As such, teaching is conceptualised as a high emotional job, because of situations such as the difficulties of teaching poorly motivated learners that may trigger feelings of anger on the teachers' part (Gregoriadis & Tsigilis, 2008; Yin et al. 2017).The teachers therefore need to engage in emotional labour, for example, to hide their emotions (Burić et al. 2017). The concept of emotional labour therefore relates to how a teacher should express relevant feelings, avoiding negative emotions to perform to the best of their ability (Kremenitzer & Miller, 2008; Yin et al. 2017) amid emotional situations. Good teachers, therefore, need high emotional intelligence (EI) to express the appropriate feelings (Ezzi, 2019; Molatodi, 2018; Ramana, 2013) through showing affected emotions (Burić et al. 2017). Teachers can operate at a high-performance level if they have developed good or high EI (Wahyuddin, 2016). A teacher applies EI skills to improve the capacity to manage anxiety and improve performance when stressed (Darwin et al. 2018). Early childhood educators also require high EI to be role models for learners in their care (Kremenitzer & Miller, 2008; Tominey et al. 2017; Ulutaş et al. 2021). Higher levels of EI are linked to positive consequences, for example, improved workplace performance and physical and intellectual health (Asrar-Ul-Haq et al. 2017; Ramana, 2013; Suganthi & Singaravelloo, 2021).

EI, an essential life skill that can support performance levels (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017), includes abilities, for example, inhibiting one's actions, relating well with others, controlling and venting emotions properly, which allow for the appropriate management of emotions in varied circumstances (Coleman, 2008; Segal et al. 2021). EI, also considered as interrelated skills and competencies (Bar-On, 2006; Chan, D.W. 2007; Mishar & Bangun, 2014) comprising socio-emotional skills (Boyatzis, 2008) refers to how persons distinguish, appraise and show emotions, utilise emotions to enable thinking, comprehend the experiences and consequences of emotions, and control own and others' emotions (Barsade et al., 2008; Mayer et al. 2001; Serrat, 2017). In addition, EI includes concepts of emotional expression and management, self-awareness and sympathy (Cain et al. 2006; Mishar & Bangun, 2014) as well as the capacity to reason with emotions and access and produce emotions to effectively regulate emotions to stimulate emotional growth (Mayer & Salovey, 2004). Therefore, identifying and managing emotions and becoming aware of how one's emotions can impact others' emotions is known as EI. Therefore, individuals have developed the ability to monitor emotions about themselves and others and judge how clear or sensible these emotions might be (Mayer & Salovey, 2007; Mayer et al. 2016). These capacities again dovetail with what is referred to as emotional competence (EC).

EC is viewed as a learned ability centred on EI that points to excellent performance at work (Goleman, 1998) and can be referred to as job skills. Within teaching and learning, EC relates to a set of skills allowing sufficient awareness of oneself and others, the ability to manage relationships with oneself and others, including the ability to manage emotions (Forcina, 2012). This means that EC connects with work performance and is relevant to most professional teaching standards (Dolev, 2012; Mishar, & Bangun, 2014; Yiyimo, 2009), being viewed as a level of achievement about a certain standard. However, there is a lack of research concerning early childhood teachers' emotional intelligence competencies (EIC) which is deemed necessary to enhance job performance.

EI competencies fall within certain frameworks or models. Frameworks such as Goleman (2001) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) have principles that include the capabilities to identify and control emotions within ourselves and others (Forcina, 2012). Specifically, Goleman's EI model recognises EC concerning job performance (Ugoani et al. 2015; Yiyimo, 2009). Thus, EI frameworks directly relate to employee performance, organisational and leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 1998), and teaching skills or competencies linked to EI (Mayer &

Salovey, 1997). As there is a paucity of research concerning the use of an EI framework to improve teachers' performance, it becomes imperative to ascertain the emotional intelligence of caregivers and how they exercise emotional intelligence framework to enhance their job performance when working with ECD children. EI frameworks which include domains of emotional intelligence with competences nested within them, have been observed to be appropriate for schools and that researchers found the competencies relevant to teaching standards (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Dolev, 2012; Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021). Hence the main focus would be on the competencies within the frameworks and how they are utilised to facilitate job performance.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Emotional intelligence is noted as consisting of adaptive emotional functioning involving inter-related competencies or branches relating to the perception of emotion, emotion understanding, using emotion to enable thinking and management of emotions in oneself and others (Brackett et al. 2011; Malouff et al. 2013). These branches and EC concerning EI need elaboration.

The first branch, the perception of emotion, comprises the capacity to recognise and discriminate emotions in oneself and others (Brackett et al. 2011). There are two features linked to young children's emotional working: emotion identification and disposition. Perception of emotion can also be referred to emotion identification which is the ability to recognise emotions in voices and faces, including behaviour (Köppe et al. 2019). Accurate emotion recognition forms the foundation of emotional knowledge, which includes conceptualising expressive signals, labels and purposes of emotions (Izard et al. 2008). Emotion knowledge describes the capability to understand emotion in facial expressions, behavioural signs and social situations (Trentacosta & Fine, 2010; Brackett et al. 2022). Most social interactions involve awareness of emotional knowledge or emotional understanding (Trentacosta & Fine, 2010). Emotional understanding (EU), crucial for children's social adjustment (Martins et al. 2014), includes recognising and conceptualising emotions portrayed in facial expressions and non-verbal signals. Emotion knowledge, therefore, plays an essential role in social interaction. The ability to accurately recognise the emotions assists individuals in noticing another person's emotional disposition and relying on the expressions to react and make inferences cautiously in difficult social circumstances (Grossmann & Johnson, 2007; Cote, 2014). Thus, communication between educators and learners is expedited by the perception of emotional information.

Challenges in recognising emotions in young children can lead to extensive and long-lasting discrepancies in social functioning (Batty & Taylor, 2006; Mancini, 2018), which means that emotion recognition becomes a key prerequisite for caregivers who work with young children. Facial expressions, crucial for communicating emotions at all stages of development, enables children to share emotions with their relations and peers throughout social interactions (Grossard et al. 2018). However, they may be especially significant early in life when children are verbally less able to express themselves. Children can communicate through emotional expression in a learning environment, calling upon caregivers or peers to respond appropriately. It becomes relevant for caregivers to render emotional intelligence and recognise children's emotions. Educators can use their EI to acknowledge the feelings experienced by children, for example, by recognising emotion cues in children (Tominey et al. 2017) as some experience emotional struggles and need caregivers to attend to their individual needs (Kralj, 2018). People who are equipped to identify other emotions are more successful in their work. Educators are therefore likely to be successful in their work if they can identify the emotions of others, including learners. The role of educators' EI is thus vital as it comprises many verbal and non-verbal abilities that allow the educator to articulate, recognise, understand and assess his/her own and learners' emotions (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020).

The second branch of EI involves using emotion to assist thinking (Brackett et al. 2011), specifically, directing attention to important information concerning the environment or other individuals. Emotional facilitation of thinking uses emotion to assist thinking plus action (Salovey et al. 2002). Other skills within this aspect involve producing lively emotions to aid judgement and to foster different thinking styles. It refers to exploiting emotions to assist cognitive activities. Teachers can induce an emotional state in their learners which then could raise imaginative and original thinking, for example, by playing music in the classroom to create a favourable emotional state to develop imaginative tasks such as executing art activities (Extremera & Fernandez-Berrocal, 2005; Chao-Fernández et al. 2020).

The next branch, which is understanding emotions, encompasses essential skills of labelling emotions with exact language and distinguishing similarities and variances between labels of emotion and emotions themselves (Brackett et al. 2011). Emotional understanding involves the capacity for determining emotions and understanding complicated feelings (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). Interpreting the meanings and origins of emotions represents necessary emotional understanding skills and other necessary skills. This raises questions about the extent

of emotional intelligence skills that caregivers need to possess to enable them to recognise and interpret the meanings of children's emotions to appropriately respond to their needs. Therefore, this study aimed to establish EI skills caregivers' ability to interpret meanings of children's emotions.

Emotion regulation, another branch of EI, involves the skill to avoid, reduce, improve or change an emotional reaction in oneself and others (Brackett et al. 2011). Watching and reflecting on one's own and others' feelings become critical in this regard. EI is essential for teacher effectiveness (Dolev & Leshem, 2016) and in the ECD environment, both caregivers and children require emotional intelligence. Caregivers demonstrate emotional intelligence if they manage to modify emotional responses in themselves and children. Since schooling is an emotional process and emotions have an effect on learning, teachers and learners at times should employ emotion management approaches in the classroom (Fried, 2011; Fried et al. 2015; Rodrigo-Ruiz, 2016; Mustafina et al. 2017). Negative feelings, comprising anger and frustration, can hinder the quality of teaching (Garner, 2010; Fried et al. 2015; Hagenauer et al. 2015). This means that when teachers experience emotion-laden situations in the classroom, they need to consciously regulate their emotions (Rodrigo-Ruiz, 2016; Kralj, 2018), especially negative ones, as this will help them stay focused and concentrated on their teaching (Kralj, 2018).

Young children's emotional competence (EC), encompassing an expression of emotions, knowledge of self and other's emotions and regulation of their own and other's emotional expressiveness, contributes to their social and pre-academic adjustment concurrently and across time (Housman, 2017; Strobbe, 2017; Alzahrani et al. 2019). Improper and intense emotional reactions to stimuli could hinder good relationships within the learning environment. Children should therefore be taught to engage in emotion regulation when confronted with extreme emotional situations. Managing emotions is a prerequisite for children's readiness for learning. Indeed, kindergarten educators rate socio-emotional abilities as more significant to school achievement than grasping a pencil or reading (Boyd et al., 2005; Strobbe, 2017), preferring children to have the readiness to learn so that they can collaborate, follow instructions, exhibit self-control and be attentive. Developing EI can allow learners to recognise and handle emotions resulting in effective emotional output (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017). Social-emotional skills provide a foundation for learning and well-being in early childhood and beyond (Aspden et al. 2017). Children utilise their socio-emotional abilities in

daily interactions and activities in early learning environments permitting them to participate effectively (Aspden et al. 2017). Teachers with high socio-emotional competencies offer a good role model for learners in identifying the right emotional skills to use and in particular situations (Tom, 2012). For example, teachers are seen as role models of emotion regulation (Kralj, 2018) if they can regulate their emotions (Tom, 2012). The pre-school years denote a sensitive period for developing a firm foundation for accurate perception and emotions labelling of self and others. It is incumbent for pre-school teachers to build emotional intelligence in children during these sensitive periods. It is anticipated that developed emotional competence can enable teachers to assist learners' socio-emotional development in readiness for the learning process (Wahyuddin, 2016; Gill & Sankular, 2017).

EI is well researched, documented and addressed in colleges and universities in most developed and developing countries (Brackett et al. 2011; Szekely, 2012; Gross, 2015; Spano-Szekely et al. 2016). However, there remains a lack of research regarding the use of emotional intelligence competence to improve teachers' performance. It becomes imperative to ascertain the emotional intelligence skills educators in ECD settings possess and how they exercise these to enhance their job performance when working with ECD children.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Teaching is conceptualised as a high emotional job since it involves interactions with various children (Dhanpat, 2016; Gregoriadis & Tsigilis, 2008; Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). Lack of clarity on a caregiver's expectations and their misinterpretations by children can lead one to perceive classroom interactions as confrontational, stimulating and aggressive responses. However, it has been noted that emotionally challenging situations such as teaching difficult children and maintaining discipline in classroom settings are stressors that teachers frequently experience (Lindqvist, 2019; Amstad, & Müller, 2020). EI fosters the capacities of teachers to utilise approaches of coping with managing stress or emotions aroused by handling problem behaviour, teaching difficult children, having difficulties relating to children and maintaining discipline in a classroom setting (Bibi et al. 2015; Molatodi, 2018; Banga, 2019; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Thus, EI fosters the capabilities of teachers in using proactive coping approaches when they experience stress (Galler, 2015) and shields them from being at risk of burnout.

Teachers' emotional intelligence, utilised in their diverse roles (Ramana, 2013), is essential for optimal teaching performance and to improve learning (Mulyasa, 2006; Abiodullah et al. 2020) Sutton and Wheatly (2003) have indicated that EC of teachers is essential in general for their well-being and for efficiency and quality in performing the teaching and learning processes in the classroom. EI-developed educators have high competency in creating plans to face the stressful situations in the classroom environment and continue pursuing their goals resulting in better job performance. Ramana (2013) espouses that an EI teacher can utilise emotional intelligence to assist her/him to stay composed in the classroom particularly when circumstances arouse emotions.

Teachers have the responsibility of implementing teaching programmes at school and their performance is central to achieving the school goals (Wahyuddin, 2016). Teacher performance thus needs to incorporate the emotional intelligence especially as teaching is viewed as a stressful profession (Darwin et al. 2018). Since emotions are abundant in an early childhood classroom, children without emotional skills cannot concentrate, learn effectively and have difficulties adhering to teachers' directions and getting along with others, leading to off-task behaviour (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004; McClelland et al. 2017) which means that emotionally charged, problematic behaviour displayed by students may be challenging to manage (Schonert-Reichl, 2019). As a result, teachers require high EI to handle on-the-job stressors and to serve as positive role models for the learners in their care (Kremenitzer & Miller, 2008).

Research has established that EI is associated with performance in the workplace (Yiyimo 2009; Saberi, 2012; Mohamad & Jais, 2016) with emotionally intelligent teachers' capability to perceive and control their feelings assisting in increasing workplace participation (Denham et al. 2010; Fiorilli et al., 2019) and is linked more to job performance than other less emotionally laden jobs (Galler, 2015). However, the link between emotional intelligence and job performance becomes unclear if teachers lack understanding and preparation in facing emotional demands in teaching. It is imperative to ascertain teachers' understanding of emotional intelligence as it is likely to support their job performance.

There exists a wealth of research on EI in schools. The majority of these centre on the association between leaders, teachers, EI and schools and student performance (Mohzan et al. 2013; Gablinske, 2014; Rust, 2014; Harney, 2015; Cumberlander, 2017; Ezzi, 2019). Some

studies suggest a positive relationship between teacher EI and student academic performance (Mohzan et al. 2013; Rust, 2014; Ezzi, 2019). However, few studies have explored how EI competencies in the emotional intelligence framework are utilised to excel in ECD teacher performance. Therefore, more research in this area is required to firmly establish how teachers utilise competencies in the emotional intelligence framework to enhance their job performance. Thus, it becomes essential to explore the use of EI by ECD caregivers to determine whether this would enhance their job performance when executing during the diverse roles. The need to ascertain the competencies in an EI framework that teachers utilise to be successful in their teaching becomes paramount (Ergur, 2009; Gill & Sankulkar, 2017). Therefore, the competencies within Goleman's EI framework, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, were considered (Molatodi, 2018).

It became important in this study to determine the use of emotional competencies in some aspects of the teaching profession, such as the creation of student-caregiver relationships and engagement of students (Ergur, 2009, Welmilla, 2020), to improve teachers' performance. Presently, very little research on EI and education in Zimbabwe exists. A few studies have been conducted on EI and the academic achievement of students (Dambudzo, 2014; Rupande, 2015). From literature, it has been noted that EI is critical in student learning and that it accounts for 80% success for an individual's learning (Rupande, 2015). Rupande (2015) submits that high IQ complements EI and makes academic achievement a reality. In another study, emotional self-concept was found to be considerably and positively connected to the academic attainment of adolescent students (Dambudzo, 2014). The research established that self-concept had a role to play in the academic attainment of the adolescent students in Zimbabwe. These studies focused on EI and high school students' academic achievement. To date, it would appear that no single study has investigated EI and how it is utilised to improve teacher performance in Zimbabwean ECD classes. Therefore, this study sought to explore how the EI framework is utilised to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance.

1.4   RATIONALE

A teacher utilises EI competencies to develop the capacity to control anxiety and enhance performance under pressure (Darwin et al. 2018). These skills, which can be referred to as job skills or emotional competencies, are viewed as learned abilities centred on EI leading to excellent performance at work (Goleman, 1998). The skills are nested within clustered

constructs in EI models, for example, Goleman's EI model. Goleman (2001) initiated a framework of EI reflecting on how individuals' potential for understanding constructs of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management transforms into job achievement. Within the aforementioned terms of emotional intelligence, competencies are nested (Ugoani et al. 2015). Emotional intelligence frameworks directly relate to employee performance, organisational and leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 2001), and the teaching skills or abilities are linked to EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The emotion skills are required by educators for their efficacy in teaching and learning practices (Sutton & Wheatly, 2003; Yoo & Carter, 2017; Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021). It is, therefore, essential to explore the emotional competencies of teachers in early childhood development.

Research has been carried out on EI (Morton, 2014) in the area of education (Ashworth, 2013; Rust, 2014), specifically exploring the relationship between teachers, leaders of schools and performance of schools. For example, in one study, the school's performance was rated against the principal's emotional intelligence as a leader (Ashworth, 2013). It was established that emotional intelligence was not statistically significantly related to school's performance. It was also found that teachers needed support to enhance their understanding of EI to affect school climate positively (Morton, 2014).

Furthermore, to date, research studies that explore teacher EI concentrate mainly on the relationship between teacher EI and student achievement or teacher outcomes. Several researchers have investigated the relationship between teachers' EI and students' learning (Fatum, 2008; Morton, 2014; Rust, 2014; Galler, 2015; Danielle, 2016; Wahyuddin, 2016). For example, varying fifth-grade teachers' emotional intelligence showed measurable differences in student achievement scores (Fatum, 2008). Emotionally intelligence-measured competencies of teachers did not reveal a strong significant relationship with the fifth-grade student achievement tests. Danielle (2016) explored the association between teacher EI and the academic progress of elementary school learners. The investigation established a weak relationship between the two variables as it was not statistically significant. In contrast, research focusing specifically on the use of an emotional intelligence framework is minimal and should be explored in terms of early childhood centres specifically (Galler, 2015; Morton, 2014,).

It should also be noted that outstanding high school teachers were observed to monitor children's emotions by utilising them to create a positive classroom climate (Galler, 2015). Galler's (2015) study revealed that these exceptional teachers showed sympathy and engaged in self-regulating techniques to create a favourable classroom climate, unlike typical teachers who did not do likewise. Morton (2014) explored the impact of emotional intelligence on school climate. The study established that teachers needed support to enhance their understanding and application of EI to create such a positive school climate. The studies reveal that emotional intelligence can achieve a positive classroom and school climate, respectively. Whilst these studies focused on the application of EI to create positive environments, the current study sought to address the use of an emotional intelligence framework to enhance the performance of ECD teachers.

Some studies have investigated individual competencies and teaching in the classroom (Fried, 2011; Forcina, 2012; Fried et al. 2015; Molatodi, 2018; Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). Fried (2011) carried out an investigation concerning emotion management in the classroom and revealed that teachers and students need to implement emotion management strategies in the classroom. The way teachers' EI influences conflict management was also examined, and indications were that teachers with emotional intelligence employed various strategies for conflict management in a classroom (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020).

Individual clusters within Goleman's emotional framework have been found to contribute to tutor effectiveness within online contexts at the university level (Youde, 2016). The effectiveness has been noted from the perception of learners with regards to the quality of tutoring that they experienced. Therefore, a teacher applies emotional intelligence skills in a framework that can improve the ability to manage anxiety and improve performance under pressure (Darwin et al. 2018). There is limited research, however, on the utilisation of an emotional intelligence framework by early childhood educators to enhance their performance, which was this study's focus.

Some teachers have been found to have emotional abilities such as communication, adaptability, motivation and self-management comparably as females and males (Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021. Another comparison of the emotional abilities revealed was that vocational school teachers tended to use the competencies better than grammar school teachers as they would take into account learners with disabilities and having parent-like relationships with

learners. Vocational and grammar schools comprise learners participating in education and training for future work (Alla-Mensah et al. 2021) and high school learners respectively (Andrews et al. 2016). In Zimbabwe, where the phenomenon of emotional competence has rarely been explored in young children's classrooms, there is need to investigate their use to facilitate teaching performance by ECD caregivers, without however considering comparative aspects.

Emotions are abundant in an early childhood classroom as the children learn in an environment in collaboration with teachers and peers (Denham, 2005; Denham et al. 2011, Ulutaş et al., 2021). In an ECD setting, emotions are evident, but cooperation exists when teachers and learners respond to one another, being directed by their emotional state. This current study used early childhood caregivers, teachers working with young children from pre-kindergarten to grade three (Kremenitzer & Miller, 2008; Edward, 2017; Housman, 2017). Teachers of pre-kindergarten up to Grade three classes have supervisors who are teachers-in-charge (TICs). The TICs ought to take extra care regarding the teachers as monitoring or criticising teachers could lead to a negative effect, which contributes to the development of burnout (Ramana, 2013; Donna, 2016). As administrators, TICs have a bearing on teachers' capacities to manage the demands and ensure that they are less likely to break down from reduced personal achievement (Ramana, 2013). Teachers' relationships with their supervisors can either lead to a positive or negative effect and teacher who experience a positive effect at work, tend to have a high level of job satisfaction particularly if they have supervisors who take great care of them.

Taking the above discussion into account, it was necessary to investigate the use of emotional intelligence competencies in an ECD environment by ECD caregivers. As noted above, a relationship between emotional intelligence competencies and student performance has been well documented in primary schools, high schools and even university classrooms including merged environments, yet consideration of the relationship between job performance of ECD teachers and emotional intelligence competencies in their particular learning environments remains unclear. Research has also explored the relationship between leaders of schools, performance of school organisations and EI. Use of individual competencies instead of competencies in a framework by some studies, has also been shown. Additionally, several studies have focused on how a certain calibre of teachers used emotional competencies for example, comparison of typical and outstanding teachers with most studies employing quantitative rather than qualitative approaches. It is against this background that the study

found it necessary to qualitatively explore emotional competencies in an intelligence framework and their utilisation by ECD teachers in their teaching and learning environments. Specifically, it endeavoured to investigate the relevance of emotional competencies in facilitating the ECD caregivers' job performance. The study therefore had to concentrate on ECD caregivers' job performance, encompassing their quality of instruction, desirable skills and necessary task performances leading to teacher effectiveness and how these performances could be facilitated by emotional intelligence competencies and views of TICs in relation to the importance of EIC they use for improved job performance.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of this study was as follows: *How is an intelligence framework used to enhance job performance for early childhood development caregivers?*

The main research question necessitated the formulation of sub-questions:

1. Which emotional competencies do early childhood caregivers use to facilitate their work performance?
2. How do caregivers utilise the emotional intelligence framework competencies to improve their job performance?
3. How do teachers-in-charge perceive the role of the emotional intelligence framework in enhancing ECD caregivers' job performance?

1.6   AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to establish how an emotional intelligence framework enhances ECD caregivers' job performance. From this central aim, several research objectives were identified:

1. To establish emotional competencies in an intelligence framework which caregivers use to facilitate their work performance.
2. To explore how emotional intelligence framework competencies are utilised to enhance caregivers job performance.
3. To investigate how teachers-in-charge perceive the use of the emotional intelligence framework to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance

1.7   THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilised a qualitative approach, located in the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist research methods comprise focus groups, interviews, and research diaries, particularly methods that permit as many variables to be documented as possible (Vine, 2009; O'Leary, 2017). A detailed discussion on the interpretivist paradigm and the characteristics are located in Chapter 3 section 3.3.

Qualitative research as a form of social inquiry focusing on the 'how' individuals interpret emotional expressions and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live, was employed (Mohajan, 2018). The study utilised a qualitative approach as a form of social inquiry to investigate participants' behaviour, perceptions, practices and feelings on emotional competencies. Qualitative research emphasises exploring variables in natural settings in which they are found (Ahmed et al. 2011; Aspers & Corte, 2019). Detailed information concerning qualitative research is presented in Chapter 3 section 3.4.

Caregivers' emotional intelligence and work performance in a natural learning environment were examined in this research. The explanatory case design allowed for thorough examination of data to explain the phenomenon of EI (Kabir, 2016). The case was also explanatory as it sought to answer research questions and explaining links which did not involve experimentation (Yin, 2014). The explained case was the issue concerning utilisation of emotional intelligence framework by ECD caregivers. Case study information is presented in Chapter 3 section 3.5.

The sample consisted of 18 purposefully selected ECD caregivers with their learners and nine teachers-in-charge (TICs) from nine centres. Purposeful sampling was deemed appropriate as it permits researchers to deliberately select participants experienced with the central phenomenon or the crucial concept being explored (Creswell, 2007; Palinkas et al. 2015). The case study sample was relatively small and intended to produce meaningful findings (Shuttleworth & Wilson, 2008; Johnson et al. 2020). Focus group interviews, in-depth interviews and observations were utilised to collect data since these are consistent with the interpretive paradigm (O'Leary, 2017; Vine, 2009). During the process of collecting data, events that occurred during observations, and interviews were recorded in a diary which is an important tool that permitted reflexivity (Valéau & Gardody 2016). Reflections, decisions and feelings that emanated from the procedures were recorded and these informed methodological

decisions related to the study. Chapter three, section 3.6.1 provides a detailed description and justification of the sampling strategy and the sample whilst section 3.6.3.4 proffers information concerning the research diary, section 3.6.3 focuses on data collection instruments, section 3.7, on data collection procedures, section 3.8 data analysis, section 3.9, on methodological norms and section 3.10 on ethical considerations.

After data collection and transcription, the data were analysed using a thematic content analysis framework to explore identify patterns in the data (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2016). In this case, the researcher employed inductive analysis, which is consistent with qualitative data analysis (Bunard et al. 2008: Azungah, 2018). A detailed explanation of inductive analysis is presented in Chapter 3 section 3. The thematic analysis enabled the generation of themes or findings and resulted in significant findings to document emotional competencies used in the learning environment (Ashworth, 2014).

1.8 METHODOLOGICAL NORMS

To establish trustworthiness, the study employed triangulation of methods, selection of relevant participants, verbatim transcriptions and member checking, (Birt et al. 2016). Triangulation of methods also assisted in ensuring credibility and dependability as well as member checking of final themes with participants (Yiyimo, 2009; Johnson et al., 2020). To ensure inter-subjectivity of the data, checking whether interpretation was not based on the researcher's views but rather grounded in the data itself was necessary (Korstjensa & Moserb, 2018). Hence an audit trail was developed to ensure confirmability of findings. Transparency of the research path was enabled through the provision of the research diary with a complete set of research notes indicating important decisions made about the research process including reflective thoughts, findings emergence and the materials adopted for the research (Korstjensa & Moserb, 2018). An auditor who had to execute the exercise of studying transparency of the research path was not part of the team but an individual knowledgeable in grounded theory (Carcary, 2009; de Kleijn, & Van Leeuwen, 2018). The audit trail was developed through providing the supervisor with an account of the study's decisions and actions during the course of the research.

The audit was availed to members of the research team (Korstjensa & Moserb, 2018). Chapter 3 section 3.8 gives a detailed discussion of how trustworthiness was established throughout the research. To protect the right of the participants, the study has an obligation to observe ethical

considerations such as the right of privacy, the issue of informed consent, the issue deception and right to participate (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 2009).

1.9   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were observed by informing participants on the purpose and procedure of the research, preserving their anonymity, and using pseudonyms in the writing of the final report (Driscoll, 2011; Kawulich, 2005; Mukungu, 2017). See Chapter 3 section 3.9 for an in-depth description.

1.10   DELIMITATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This study was limited to early childhood caregivers, teachers-in-charge and the children in ECD centres at primary schools. Due to the nature of purposeful sampling employed, only ECD caregivers with considerable experience in working with the 4–5-year-olds were included in the study. The 4–5-year-olds who formed a cohort of pre-scholars being prepared for formal learning, were included as they are learners who are constantly exposed to potentially arousing stimuli in a classroom environment. It was assumed therefore that the caregivers who participated in the study would provide the needed information on the use of emotion competencies due to their experience of working with ECD children. The study was limited to the competences within EI frameworks developed by Goleman (2001) and Salovey and Mayer (1997) and their contribution to teacher performance as they are relevant to the teaching profession. It was expected that caregivers who participated in focus group interviews would be truthful in their discussion of using emotional intelligence competences in enhancing their job performance. It was also assumed that the use of observations would enable identification of competences caregivers use to enhance their job performance. As the sample size was relatively small with 18 caregivers purposively sampled from nine ECD centres, the findings of the study could therefore not be generalised to the whole population.

1.11   ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organised into five chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the research problem and its context. The concept of emotional intelligence has been described in terms of its components. The chapter   discusses the rationale of carrying out the study through several studies. Research questions and objectives guiding

the study, background of the study and problem statement are presented. Furthermore, the chapter presents delimitations, limitations, assumptions and organisation of the thesis. Finally a conclusion is drawn from the issues the chapter presents.

Chapter 2 presents a detailed review of the relevant literature concerning emotional intelligence and teacher behaviours or performances. The chapter provides an analysis of the concept of emotional intelligence and its relationship with emotional intelligence competencies. The chapter also outlines competencies expected of ECD learners and their caregivers. In addition, the chapter presents the conceptual framework set to guide the research study. The conceptual framework comprises the constructs from Goleman's mixed model and the ability model by Mayer and Salovey. The chapter discusses the use of EIC in workplaces by reviewing previous research focusing on the relationship concerning emotional intelligence and/or competencies and various workers in varied organisations, including schools. The literature identifies the need to explore the use of competencies by ECD caregivers to enhance their work performance. Literature on the use of EC is used in Chapter 4 and invoked in the discussion in Chapter 5, examining the role of emotional intelligence on teacher behaviours. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the workers' emotional intelligence competencies through reviewing previous research.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology that guided this study and includes a discussion on the paradigm that underpinned the study along with philosophical orientation. The discussion offers a justification for the use of the qualitative methodology that guided and underpinned the interpretivist paradigm and the epistemology and ontological views used in this study. The chapter also justifies the case study design in relation to the research. The chapter further explains the sampling strategies, the selected participants, the data collection methods, instruments and procedures as well as the analysis in detail. The research questions presented in the first chapter are outlined in Chapter three, linking them with data collection and analysis methods. Finally, the chapter describes methodological norms, which encompass trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, reflexivity and then research ethics.

Chapter 4 discusses the analysis of data collected from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The chapter examines the emotional intelligence caregivers utilise to enhance their performance when carrying out their roles. In addition, Chapter 4

analyses the caregivers and their supervisors' perceptions of how emotional intelligence competencies are used to enhance the caregivers' job performance. Chapter four presents the results, which are expounded in the Chapter 5 discussion.

Chapter 5 summarises the research methodology and discusses the study's findings and results in light of the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 and which directed the study. The discussion links the findings emerging from the current empirical research with previous research findings discussed in Chapter 2. The chapter then proposes recommendations for policy and practice concerning some findings of the research. It further offers recommendations for future research in relation to identified limitations and qualitative research methodology.

1.12   CONCLUSION

This study is based on the premise that teaching is an emotional endeavour as educators experience a varied range of negative and positive emotions when instructing and interacting with children. Some children are likely to display poor emotional skills resulting in problematic behaviour affecting their attention in class. Therefore, this research was necessary to ascertain how teachers employ emotional intelligence competencies to perceive and regulate their own emotions when confronted with such situations. The research also needed to establish competencies that teachers utilise to assist children with poor emotional skills to increase workplace engagement. This chapter highlighted those background issues, including the motivating factors for conducting the study. Furthermore, the chapter presented the research questions and objectives that guided the research and the statement of the problem and significance of the study. The next chapter reviews literature related to the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the chapter, which focuses on emotional intelligence theoretical aspects nested in an Emotional Intelligence (EI) framework, is to review literature pertinent to this study. The related literature focuses on employees, that is, early childhood development teachers' use of emotional intelligence competencies such as empathy, emotion recognition, self-assessment, influence, self-regulation and conflict management competencies, the competencies they use and how they utilise these to improve their job performance. The literature reveals individuals' perceptions concerning the importance of the above-mentioned competencies in enhancing job performance. It also demonstrates the importance of emotion-related skills in enhancing the performance of early childhood development teachers. The competencies are also referred to as components nested within clustered constructs in EI frameworks or models such as Goleman's mixed (2001) and Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability models. There are multiple theoretical frameworks meant for conceptualising the emotional intelligence construct (Kalivoda, 2018) and describing people's emotional intelligence (Rust, 2014). The models have domains, and within each domain, competencies can be identified (Ott, n.d.; Youde, 2016).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) define emotional intelligence as the capacity involving perceiving, expressing, understanding, using emotions and managing emotions to foster personal growth (Mayer et al. 2000; 2016). Emotional intelligence is viewed as the ability, capacity, skill or self-perceived capacity to recognise, assess and control one's emotions, those of others and groups (Serrat, 2017). Mayer et al. (2000) view emotional intelligence as encompassing sets of emotional skills that enhance interpersonal competencies essential for employee performance development (Gunu & Oladepo, 2014; Mayer et al. 2000). This definition also highlights the association between emotional intelligence and successful job performance. As explained in Chapter 1, teaching is considered a highly emotional job. (Galler, 2015). Further to this, emotional intelligence can be viewed as that ability to recognise one's own and others' feelings, motivating and managing emotions in ourselves and our relationships (Goleman, 1998).

Emotional intelligence is also conceptualised as managing feelings, enabling appropriate and effective expression, resulting in people cooperating efficiently to achieve their goals (Goleman, 1998). Working together would mean that individuals are in a partnership or collaborating well, creating a good working relationship. Such a relationship can exist between learners and teachers (Rust, 2014) and it has been noted that teachers with emotional intelligence can establish a good working relationship with their children (Galler, 2015). Therefore, there was a need to ascertain whether ECD caregivers possess emotional intelligence competencies and how caregivers utilise these to enhance their job performance.

ECD is a multi-sectoral programme which requires full cooperation among key sectors for providing quality services to young children (Mugweni, 2017). ECD is fast becoming a global imperative since it is vital for all children (Nyarambi & Ntuli, 2020) and it is the propitious moment to form lifelong needed skills and qualities so as to prosper in the presence and the future too (Paavola, 2017). ECD education is seen to contribute immensely to the nurturing of young children's total development and therefore seen as a critical period requiring proper training for those who provide early education (Nyarambi & Ntuli, 2020). However, teachers who experience the problem of stress are likely to convey a negative action to school and display negative behaviour within the ECD classroom (Naqvi et al. 2016). ECD professionals have an impact on children's lives and their development, hence the need to have the behaviours that are likely to make a difference in children's lives (Paavola, 2017). It has been observed that emotional intelligence affects a person's individual and professional success in life (Paavola, 2017). Early childhood emotional competences have been observed to be relevant to service providers in early care because of its link with social and pre academic success (Denham et al. 2022). Emotional competences denote personal, social skills and learned abilities grounded on emotional intelligence which results outstanding performance at work (Ugoani et al. 2015). Early childhood teachers need to have high emotional intelligence to cope with the daily challenges, since the profession is quite demanding, posing several expectations (Paavola, 2017). Goleman and Boyatzis (2017) found out that a well-balanced range of specific EI competencies prepares a teacher for these kinds of threatening challenges. The teachers' emotional competencies will assist them in managing the high levels of stress they encounter on a daily basis (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). The study therefore had to investigate the competences caregivers utilise to cope with the demands and pressures of work in order to deliver quality early education to the young.

Limited research exists on how early childhood teachers promote children's emotional competencies, yet the need to teach them competencies such as self-awareness, anger management, empathy, self-control and relationship management for them to be successful in life, is essential (Denham et al. 2012; Sprung et al. 2015; Paavola, 2017). Therefore, research needs to explore how teachers influence the development of children's emotional competencies. In presenting the issues in literature germane to this study, the chapter is divided into five sections. The first gives the background to early childhood development in Zimbabwe (2.2), thereafter there is a section on understanding emotional intelligence (2.3). Children's emotional competencies and ECD caregiver's emotional competencies is discussed in 2.4 and in 2.5, the role of an ECD caregiver and emotional intelligence is described. The final section, 2.6, presents the conceptual framework guiding the study.

2.2   BACKGROUND TO EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Early childhood development (ECD) focuses on zero to eight-year olds' educational development (Deiner, 2010; Mugweni, 2017). ECD is pivotal since the zero to eight age range is a sensitive period for the development of children. Emphasis is on ECD as total development for the child, including numeracy, literacy and oral expression skills (Dakwa & Mugweni, 2013; Woodhead, 2014; Who et al. 2018). The 1994 Salamanca Statement points out that early childhood development programmes enhance a child's total development and school preparedness. The education sector in Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture (MoESAC) recognise and support that ECD education can contribute immensely to the nature of young children in their physical, social, emotional, intellectual, cultural and spiritual domains (Nhaka Foundation, 2013). In Zimbabwe policies have been instituted to formalize ECD programmes under the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture (MoESAC) to increase access and equity to ECD provisions and enhance quality education (Nyarambi &Ntuli, 2020). In 2005, ECD was formally introduced into the primary school system in Zimbabwe through the Permanent Secretary's circulars (Director: Quality Assurance, 2004 and Director: Quality Assurance, 2005) which decreed education for all children in the country (Dakwa & Mugweni, 2013). The Government of Zimbabwe (1986) and (1987) Education Acts were utilised to create Government of Zimbabwe (2005) Statutory Instrument (SI) 106, whilst, Director: Quality Assurance (2004) and Director: Quality Assurance (2005) were utilised to create Secretary's Circulars 14 and 12 by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MoESAC). Therefore, the revised Education Act, SI 106 of 2005 and the circulars govern the

ECD centres and programme operations. Guided by the above-mentioned regulatory framework, primary schools were thus required to incorporate ECD as part of the infant classes of Grades 1 and 2 (Makororo, 2017). This entailed ECD 'A' for 3 to 4-year-olds and ECD 'B' for 4 to 5-year-olds attached to their schools. As a result, the Zimbabwean education structure is such that it has two years of early childhood development and seven years of primary education. Four types of ECD centres exist in Zimbabwe. These are provincial model centres, cluster model community centres (run by communities and parents), urban primary schools and private ECD centres and, lastly, ECD centres in rural areas (Dakwa & Mugweni, 2013). The research context of this study falls within urban ECD centres attached to primary schools. . In particular the focus is on ECD 'B' classes for the 4-5 year olds.

The above mentioned policies ensure that ECD 'B' children are not exposed to formal school curriculum but to total development the child, socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically in a holistic approach. Hence, the Ministry of education sports and culture is viewed as providing the most important support towards the implementation of the ECD curriculum (Chiparange & Saruchera, 2016). Previous studies on the implementation of ECD in Zimbabwe have noted overcrowded classrooms reflecting high teacher pupil ratios (Chikwiri and Musiyiwa, 2017) being experienced. Large classes sway teacher's attention stimulating chaotic behaviour among the ECD children (Sibanda, 2018). It became necessary to explore the ECD teachers' use of emotional competencies in handling some such behaviours of children during teaching and learning situations.

Majority of the children aged 5 years and below attending ECD classes in Zimbabwe, come from backgrounds fraught with challenges including hunger, economic hardships, poor mobility of parents and low parental knowledge about importance of ECD education (Chikwiri & Musiiwa, 2017). The children face developmental challenges due to their disadvantaged backgrounds (Zhou, 2021). For example, most young children in Zimbabwe tend to face emotional disturbances which affect their socio- emotional development (Daudi, & Mugweni, 2018). In urban areas, street vendors sometimes go to the street with their children due to socio economic problems. The children encounter situations that are frustrating including quarrelling, fighting which emotionally disturb them Teachers are likely to face some such vulnerable children at ECD centres attached to primary schools.

The following figure, Figure 2.1, depicts the organisational structure of ECD centres found in primary schools in Zimbabwe.
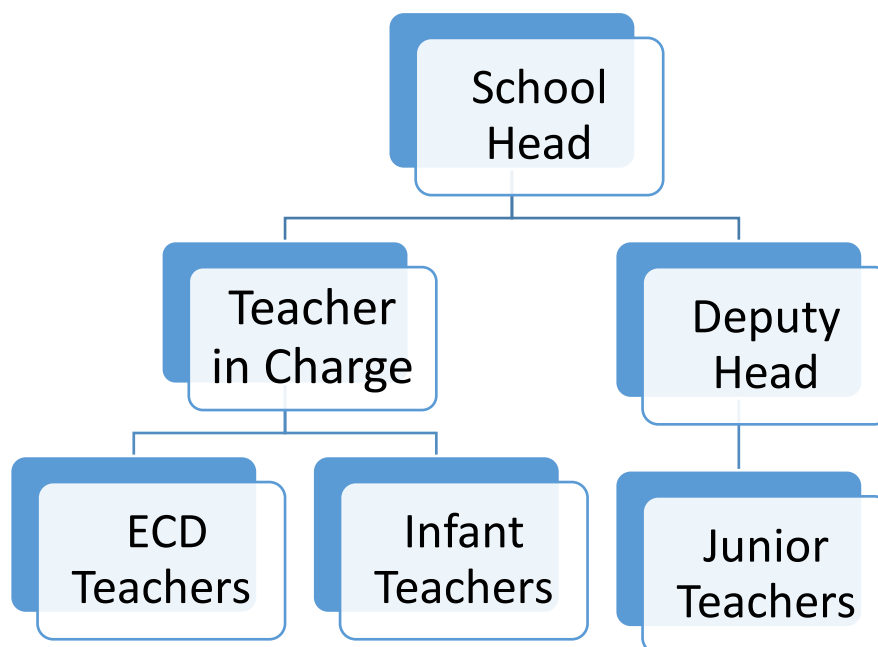
(Source: Created by the researcher, 2022)

Figure 2.1: Primary school organogram

The structures found in the ECD centres are such that the school head has the ultimate responsibility for the management and operation of the school, as specified by the Education Act, school policies and protocols (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, n.d.), although in the absence of the school head, the deputy head takes charge of the school. The teacher-in-charge is responsible for leading and supervising the Infant Section which includes ECD classes and performs duties assigned by the head, as indicated in the relevant statues (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, n.d.). Teachers report to the school head through their direct supervisors which means that ECD teachers report to the teacher-in-charge. The teacher-in-charge become the immediate supervisor for the ECD teachers.

The organogram in Figure 2.1 indicates teachers' position, including ECD teachers responsible for teaching the ECD classes. ECD classes ought to be taught by appropriately qualified teachers, for example, those who graduate from colleges of education, as stipulated by the Secretary's Circular No 14 of 2004; however, the Director's Circular No. 12 of 2005 recognises services rendered by paraprofessionals in the ECD programme. According to the policy

framework, the caregiver-pupil ratio stands at 1:20 but in reality, ECD classes are characterised by high enrolments with a ratio of about 1:50. This heavy workload is likely to overwhelm and stress any ECD teacher, hence the need for EI.
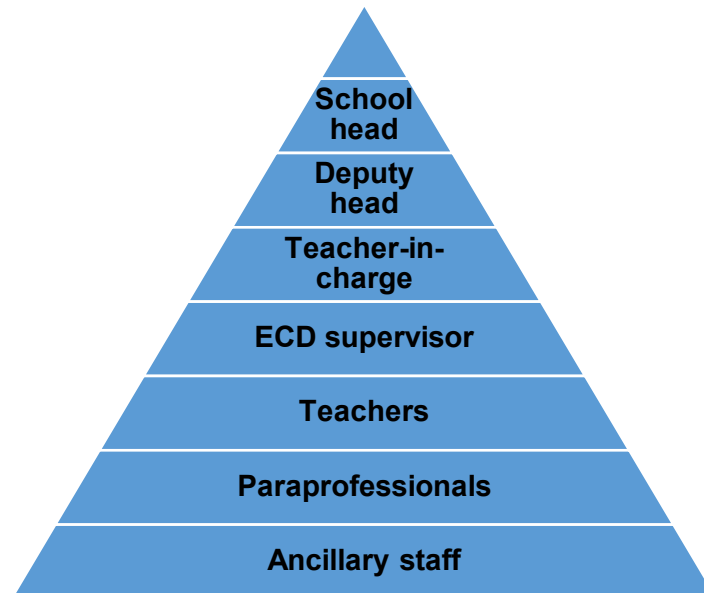
(Source: Adapted from Kuyayama-Tumbare et al. 2015)

Figure 2.2: ECD centre organogram

The duties of each group of people depicted in the above organogram are clearly defined, following the necessary authority to supervise those responsible for performing school activities (Kuyayama-Tumabare et al. 2015). The teachers and paraprofessionals are responsible for school activities that encompass classroom activities with ECD learners. In the absence of ECD supervisors, teachers-in-charge are tasked with supervising the ECD teachers. For example, among many responsibilities, the school head ensures that records such as enrolments, registers, performance and health, term commencement and termination dates during the year are maintained and kept up to date by individuals operating the centre. In addition, the school head maintains an up-to-date attendance register on ECD teachers, supervisors and as well as their qualifications for the purpose of remuneration (Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005). The ECD curriculum concentrates on children's domains of development such as physical, mental and social without targeting reading, writing and number work (SI of 2005). What is essential in an ECD centre is the participation of children to develop abilities, character and school readiness (Eurydice, 2019). However, it has been observed that participation and achievement gaps are characterised by learners feeling unwanted and

detached from the school environment in some schools (McNutty& Quaglia, 2007; Voight et al. 2015; Ratcliff et al. 2017).

2.3   EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence entails monitoring one's personal and others' emotions, distinguishing and appropriately labelling them and using the information to control thinking processes and behaviour (Salovey, & Mayer, 1990; Coleman, 2008). EI is vital to develop and to ensure that one is equipped to operate effectively in society. Most researchers consider EI to be made up of components which include recognition, expression, discrimination, labelling and regulation of emotions. One of the first explicit conceptualisations of EI comes from Salovey and Mayer (1990) who explained EI as the capacity to observe feelings and emotions from oneself and others, including distinguishing among them in order to utilise the information to control one's operations and thoughts (Ashworth, 2014). Salovey and Mayer (1990) widened their definition of emotional intelligence by including the concepts of distinguishing emotions, integrating emotional feelings, conceptualising anything related to emotions and controlling the emotions. Salovey and Mayer (1997) and Goleman (2001) developed models meant to examine and describe people's emotional intelligence (Rust, 2014), referred to as the ability and mixed models of intelligence.

Salovey and Mayer established the ability model (Brackett et al. 2011), which is an intellectual framework with emotions and thinking processes/relations (Salovey & Mayer, 1997). Goleman's mixed framework is similar to the ability model of intelligence but it combines the ability conception with personality traits such as optimism, self-esteem and emotional self–efficacy. Goleman views intelligence as the ability to recognise one's own and others' feelings to motivate and manage feelings in our relationships and ourselves (Ashworth, 2014). To measure emotional intelligence, the mixed model utilises tools that use self-reporting to ask participants to give judgement, articulate and rate their performance on recognising others' emotions with accuracy (Brackett et al. 2011). Even though the theoretical frameworks initially focused on business leadership, the concepts of emotional intelligence in education, concerning students, teachers, and leaders' emotional intelligence, have become research topics (Ashworth, 2014).

Since this current research involves children and teachers, these above-mentioned models have been selected especially for this study. There is a need to have a clear conceptualisation of the

connection between emotional intelligence and competencies. Emotional intelligence is viewed as a set of capacities encompassing recognition of emotional expressions, assessing and controlling one's and others' emotions including conceptualising sources and consequences of emotions in daily relational circumstances, including their interaction with motivation (Chan, 2007; Serrat, 2017) while emotional intelligence is seen as interconnected skills and competencies (Bar-On, 2006; Boyatzis, 2008; Brackett et al. 2022).

2.3.1 Linking Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence Competencies

Emotional intelligence is made up of domains which are clustered in the Salovey and Mayer's (1997) ability model and Goleman's (2001) mixed model respectively (Kremenitzer & Miller 2008; Yiyimo, 2009; Dolev, 2012; Galler, 2015). The ability model includes domains such as management of emotion, understanding emotion perception and integration of emotion (Dolev, 2012; Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018) and the concepts of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management make up emotional intelligence in the mixed model (Deniz, 2013; Iheanyi, 2015). Nested within those domains are specific, learned emotional competencies or abilities (Ugoani et al. 2015). Distinctive competencies are found within emotional intelligence's four domains include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Boyatzis & Goleman, 2017).

Boyatzis and Goleman (2017) and Ugoani et al. (2015) consider that emotional intelligence and emotional competencies are linked with emotional competence within emotional intelligence domains or capabilities. There exists an overlap of thought amid the theories of EC and EI, yet they are conceptually different.

Emotional intelligence is conceptualised as feelings by Salovey and Mayer (Craig, 2019), whilst emotional competence denotes one's capability to show or release inner emotions (Vaida & Opre, 2014). Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Vaida and Opre (2014) suggest that emotional intelligence denotes feelings that can be expressed through EC, showing the connection between the two concepts with EC sharing some commonalities with EI. EI theories view intelligence as abilities and qualities of persons to help them utilise the competencies in actual life circumstances (Lau & Wu, 2012; Ugoani et al. 2015). With emotional competence, one exhibits the abilities that institute self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills at suitable times to be effective in a situation (Lau & Wu, 2012; Ugoani et al. 2015). Therefore, emotional intelligence and emotional competencies have a symbiotic

relationship (Vaida & Opre, 2014). The association is such that emotional intelligence is necessary to form the building blocks to build emotional skills leading to performance. For the attainment of good results, such as improved academic and job performance, emotional competence has to be developed, based on enhanced emotional intelligence (Vaida & Opre, 2014). EI is seen as a snapshot of emotional competencies (Vaida & Opre, 2014). However, a categorical differentiation does not exist between emotional intelligence and emotional competence, rather there is a close connection between emotional intelligence and competencies which makes them to be seen as identical (Nelis et al. 2011; Youde, 2016), yet a conceptual line lies between them (Vaida, & Opre, 2014), thus these concepts are often used interchangeably (Monnier, 2015). Researchers note that one cannot exist without the other. For example, the existence of emotional competencies is dependent on factors of emotional intelligence which support the competencies' development (Goleman, 2001; Wakeman, 2006).

Emotional competence, according to Schmutz (2017), is directly linked to emotional intelligence with the commonality between EI and EC being that the measurement tools developed for EI can be employed in the study of EC. This indicates the compatibility of the measurements for assessment of EC, for example, the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-on, 1977). Emotional intelligence assessments measure personality characteristics or emotional competence (Conte 2005; Ugoani et al. 2015). An emotional competence inventory also has clusters based on Goleman's (1998) explanation of emotional intelligence; for example, the empathy cluster, which involves understanding and developing others.

In addition, EI is viewed as an inborn ability or human talent (Ugoani et al. 2015), while EC emphasises abilities acquired due to cultural and contextual interventions during one's development. Emotional competencies are abilities that are learned and worked on to be developed and put into practice to attain exceptional performance. Hence EC are not innate talents. For example, the construct of self-awareness includes an awareness ability and understanding of one's emotions, and emotion management is the ability to reflect on, manage and control emotions (Goleman, 1995; Kremenitzer & Miller, 2008 Dolev, 2012; Boyatzis & Goleman, 2017). When one understands and becomes aware of own's emotions, this denotes emotional competence, which must be learned and exercised by displaying emotional intelligence. These competencies allow for good performance in the workplace (Boytzis & Goleman, 2017).

EC focuses more on the application of skills. Individuals with EC react to emotion-eliciting environments with skills whilst those with EI respond with characters inherent within the individuals. EC focuses on applying latent skills in life contexts with no emphasis on internal capacity in handling emotion-laden contexts (Lau & Wu, 2012; Molatodi, 2018). Emotional competence comprises a group of common abilities applicable to types of emotion-related skills (Garner, 2010) with emotional competencies being viewed as a stand-alone; however, descriptions that are detached from emotional intelligence do not exist (Monnier, 2015). Rather emotional competence is considered to be an application of EI because, as Monnier (2015) and Goleman (1998) suggest, EC is a learned ability centring on EI, which is applied in the workplace. In this study, emotion competencies are viewed as how caregivers apply emotional intelligence in teaching ECD children contributing to performance. As caregivers use emotion competencies, they are therefore demonstrating emotional intelligence. Emotional competencies are thus connected to and are centred on emotional intelligence; hence in the study, emotional competencies are used and referred to as indicators of emotional intelligence (Nagar, 2016).

Because emotional intelligence is viewed as associated skills and competencies researchers (Bar-On, 2006; Boyatzis, 2008; Chan, 2007; Ugoani et al. 2015), have found these competencies relevant to most professional teaching standards (Dolev, 2012; Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021). Teachers are thus expected to demonstrate different emotional competencies that enable them to carry out specific tasks within the workplace. For example, an emotionally intelligent teacher, can perceive, monitor and control negative emotions including anger, frustration and temper and remain keep calm which helps increase workplace engagement in the learning environment (Ramana, 2013; Frenzel, 2014).

There is thus an association between EI and employee performance (Ugoani et al. 2015). EI acts through the EC, predicting good performance (Monnier, 2015; Ugoani et al., 2015). A learned ability centred on emotional intelligence leads to better performance at work (Goleman, 2001) with individuals using the emotion dimensions to achieve high performance in the workplace (Li, 2012; Ugoani et al. 2015), for example, the self-emotional appraisal dimension which is facilitated by emotional competence, indicating that it is not enough on its own (Murensky, 2000; Vaida, & Opre, 2014).

Since emotional competencies fall within emotional intelligence constructs, EI can only have influence over performance when facilitated by emotional competence. The two constructs can be used interchangeably. Sutton and Wheatly (2003) and Korotaj & Mrnjaus (2021) have indicated that teachers' emotional competence is a necessity both in general for their own welfare and for efficiency and quality in teaching and learning in the classroom and, in particular, for students' development of the socio-emotional domain. Therefore, the study sought to explore caregivers' EI through the competencies they display to enhance children's engagement, develop caregiver pupil relationships, and for their own EI development.

2.4 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCIES

Emotional intelligence comprises one's ability to learn and apply knowledge, be flexible, fluent, control emotions, resolve difficulties, all requiring strong motivation to attain results (Mayer & Salovey, 2004; Cherry, 2018). EI consists of four main components (Mayer & Salovey, 2004; Brackett et al., 2022) comprising emotional perception and expression, including recognition and verbal and non-verbal data, facilitation of thought through emotions which entails utilising emotions as part of the intellect, such as originality and problem-solving, understanding of emotion encompassing intellectual processing of emotions about one's and other's emotional state and emotional management, which entails the regulation and management of emotional realities in oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 2004; Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018).-

 In the following section, there is a discussion on the emotional competencies that caregivers and children should possess in the classroom as the workplace.

2.4.1 Emotional Intelligence Competencies in Children

Children need to develop emotional intelligence competencies as these are helpful with learning and attention issues (Rosen, 2014). The young children develop EC during early childhood development which encompasses the expression of useful emotions, self and others' emotional understanding and management of emotions, enhancing their social and pre-learning adjustment (Campbell et al., 2016; Palmer, 2019). These components are seen as the main components of emotional competence during early childhood development and competencies are discussed in the subsequent sections.

2.4.1.1 Perception of emotion

Children who can express emotions effectively can communicate how they feel in a socially-expected manner (California Department of Education, 2022). Children therefore need to be skilled in the perception of emotions (knowledge of emotions) as this enables them to have positive social interactions. For example, ECD children express non-verbal messages concerning social situations and relations through emotional communication such as stamping feet (Denham et al. 2011; Campbell et al. 2016) or patting a classmate who is in pain to display empathy. From birth to three years, children begin to build self-awareness which is necessary for recognising emotions both in themselves and in others. From three years and above, the child can improve skills such as empathy and sympathy (Paavola, 2017). Several studies have been carried out to assess how accurately children recognise the facial expression of emotions. For example, the relationship between facial emotional responses and maternal deprivation has been established (Szekely, 2012; Taylor-Colls & Fearon, 2015; Priel et al. 2019). Research has also focused on children's emotion recognition and disposition in the formative years. Recognising emotive facial expressions quickly and accurately is critical for smooth social relations and suitable behaviour modification. This means that facial expressions as a mean of communication, are essential at all developmental stages, mostly when children express themselves less verbally. Emotion knowledge is another key component of children's emotional competence which is essential to ensure that they get along with adults and peers (Campbell et al. 2016).

2.4.1.2 Emotion knowledge and understanding

Emotion knowledge focuses on how an individual can use emotions to facilitate intellectual processing or make decisions. For example, when a child cries, it will be using emotion to signal that the need for food must be met (Cheshire, 2013; Campbell et al. 2016). A person can also use an emotion such as happiness to facilitate creativity (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). For children, emotion knowledge and understanding are essential.

Emotion understanding competence, which emerges at the pre-school level, involves young children's ability to recognise labelling their own and others' emotions correctly (Denham et al. 2011; Sprung et al. 2015). This understanding of emotions facilitates interactions as they learn in the classroom environment, particularly as they develop the ability to regulate emotions. Young children begin to regulate emotions through awareness of their own feelings, checking and modifying them to cope in different situations (Denham et al. 2011). Although

the children might start comprehending some useful management strategies, adult support is still needed in these efforts (Denham et al. 2011; Campbell et al. 2016). For example, adults can use music or model emotions. Music can either calm or energise life moods (Uzsalyné Pécsi, 2010; Paavola, 2017; Shauna et al. 2017). Modelling can help children learn how to feel others' emotions, particularly through speaking about emotions to them. Children's emotional intelligence needs to be developed in the early years as children learn to control their lives and maintain social relationships (Paavola, 2017).

Emotional competence aspects, such as perception of emotions and emotion regulation, are interrelated (Denham, et al. 2011; Kirk & Jay, 2018); thus, emotion knowledge plays an integral part in children's ability to manage emotions. Little or no development of knowledge of regulation of emotions affects children's learning potential (Park, 2016). If a preschool child has deficits in both emotion knowledge and under-regulated expression of emotions, problems in the kindergarten can be envisaged. For example, pre-schoolers with discrepancies in emotion understanding could be aggressive (Campbell et al. 2016; Laurent et al. 2020; Wong et al. 2019). Emotional competencies predict young children's early school success (Calkins et al. 2008; Alzahrani et al. 2019), therefore training and development in emotion knowledge and skills is vital (Brackett et al., 2006; Morkel, & McLaughlin, 2015; Shauna et al. 2017). The opportunity to develop children's emotional intelligence is found with early child care and in childhood sites (Burton & Denham, 2003; Lam & Wong, 2017; Shauna et al. 2017); for example, the PATHS programme, designed to facilitate the development of self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving, which focuses on teaching young children about emotional competencies.

The following section focuses on ECD teachers' emotional intelligence competencies which are vital to facilitate positive and effective interaction with young children.

2.4.2   Emotional Intelligence Competencies in Teachers

Teachers encounter both negative and positive emotions during teaching and interacting with children (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Frenzel, 2014), thus, teachers need to have developed emotional competencies to be effective in their working environment. In the teaching environment, there is constant interaction with the children and with others, hence a constant interplay of emotions (Brackett & Katulak, 2007) which requires competencies such as

perception of emotions, use of emotion, understanding emotions and managing emotions, each of which are discussed in the section to follow

2.4.2.1 Perception of emotions

The ability to recognise how one feels is essential as it enables teachers to express themselves freely. Strategies teachers may employ in some lessons and activities can be guided by their ability or emotional knowledge to be aware of people's social interactions and identify their emotions (Szekely, 2012). Facial expressions are powerful non-verbal displays of such emotional information. The skill to recognise facial expressions correctly facilitates detection of another individual's emotional state and offers signals that enable one to respond appropriately to complex social situations (Grossmann & Johnson, 2007; Guarnera et al. 2015). In a preschool environment, caregivers and children can respond to each other by being guided by their emotional states, showing the importance of emotional recognition. If teachers are aware of the impact of emotions on others, they become responsible persons in the classroom (Kralj, 2018). The current research sought to examine the utilisation of emotion recognition as an aspect of emotional intelligence to respond to children's' expressions in a classroom situation by ECD teachers.

2.4.2.2 Use and understanding of emotion

For a teacher to be effective, it is imperative to recognise emotions appropriate for different situations. Caregivers with developed EI utilise emotions to prioritise intellectual processes by focusing attention on relevant information about the situation or individuals (Brackett et al. 2011). Directing attention to important events and children demonstrates emotional intelligence, which this study sought to ascertain. Tests to ascertain emotional intelligence have been created (Brackett et al. 2011). For example, participants are presented with a sentence asking them to imagine feeling an emotion such as guilt, they are also asked to visualise a feeling of an emotion such as guilt through a sentence. Participants are then asked to rate a list of adjectives and other sensory descriptors on a five-point scale *Very Much Alike* to *No Alike,* to indicate how much the feeling of guilt is similar to the adjectives. Teachers can also be asked to indicate what they do to generate certain moods in themselves and others (Brackett & Katulak, 2007).

Caregivers and children need to understand the meaning of emotions for smooth interactions in a learning environment. Specifically, understanding emotions encompasses labelling

emotions using precise language and identifying resemblances and variations between emotions and their labels (Brackett et al. 2006; Mayer et al. 2016). According to Brackett et al. (2006), two tasks which are blends and changes that relate to one's ability to examine difficult emotions and conceptualise how emotional reactions change over time respectively, are used to measure emotion understanding. Understanding emotions also comprises the conception of the language and what emotions denote. Teachers need to have an ability to understand what causes certain emotions, and describe how they and others feel. The competencies are relevant in the teaching environment, as there is constant interaction with others and hence a constant interplay of emotions (Brackett & Katulak, 2007; Korotaj, & Mrjaus, 2019; Abiodullah et al. 2020). Understanding emotion vocabulary can impact classroom culture, learning and achievement which is the reason for teachers needing to manage emotions in the class environment.

2.4.2.3 Management of emotions

Emotion regulation (ER) involves being able to make decisions on utilising an emotion in a situation by preventing, reducing or modifying the course of an emotional response in oneself and others (Brackett et al. 2011; Peña-Sarrionandia et al. 2015). Teachers encounter both negative and positive emotions during teaching and interacting with children (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Frenzel, 2014). Their work requires that they control their own emotions, including that of the children they teach. The capacity to control one's own and others emotions is a valuable skill for teachers (Brackett & Katulak, 2007; Aldrup et al. 2020), which enables them to generate a more open, effective teaching and learning environment resulting in less disruption (Brackett & Katulak, 2007; Aldrup et al. 2020). Teachers can carry out exercises with students to teach them to manage their emotions so that they are able to achieve their tasks. For example, these could be class discussions of types of emotions, how they are elicited, and different ways of handling the emotion. Teachers who fail to manage their emotions might have children who experience negative feelings, including unhappiness and shame (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Makhwathana et al. 2017).

Other scholars have studied the ability to control one's emotions (emotion management) and others (social management) (Brackett et al. 2006). For example, assessment of social management involved a task in which participants had to read a vignette concerning another person to determine the usefulness of varied plans of action in managing emotions portrayed in the vignette. Some possible actions were rated ranging from *Very ineffective* to *Very*

effective. In another study assessment of management of emotions had emotional skills and competence questionnaire with statements on a 5-point scale, thus of *Not at all valid, Not valid, Sometimes valid, Mostly valid* and *Always valid* (Gabrijelcic et al. 2021). The present study intended to establish caregivers' ability to control their own and children's emotions in a learning environment. The caregivers in the study indicated how they managed their own and their children's emotions.

RULER (which stand for Recognising, Understanding, Labelling, and Expressing and Regulating emotions) is an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning (SEL) designed to develop varied emotional skills for students, teachers, leaders at school, and family members. This approach aims to infuse the principles of emotional intelligence into the school, enabling all to improve decision-making, form and maintain relationships, be prosocial, and regulate their feelings (Brackett et al. 2006). However, to ensure the provision of the best learning environment, there is a need for training teachers in programming and assessment tools aimed at assessing and establishing interventions for the promotion of social and emotional skills (SEL) (Denham et al. 2011; Cristóvão et al. 2020). For example, educational tools such as conflict resolution and mapping of feelings are utilised to improve pre-school children's emotional competencies (Andrews, 2017). Conflict resolution and mapping of feelings may enable children to express their feelings in expected and appropriate ways. In addition, the skill to recognise sensitive facial expressions swiftly and correctly is essential for smooth social interaction and relevant behaviour modification. Deficits in young children's emotion recognition result in extensive long-life damages in social functioning and could encompass a risk factor for psychopathology later in life (Batty & Taylor, 2006; Liu et al. 2019). Research indicates that children's intellect, motivation and behaviour can be influenced by emotionally intelligent teachers' ability (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), which enables them to increase workplace engagement and complete set tasks (Gill & Sankukar, 2017).

A study has been carried out to establish emotional characteristics valued and possessed by leaders such as public-school principals (Ashworth, 2013). As leaders, the principals ought to show awareness of their own emotions, be confident and conscious of their intrapersonal feelings and recognise others' emotions, empathy, strong communication skills, and relationship skills. Principals' specific emotional intelligence is displayed in social awareness, empathy and comfort in performing their duties. These aspects enable principals to take charge of a situation and to communicate effectively. Self-management is ranked the most valuable

for principals' school performance, followed by other competencies like leadership, interpersonal and intrapersonal (Ashworth, 2014).

In this research, competencies were measured by the mean of respondents' responses thus the results revealed that self-management had 1.27, leadership had 1.33, Interpersonal 1.52 and Intrapersonal 1.82, reflecting the hierarchy ranking the most to the least appreciated competence for principals. Additionally, self-awareness and understanding others' emotions, ability to express emotions naturally and showing empathy to others were also ranked. Other competencies were measured in ten emotional scales and ranked according to their value from the most liked to the least liked with commitment being the most, followed by self-esteem, social awareness, empathy and, lastly, stress management (Ashworth, 2014). The ten emotional scales were assertion, social awareness, comfort, empathy, decision-making, leadership, drive strength, time management, commitment ethic, self-esteem and stress management (Ashworth, 2014). The scales were then divided into four competencies: interpersonal, leadership, intrapersonal and management. The mean of responses gave a rank of emotional skills in which the lowest mean of 1.03 reflected the leaders' need to achieve goals set whilst the highest mean of 2.65 indicated that the leaders felt they had little control over what they thought of doing. When measured, the coefficients ranged from .53 to .82; thus, the self-management competence was ranked the most with .82 followed by leadership with .76, interpersonal with .70 and lastly .53 intrapersonal.

Some studies have revealed discrepancies regarding particular emotional competencies required for different positions in the workplace (Yiyimo, 2009; Stamouli & Gerbeth, 2021). For example, certain positions require one to be assertive while others like Construction Engineering Management (CEM) need to have an interpersonal relationship competence. Some competencies would enhance the work of certain positions and work situations (Yiyimo, 2009; Stamouli & Gerbeth, 2021), hence the need to unravel competencies a caregiver needs to utilise to enhance his or her work in teaching ECD children.

In one study, tutors displayed positive emotions related to eagerness for face-to-face tuition, which motivates learners (Youde, 2016). The online tutors were self-aware and could recognise their own emotions and how they impacted performance. A teacher who is aware of their own emotions is likely to control emotions, use motivating approaches, empathise with students, and manage relationships amongst peers (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017). Youde's study (2016)

explored students' views of their teachers in merged settings, focusing on competencies contributing to the teacher's efficiency. It explored teachers' emotional competencies appreciated by students in a merged learning environment. The study reported teachers using competencies within Goleman's framework such as trustworthiness, adaptability and initiative, influence and leadership competence. On self-assessment, the teachers were aware of their capabilities and their weaknesses and could identify areas that needed improvement. Among the competencies, trustworthiness had high Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) scores (Youde, 2016).

Teacher practitioners in Gill and Sankulkar's study (2017) had reasonably high emotional intelligence in self-awareness then empathy in contrast to the scores for the self-management domain, which were the lowest. Some teachers were found to use empathy by looking at scenarios from the students' perspective (Morton, 2014). Empathy can be utilised to observe, recognise and have an awareness of learners' emotions and express this to understand them (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). Teachers can develop empathetic behaviour to provide a closer association to the bond of love essential for quality teaching and learning (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020)

In another study, student teachers at a university displayed a high level of emotional intelligence (Szorc & Kunat, 2019). Comparatively, women's statistical levels of EI were higher than that of men, which is 77.6% more than men. The emotional intelligence domain was emotion recognition which is recognised as being done by the right hemisphere; hence women had a higher level (Szorc & Kunat, 2019). The student-teachers therefore were using emotion recognition competence. Morton's study (2014) revealed that teachers could perceive others' emotions quite well and could easily express emotions. This is a valuable competence in the teaching environment as teachers' display of emotions such as excitement and enthusiasm could motivate students (Pekrun, 2005; Baba, 2019; Hagenauera et al. 2016).

Lourenço and Valentine (2020) found that teachers use conflict management approaches to benefit the teaching and learning process. Constructive conflict management expands the relationship with students enhancing the development of a learning atmosphere favourable to teaching and learning (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). Teachers with higher levels of EI have emotional skills that enable them to manage classroom conflicts constructively (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020).

Teachers often experience stress due to their work (Forcina, 2012; Greenberg et al. 2016); however, this can be reduced if attention is given to emotional intelligence (Morton, 2014) where they consciously regulate their emotions (Kralj, 2018). It has been reported that teachers can learn to regulate emotions after training, although some emotions are difficult to control (Morton, 2014).

Teachers ought to be skilled in evaluating their own emotions which would increase their skill of communicating their needs, reinforcing student behaviour and displaying more concern about achievement of their goals, which may lead to better job performance (Greenberg et al. 2016). This ability makes them to be more alert to other people's desires and affords them emotional support and the ability to cooperate with others (Mohamad & Jais, 2016).

2.5   EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK-BASED PERFORMANCE

Job performance relates to behaviours that personnel engage in at work (Sonnentag et al. 2008; Motowidlo & Kell, 2012; Ali-Hassan et al. 2015) and involves the nurturing of positive relations. According to Juraifa and Mafuzah (2015), job performance allows employers to make informed decisions about personnel promotions and retention. This study focused on ECD teachers' behaviours in engaging children in learning situations. Emotional intelligence enhances individuals' efficiency and performance. Personnel possessing a high level of emotional intelligence can control emotions to retain a progressive mental state leading to enhanced job effectiveness (Gunu & Oladepo, 2014). Research has revealed that emotional skills outweigh academic understanding and technical knowledge for improved work performance in an industry (Yiyimo, 2009; Acosta & Muller, 2018). It was noted that participants employed in varied roles underscored different emotional competencies for an improved performance in their work. For example, EI was observed to play an important role in controlling individuals' emotions and employing EI in regulating people's behaviours to ensure good job performance. It was also seen that being assertive was important in dealing with relationship. The question is: If a teacher as an employee has a high level of intelligence, will his/her job performance be improved?

Teacher performance can be perceived from the emotional intelligence of a teacher in the teaching process (Wahyuddin, 2016). Having an emotionally intelligent teacher in the learning environment is necessary as the varied characteristics of a teacher's EI are considered the dynamic element for effective schooling (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). EC has been vital in

assisting novice teachers in becoming extra proficient, confident and devoted to teaching over the long term (Mohamad & Shnmugasundaram, 2011). Teachers report regulating emotions regularly since they trust that this helps them realise their aims (Sutton, 2004; Greenberg et al. 2016).

Several studies have been carried out on the relationship between EI and teacher effectiveness with teachers, leaders, students and school performance (Yiyimo, 2009; Ramana, 2013; Curci et al. 2014; Rust, 2014). The effectiveness of teachers and the performance of children are related and take place in the context of a workplace hence what teachers and students do results in work performance or work-based competencies indicating an association between EI and job performance (JP) (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Dhani et al. 2016). This connection implies that teachers carrying out their roles in creating a friendly learning environment, building relationships with learners, implementing the curriculum and developing learners' emotional intelligence (Ramana, 2013; Banda & Mutambo, 2015), have to utilise emotional intelligence. The teacher's roles encompass activities they perform in a learning environment which contribute to teachers' job performance or work performance.

Emotional intelligence is seen as crucial for becoming a successful leader, hence a call for an inclusion of emotional intelligence skills in creating effective administrators (Nelson & Low, 2006; Watkins et al. 2017). However, it has been established that emotional intelligence and school's performance are not statistically significantly related (Ashworth, 2014). The school performance is rated against the principal's emotional intelligence as a leader. Emotional intelligence competencies such as interpersonal, intrapersonal, leadership and self-management are therefore found not to be statistically significantly related to the school performance ratings. Though statistically, a relationship between principals and school performance is not evident, qualitatively it was established that an association between a principal's emotional intelligence skills and the school performance exists. Principals ought to have emotional consciousness of their own and others' emotions to build relationships leading to a successful campus. Positive leadership, which entails the ability to have a positive influence on staff, would inspire and motivate them to work towards the success of the campus. However, as principals have no close relationship with students as compared to teachers, who interact with children on a day to day basis, there was the need to concentrate on teachers and children in this study.

Emotional competencies treasured at a place of work such as a school, are leadership, self-awareness, social awareness or empathy, self-management and emotion regulation (Opengart, 2007; Fuge, 2014). The more emotional intelligence competencies one masters, the better one will perform (Li, 2012). Association between EI and work performance amongst secondary school teachers was revealed by a study conducted in Malaysia (Juraifa & Mafuzah, 2015). The emotional domains that demonstrated the relationship with job performance included self-awareness, self-regulation, self–motivation, empathy and social skills. Four constructs of EI, namely self- awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation empathy and social skills, affect work performance. However, secondary school teachers' behaviour related to emotional intelligence, was not known.

Rust's study (2014) investigated the likelihood of an association concerning EI of teachers and attainment of students in a classroom. For example, teachers with self-actualisation and stress management had their students achieving the highest gains in achievement scores, indicating an association between instructors' EI and learner performance. Generally, the variations in teachers' emotional intelligence performance create variations in student achievement. The connection between teachers' emotional intelligence and learner performance, as a result, is not consistent as teachers with high EI on specific emotional intelligence dimensions can either have students with high or low achievements, for example, in maths. Generally, a possible relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and student achievement has not been clearly established.

A study conducted by Fatum (2008) ascertained that teachers' different levels of emotional intelligence show quantifiable variances in fifth grade performance scores. The Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment for Youth (SEI-YV), was used to measure emotional intelligence competencies. The findings showed a weak though positive and statistically substantial association that exists between emotionally intelligence composite, 'Life Satisfaction' and 'Personal achievement' measured using SEI-YV and academic attainment in English – Language Arts (ELA) (Fatum, 2008). Each of the emotional intelligence composites relates to emotional intelligence factors, for example, Personal Achievement which relates to Engaging Intrinsic Motivation, Exercising Optimism and Pursuing Noble Goals. The other issue is that the academic achievement of students in each of the subjects varies in relation to the different emotional intelligence composites.

A study conducted by Zirak and Ahmadian (2015) ascertained that teachers' different levels of emotional intelligence show quantifiable variances in fifth grade performance scores. The Bradberry and Greaves' Questionnaire, which measures emotional intelligence competencies, did not reveal a strong statistically significant relationship with the fifth-grade academic achievement. The components of emotional intelligence included self-awareness, social awareness, self -management and relationship management. Each of the emotional intelligence component showed varied scores in relation to academic achievement. However, the results showed that there was a direct significant relationship between the components of social awareness and academic achievement. Such a relationship meant that the greater increase in social awareness, the greater increase in academic achievements and vice versa (Zirak & Ahmadian, 2015) with the relationship between creative thinking and academic attainment being positive and significant.

Several studies have been carried out concerning EI and job performance amongst instructors (Ashworth, 2013; Rust, 2014; Juraifa & Mafuzah, 2015). Four emotional intelligence domains, which are self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills were observed to have an effect on instructors' job performance (Juraifa & Mafuzah, 2015). Thus, a substantial association between each domain and work performance was established, for example, an association between social skills and work performance. However, the behaviours that constitute job performance were not spelt out.

Several competencies were found to contribute to tutor effectiveness within the context of online teaching (Youde, 2016). Competencies such as empathy, trustworthiness, adaptability, influence, leadership, and initiative contributed to tutor effectiveness. Specifically, influence competence used to engage learners, together with leadership competence was described as strategies to motivate learners (Youde, 2016). The emotional competencies mentioned above are found in Goleman's emotional intelligence model (Goleman, 2001).

EI is a significant influence in teacher achievement (Mohamad & Shnmugasundaram, 2011; Sekreter, 2019; Muhammad et al. 2020). Emotion competence has been viewed to be crucial in assisting teachers who are starting to be better, able, and confident and devoted to teaching over the long term (Mohamad & Shnmugasundaram, 2011; Muhammad et al. 2020). Social awareness is significant for greater job performance and communications with people (Mohamad & Shnmugasundaram, 2011).

Teachers with higher levels of EI possess emotional skills that constructively facilitate the management of conflict in the classroom (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). Empathy can be utilised to perceive, recognise and be conscious of learners' feelings and show this to understand them (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). Teachers can develop empathetic behaviour towards students, hereby providing a closer association to the relation of love that is essential for quality teaching and learning (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). Teachers can use emotional facilitation of thinking to develop creative activities, such as prompting an emotional state in learners (Extremera & Fernandez-Berrocal, 2005; Mayer et al. 2016). When teachers recognise facial expressions on their learners' faces, they can alter the lessons and find ways of making content more understandable (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). Since teaching contains an emotional workload, it needs conceptualisation on how to cope with and regulate emotions and manage conflicts that come up in the relations between learners and teachers (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020).

Teachers also acknowledge that emotional awareness has an impact on school climate (Morton, 2014). Awareness was said to prompt application of skill-related EI and school climate (Morton, 2014). Self-awareness is defined as the capacity to recognise own feelings to be able to discriminate among them, to distinguish how one is feeling and being aware of the cause of the feelings (Grayson, 2013; Serrat, 2017). It is viewed as the most vital competence related to workplace emotional intelligence (Mohamad & Jais, 2016), which allows teachers to be cognisant of their own emotions and activities in a workplace (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017)

Teacher effectiveness and student performance have been linked to EI and work performance, (Soanes & Sungoh, 2019). Findings support the significance of emotional competencies; for example, emotional competence increases the teacher's ability to regulate his/her emotions and effectively manage relationships resulting in a decrease of stress (Soanes & Sungoh, 2019). Thus, an EI teacher is described as one who effectively perceives, utilise, conceptualise and control emotions in the learning environment, and it is this capacity that enhances learners' performance (Curci et al. 2014).

2.6 THE ROLE OF CAREGIVERS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Performance-centred learning represents a set of approaches for the acquisition and use of knowledge, abilities, and work through the engagement with activities that are meaningful and

involving (Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT), 2017; Hollandsworth &Trujillo-Jenks, 2020). ECD caregivers as the classroom teachers are considered as the best variable impacting learner performance outside the child's home, engaging learners in a conducive learning environment (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond et al. 2020). As ECD caregivers apply their knowledge and work habits, they interact with learners engaging them in the learning process and through this interaction, exposing them to positive role models, so that they acquire new abilities and experience and improved self-esteem (Cahill, 2016; Kornfield, 2003; Watson, 2020).

This study sought to ascertain the influence of caregivers' emotional intelligence on classroom interactions with ECD children. The interaction between teachers and children is critical for growth, not only academic but emotional as well. The following section focuses on how caregivers utilise emotional intelligence in their roles.

2.6.1 Exercising Emotional Competencies in the Learning Environment

Research reveals how teachers utilise emotional competencies to create healthy teacher-child relationships and effective classroom organisational variables that generate a constructive classroom atmosphere (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Curie, 2022). Studying teachers' use of EI may be a valuable strategy to appreciate teachers' differences in social-emotional competencies. A teacher utilises emotional intelligence through his/her various roles (Ramana, 2013; Molatodi, 2018). As the teacher carries out her roles, emotional intelligence is utilised in creating environments conducive to building relationships with children, implementing the curriculum and developing children's emotional intelligence in a learning environment.

2.6.2 Creating Environments Conducive to Learning and Nurturing Emotional Intelligence

Creating environments conducive to learning is an essential role of ECD teacher. Effective teachers are able to generate safe environments that are conducive to nurturing and encouraging learning within their classrooms (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Mupa, & Chinooneka, 2015). Such teachers can create learning environments by conveying feelings of care and concern for their students and fostering close relationship with them (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Galler, 2015). They are also able to offer positive reinforcement if needed through emotional rewards and motivation as a way to ensure the best learning environment outcome (Malala, 2009; Rumfola, 2017). A teacher provides fascinating resources and tasks suitable by age group and organising

a classroom to improve children's learning. The Montessori approach advocates for a carefully prepared and planned environment to cater to learners' needs by providing them with the best opportunities to work individually, have choices, make decisions, solve problems, be involved in real practices and experience success (Mavrič, 2020). According to Galler (2015) and Tominey et al. (2017), all these tasks require EI on the part of the teacher. Such an emotionally intelligent teacher is also expected to generate conditions in the class so that the children do not feel the slightest worry but are emotionally steady (Ramana, 2013). The environment becomes conducive to learning hence a productive classroom climate. An optimal environment is observed by harmony, appreciation, suitable emotional expression, less conflict and disturbing conduct (Valente et al. 2020). A teacher who is able to constructively manage any conflict in the classroom expands the relationship with students supporting the growth of a learning environment conducive to teaching and learning (Loureco & Valentine, 2020). There is thus a need to emphasise and enhance teacher emotional intelligence to improve the school climate (Morton, 2014).

A learning environment needs to reflect a positive emotional climate which in turn has an effect on student emotion regulation and student learning engagement (Nichd ECCRN, 2005; Shin & Ryan, 2017). A warm, receptive and passionate climate in a classroom is evidenced by physical closeness, matched affect, amusement and eagerness, cool voices and courteous language amid the teacher and the learners (Pianta et al. 2008; Rusdinal, & Afriansyah, 2017; Sithole, 2017). A welcoming smiling teacher creates an atmosphere of safety and security and no fear (McCuin, 2012; Baba, 2019; McDonald, 2019). Deane (2018) showed that teacher empathy is important in maintaining a safe and inviting classroom environment. A teacher with socio-emotional competence is able to create an environment where social interactions are established in a positive climate (Adib et al. 2018) and where the teacher acknowledges and responds to the children's emotions as needed (Cohrssen et al. 2011; Guo et al. 2015).

Teachers with emotional intelligence have been known to use emotional understanding to monitor children's emotions, engage in self-regulating techniques and express empathy in response to students' concerns (Galler, 2015). The benefit of emotional understanding includes responding more appropriately to prevent a situation from escalating (Morton, 2014), and effectively managing their classrooms and to create stronger child and teacher relationships.

Teachers have been noted to utilise emotions in a classroom in different ways. Research which examined how teachers use their EI to generate positive classroom settings (Galler, 2015),

established that outstanding teachers monitored the emotions in the classroom and responded to children's emotions whilst typical teachers reported only monitoring emotions. The outstanding teachers also reported that they sympathised with students in certain situations, such as students' frustration (Galler, 2015). However, typical teachers indicated they would only sympathise if the students' issues were valid (when they perceived children's complaints as valid) and that they took a tough stance. It was established that exceptional teachers who monitored children's emotions showed empathy to their complaints and engaged in self-regulation techniques to create a favourable classroom climate (Galler, 2015). This study involved high school teachers and their students, while this study focused on how early childhood caregivers can utilise emotional intelligence in a learning environment.

Ramana (2013) and Tominey et al. (2017) state that an emotionally intelligent teacher can manage emotions like rage, annoyance and frustration in order to remain calm in learning environments that could induce highly-charged emotions. The teacher would be able to identify and understand the emotions amongst learners, recognising stressed children and offering them the requisite attention and refer them for assistance, if required. Research has revealed that pre-service educators who demonstrated EI competences could manage their anger in a given situation (Demir & Sahin-Baltaci, 2012; Pritamani, 2020) and develop awareness which enables the teacher to recognise their feelings and treat them correctly (Bar-On, 2004). Awareness has been found to be a critical component of the teacher's emotional intelligence as it becomes a crucial step in making changes in the classroom (Morton, 2014).

Parents can help their children by creating a structured environment at home that fosters emotional competence in children (Bailey et al. 2011; Morkel & McLaughlin, 2015). This helps the teacher in the classroom to continue the work of developing the child's emotional intelligence competencies. Emotional expression of both the teacher and student can also affect the classroom's emotional climate for both the teacher and the student (Yan et al. 2011; Harvey et al. 2016). However, the teacher also regulates or reduces worry (Ramana, 2013; Ginsburg et al. 2019) by creating a welcoming environment in the class which make children experience the minimum worry and as a result, are emotionally steady. Creating such conditions would entail caregivers using emotional intelligence to control children's emotions and generating positive classroom environments.

A caregiver can utilise empathy and emotional intelligence to work more efficiently with learners who misbehave (Rust, 2014). Understanding what a child is going through at school or at home, understanding their feelings and reasons for misbehaviour, assists the teacher in addressing the problem and developing a mutually satisfying interpersonal relationship (Bar-On, 2004; Valente et al. 2020).

2.6.3 Building Relationships between Teachers and Learners

Teachers have an essential role to play in building relationships with children to fulfil the primary drive of learning to inspire students to experience individual and mental growth (Gablinske, 2014). Early childhood experts advance kind, respectful relations which offer a safe and sound base, providing learners with a stable base to discover and learn (Cohrssen et al. 2011; Melhuish et al. 2015). Building relationships is a crucial element of teaching and learning (Gablinske, 2014), and it is thus imperative for teachers to develop caring relationships with students to engender trust, respect, and an understanding of their needs and abilities as learners (Gablinske, 2014). A teacher-child relationship has also been seen to play a key role in all students' academic success, including high and low performers in a class (Bruney, 2012; Varga, 2017). The goal of every teacher is to build meaningful teacher-child relationships through their practice where EI influences classroom management and academic performance (Kelley, 2018). Supportive relations provide learners with the safety and a sense of assurance to attempt new things to inspire learning. Research also indicates that teachers who excel in EI have the capacity to establish a good working relationship with their children (Galler, 2015).

EI therefore becomes relevant in influencing classroom social interactions (Galler, 2015). Teachers who create a good working relationship are attentive to their children's' needs, are able to recognise individual student's emotions. Teachers utilise different strategies to form associations with pupils, for example, teachers engage with their students on a personal level. Teachers who are capable of managing and controlling their feelings whether positive or undesirable, can understand the effects of these feelings on their relations with children and their work performance (Frenzel et al., 2021; Jha & Sign, 2012). Teachers view the capacity to manage emotions as an essential competence to form relations (Brackket et al., 2008; Schonert-Reichl, 2019). This student-teacher relationship can be maintained through emotion regulation, and thus teachers' social relationship with their students can make them more effective (Sutton, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, 2019. However, if teachers do not control emotions, it will affect the trust students have for them (Kralj, 2018).

The ability to manage emotions develops an enhanced understanding amongst teachers and children, constructing an atmosphere conducive to learning in the classroom (Jha & Sign, 2012). Management of emotions is considered the most relevant to teaching as a career (Corcorana & Tormey, 2010; Wahyuddin, 2016; Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021). It has been observed that practicing teachers need to learn to control their emotions to solve the challenges of a difficult profession (Corcorana & Tormey, 2010; Lindqvist, 2019). Research has shown that as teachers' ability to regulate emotions increased, their stress would decrease (Forcina, 2012; Merida-Lopez et al. 2017).

Besides emotion regulation, other competencies can build relationships with children. Conscientiousness competence, for example, focuses on building relationships and fostering trust (Youde, 2016). The use of EI increases levels of trust between a teacher and students where children feel safe to share issues about their home life because of trust within the relationship (Kelley, 2018).

2.6.4 Implementing the Curriculum

One of the important competencies of ECD caregivers is the ability to implement the ECD curriculum which centres on domains of development. Preparing and employing activities to meet the needs of children's domains of development in the programme is essential. When implementing the curriculum, the focus is on promoting social and emotional development. Good ECD educators are taught to have a learner-centred view that nurtures social and emotional development in young children (Kremenitzer, 2005; Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Having socio-emotional skills (SES) ensures that a teacher succeeds in developing socio-emotional competencies in children (Adibi et al. 2018) which plays a role in developing emotional intelligence competencies (Adib et al. 2018). The teaching can be done by displaying the SES and the teacher is thereby seen as a role model for the socio-emotional behaviours (Greenberg & Jennings, 2009; Morkel & Mclaughlin, 2015). A teacher with socio-emotional competence can create a learning environment where social interactions are established in a positive climate (Adib et al. 2018).

The role of teachers of young children is to apply developmentally appropriate practices in implementing the early childhood curriculum by taking into account their developmental needs (Obidike & Obiagel, 2013). In curriculum implementation, the caregiver's role in ensuring developmentally appropriate practices cannot be overemphasised (Obidike & Obiagel, 2013;

Ahonen, 2019). ECD caregivers' obligation is to offer developmentally appropriate classroom arrangements that appeal to children to explore and encourage them to be actively involved in learning experiences as they interrelate with others (Tadesse, 2016).

Through the developmentally appropriate classrooms, children are provided with a range of high-quality learning. Teachers with EI utilise emotional dimensions of teaching to help improve student learning (Molatodi, 2018). For example, empathy competence offers a closer connection to the relation of love essential for excellence in teaching and learning (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). When teachers observe discouragement in children's facial expressions after decoding information, they adjust the speed of the lesson, providing illustrations to make the description clearer of the theme (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020) to ensure understanding. It is particularly important to be empathetic with children who are from different backgrounds hence the ability to understand them can help instruction (Deane, 2018).

ECD teachers also have the responsibility of monitoring learning and addressing barriers to effective participation (Ramana, 2013; Mont, 2014). Barriers to effective participation encompass emotional situations which they encounter. Addressing such barriers centres around developing emotional intelligence in children to effectively participate in the learning process. ECD caregivers can therefore implement strategies to assist children to develop self-regulation A teacher who is emotionally competent creates proper communication, has effective classroom management, as in alignment with Goleman's emotional intelligence framework, they motivate their learners and themselves (Gill & Sankulka, 2017), resulting in better academic performance and learning of socio-emotional skills by children (Omid et al. 2016).

2.6.5 Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence

The early childhood period is an important time for the foundation for later learning (Kremenitzer, 2005; OECD, 2018). It has been noted that children tend to encounter emotional and behavioural difficulties which significantly impair their educational and psychosocial development (Ogundele, 2018). Cuncic (2021) noted that the current generation of children is more worried emotionally than the last. It seems children grow up lonelier and more depressed, angry and unruly, more anxious and prone to fear, more impulsive and violent because they grow up in a nuclear family where parents pamper them, providing materialistic needs but children lack moral principles and values (Dahlqvist, 2016). In this case, learning is likely to be affected hence the growing need to pay attention to the emotional well-being of these

learners. Therefore, teaching plays a crucial role in conceptualising and treating the emotions correctly and handling the social situations more efficiently. The children can thus be provided with opportunities to enhance their social and emotional competencies (SEC) by the ECD teacher.

Emotions are a vital part of a teacher's work and have a bearing on a teacher's success (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Korotaj, & Mrnjaus, 2021). Growth of SEC has always been the main aspect of early childhood programmes and the early childhood teacher naturally has strong abilities in cultivating EI skills in young children (Kremenitzer, 2005; Morkel, & McLaughlin, 2015). It is critical for early childhood teachers to occasionally test their own practices to guarantee that they are constantly serving as noble role models for managing emotions, mainly under stressful situations. Since early childhood teachers do significant foundation work, they are considered very special educators. The early childhood caregiver plays that vital role of understanding and monitoring children's emotions, addressing their emotions in a learning environment, helping children control their worrying emotions and further developing their competencies to improve their academic performance (Seth-Smith, 2006; Ulutaş et al. 2021).

However, the educational system continues to show inadequacy in training children's effective approaches for conceptualising and managing their own feelings and emotions (Bradley et al 2007; Housman, 2017). There is a significant emphasis on academic skills without giving sufficient attention to the development of the socio-emotional basics underlying the growth of the very mental abilities needed for academic performance (Bradley et al. 2007; Schonert-Reichl, 2019). It is not adequate to have knowledge of ABCs; to be ready for schooling, children need to be excited and inquisitive about learning and assured that they can succeed (motivational qualities). They should be able to comprehend others' feelings, control their own emotion and behaviours rather than only hold a pencil or read. Emotions, such as anger, aggression, anxiety, fear, love, joy and affection show both positive and negative important connections concerning meaningful learning and as a result, impact the meaningful education of learners either positively or negatively (Tyng et al. 2017). Teachers need children to be ready for learning, be able to collaborate, follow instructions, demonstrate self-control, and be attentive (Bierman et al. 2016) all of which refers to EI.

The early childhood caregiver therefore has a vital role in addressing children's emotions in a learning environment. It becomes critical to establish the extent to which caregivers understand

and monitor children's emotions. Several studies on how emotional intelligence can be developed in individuals have been carried out. For example, Carter (2015) investigated growth of EI intelligence of communal college learners registered in a management development programme. The students underwent a formal leadership training emotional development training programme and experienced emotional intelligence growth (Carter, 2015).

Correct determination therefore, is necessary for teaching the emotions and developing EI potential among the children right from their childhood. Children will confidently benefit in developing mutual emotional understanding and empathy, complemented with correct activities and conduct on the part of the individuals and groups, to ensure a better life in harmony and collaboration (Tominey et al., 2017; Ho & Funk, 2018). Children develop basic skills for self-regulation during the first five years of life (Galinsky, 2010; Timmons et al., 2016), meaning that early childhood teachers play an important role in assisting young children control thoughts and behaviour. Fortunately, training in self-regulation does not need a distinct curriculum (Florez, 2011; Peeters et al. 2014). The most powerful way teachers can help children learn self-regulation is by modelling and scaffolding it during the implementation of normal curriculum.

ECD teachers should act as good role models for regulating emotions under stressful situations (Kremenitzer, 2005; Peeters et al. 2014). Displaying and scaffolding self-regulation is the best approach to assist children in learning to self-regulate. ECD teachers ought to be good role models for managing emotions under trying circumstances (Kremenitzer, 2005; Peeters et al., 2014). Teachers who can regulate their emotions act as good role models who are capable of setting expectations for the learners (Tom, 2012; Housman, 2017). It is therefore imperative to embark on a journey to teach emotional regulation by modelling for the class (Jackson & Peck, 2018) which aligns with Galler's (2015) study where teachers modelled passion during the teaching and learning process to motivate students to reach their potential.

Teachers have a major role in promoting children's emotional intelligence through direct instruction or during formal and informal activities. An essential part of developing EI in young children is modelling and teaching the EI skills children require for readiness to learn (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Hagelskamp et al., 2013; Rivers et al., 2013; Housman, 2017; Tominey et al., 2017). Children need to be taught important skills such as recognising emotions in oneself and others, correct labelling of emotions, venting emotions in suitable ways for the time, place

and culture and managing emotions (Brackett & Rivers, 2014), which will increase their increase emotional intelligence competencies.

Students involved in built environment education (Owusu-Manu et al. 2019), were reported to be lacking management skills as well as emotional skills. The students lacked coaching and mentoring on EI skills during training which was attributed to the way they were being educated in the traditional way. It was noted that it was necessary to increase the students' level of emotional intelligence to enable them to adapt to the working environment. Skills found necessary include development of self- awareness, self- management, impulse control and emotion vocabulary. Another finding was that students' EI was ranked according to programmes with construction technology and management students having the highest followed by civil engineering and lastly, quantity surveying students. Overall, coaching in the relevant skills was seen to be appropriate. A further study, which explored effectiveness of an emotional training programme on improving EI levels of teachers found that the intervention programme's efficacy was limited as specific competencies had been improved whilst others had not (Dolev, 2016). However, the present study's focus was neither on training programmes for teachers nor children for improvement of competencies but rather on utilisation of competencies by the teachers.

The Roundies programme was instituted to support caregivers' abilities in using research-based practices to support the growth of social-emotional skills. Both ECD teachers and children were trained on the implementation of the social emotional learning (SEL) practices in the classroom (Moazami-Goodarzi et al. 2021). Finding approaches to help caregivers successfully enhance social-emotional development across early childhood contexts attests to be a significant step toward guaranteeing that all learners start school with the social emotional competencies needed for readiness to learn in pre-academic and throughout their schooling (Rivers et al., 2013; Alzahrani et al. 2019). Since there is variance between being taught about EI and implementing it into one's life, it is imperative to explore how caregivers apply emotional intelligence in their practice. The studies above focused on development of emotional intelligence among adults, that is, students on training programmes and teachers whilst the current study focused on young children's development of emotional intelligence.

Galler's study focused on how outstanding and typical teachers engage in self-regulating techniques when confronted with children's frustration (Galler, 2015). Outstanding teachers,

besides modelling emotions for their students, also used expressive body language when teaching. They were also quick to respond to children's frustration behaviour, put aside their own emotions and engage in a process of evaluating the incident. They also did not show frustration with students whose behaviour was unbecoming. In contrast, typical teachers felt that it was necessary for them to express their emotion, showing their frustration to children. For off-task behaviours, outstanding teachers responded with humour whilst typical teachers responded with hostility, expressions of anger, punishment and threats in response to unwanted children's behaviours. Observations revealed that the expression of humour with children's behaviour would make them just smile and stop the behaviour. In contrast, frustrated teachers would respond angrily to children.

Programmes for social-emotional learning (SEL) have been implemented within the school curriculum to train children in emotional competence to enhance classroom learning (Zeidner, 2009; Calhoun et al. 2020). The emotional intelligence a child displays shows the extent to which the child has an exemplary role model for emotional expression and management (Zeidner, 2009; Peeters et al. 2014; Tominey et al. 2017). Other approaches that teachers can utilise to develop children's' emotional intelligence include emotion socialisation. Sukran's study (2015) found out that teachers supported and encouraged children through talking. Teachers explained that emotions were predominantly expressed verbally, displaying their emotional competence, through being an exemplary and sympathetic teacher. Teachers serve as role models to children's development of emotional intelligence both intentionally and accidentally and via direct and indirect interactions that children observe (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Ulutaş et al. 2021). In such situations, emotional intelligence development occurs in an informal way. The way that teachers communicate with children, resolve difficulties, collaborate and manage internal and relational moments are continuing lessons from which the children learn (Tominey et al., 2017; Ulutaş et al., 2021).

Interactions are powerful modes by which teachers can develop children's emotional competencies (Ulloa, 2011; Ng & Bull, 2018). Teachers therefore use natural dialogue, informal conversations, instant responses to emotions, accidental teaching, scaffolding discourses and training and mentoring to improve social-emotional competencies in their learners (Low & Nelson, 2005; Tominey et al. 2017; Ng, & Bull, 2018; Ulutaş et al. 2021). Emotional skills are better taught and enhanced in a positive classroom environment, rendering creating such an environment a critical role for ECD caregivers.

An environment conducive to learning ought to have a positive emotional climate which has been seen to predict student emotion regulation and student learning engagement (NICHD ECCRN, 2005; Pentaraki & Burkholder, 2017). A warm, receptive and passionate climate in a classroom is evidenced by physical closeness, matched affect, amusement and enthusiasm, cool voices and respectful verbal communication between the educator and the children (Pianta et al., 2009; Pentaraki & Burkholder, 2017). The educator acknowledges and responds to the children's emotions, who seek support of the professionals as needed (Cohrssen et al. 2011; Guo et al. 2015).

Most of the above sections cited international research. This section focuses on emotional intelligence research conducted in Africa and Zimbabwe. Some research studies in Africa and Zimbabwe were centred on emotional intelligence in the industry focused on the association between EI and management positions, with a few in the education sector.

Dali and Singh (2013, 2014) explored the importance of EI in work-incorporated learning competencies (WILCs) of principals in the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) with a specialisation in School Leadership presented by higher education organisations to improve their social competencies. The study utilised qualitative research methodology in which focus group interviews and ten in-depth interviews with ten principals was employed to carry out the investigation. The programme was successful in developing the principal' social skills who realised that it was important for principals to have an understanding of the interconnectedness between WILC and EI over and above their cognitive abilities. The study established that it was pertinent to include emotional intelligence as part of the Advanced Certificate in Education programme for principals. Their cognitive abilities would not suffice for the training needs.

The relationship between quality of life of educators and emotional intelligence was examined (Maharai & Ramsaroop, 2022). One hundred and eight educators in six schools comprising primary, secondary and special needs schools from KwaZulu- Natal participated in the study. The results indicated that, quality of life of educators was related to emotional intelligence. Educators utilised their emotional intelligence abilities as a resilience tool to assess stressful situations and advocate modified coping behaviour that will protect their quality of life from deteriorating. The study's focus was on EI in relation to the lives of educators without relating to their performance in the classroom. Erasmus et al. (2022), explored classroom factors that promote or inhibit the development of middle childhood children's emotional intelligence. A

strong relation between classroom climate and EI was found to exist whilst satisfaction and cohesiveness correlated positively with EI level. On the other hand, friction, competitiveness and difficulty correlated negatively with EI levels. The study established that classroom climate has an enough impact to affect emotional intelligence of a child. The focus of the study was on development of children's emotional intelligence yet the current study needed to address importance of EI of teachers to enhance their performance in working with children.

A connection between EI and management has been established in research conducted by Chigumbu (2015) in a Zimbabwean mining company. Those in leadership positions felt that effective leadership was a combination of emotional intelligence skills and expertise and subordinates felt that emotional intelligence influenced leadership performance. It was also revealed that emotional intelligence could empower business leaders to positively apply emotional intelligence to influence others, to create strong relationships and effectively motivate others by controlling their emotions and understanding their weaknesses (Muchechetere et al. 2014). . This was evident among business leaders from fifty companies who underwent a study on the effect of EI their empowerment in Zimbabwe. Some heads of schools as leaders in Zimbabwe have been observed to experience stress such as anxiety, pain, sorrow, sympathy, frustration and sadness (Perumal & Zikhali, 2015). The sources of the stress were related to the plight of disadvantaged children lacking parental cooperation, unrealistic professional and social expectations. Though the sources of stress had a relationship with the plight of underprivileged children, the heads were not part and parcel of the teaching and learning of the children. Since no such study has been done in Zimbabwe, this research therefore sought to elicit information on how ECD caregivers utilise or apply emotional intelligence in a learning environment to enhance their work performance.

2.7   THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Goleman's (2001) four branch mixed model and Mayer and Salovey's (1997) emotional intelligence competencies four branch ability model served as the framework for this study. These models are linked to the competence method (Dolev, 2012; Ugoani et al. 2015).
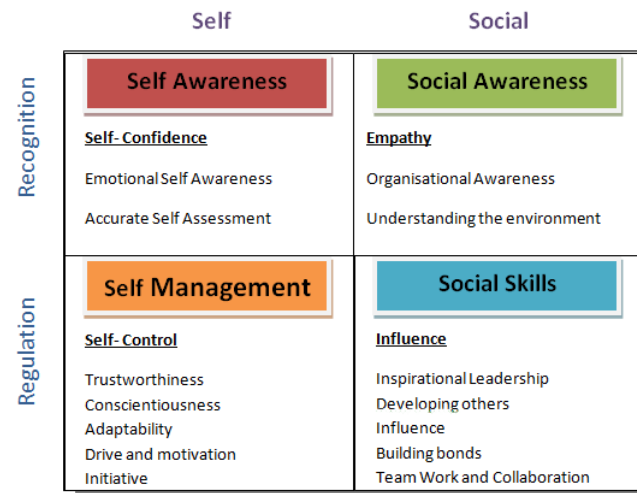
(Source: Adapted from, MBA Knowledge Base, 2021).

Figure 2.3: Goleman's (2001) mixed ability model
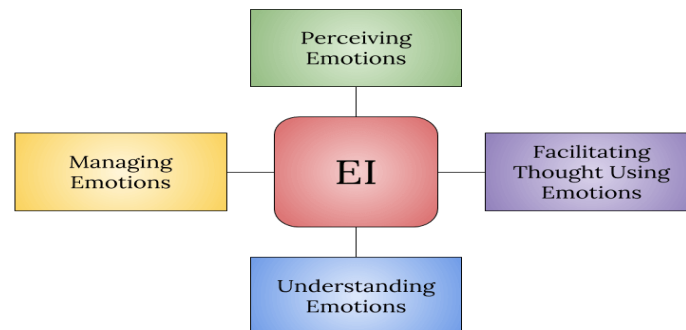
(Source: Adapted Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018)

Figure 2.4: Mayer & Salovey's (1997) ability model

Goleman (2001) espoused the mixed ability model, which comprises four intelligence domains, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Ugoani et al. 2015), whilst the ability model espoused by Mayer and Salovey (1997), includes constructs such as emotional perception, emotion integration, emotion understanding and emotion management (Dolev, 2012; Ugoani et al. 2015).

Goleman's EI framework recognises emotional competencies in relation with employment performance which also satisfies the obligation of the current study (Yiyimo, 2009; Swe - Hlaing & Fernando, 2021). Goleman espoused the mixed model of intelligence, which spells out four key intelligence concepts which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. *Self-awareness* points to understanding of one's own feelings and accurate assessment of own's emotional status. It includes emotional self-assessment exploring weaknesses and strengths (Goleman, 2001; Serrat, 2017). Self-awareness also involves how one understands the impact of those feelings or moods have on others. An emotionally intelligent caregiver therefore has to understand how he/she feels enabling her/him to emotionally assess him/herself. In addition, self-awareness includes competencies such capacity to be conscious, understanding of own's emotions and it also involves awareness of others feelings and how to handle relationships (Jais & Mohamad, 2016; Yiyimo, 2009; Dolev, 2012). Handling emotions in an ECD classroom becomes critical in an ECD class for learning to take place effectively. The *self-management construct* comprises skills such as self-control, being trustworthy, taking initiative, and being determined to succeed (Yiyimo, 2009; Daft et al. 2015). It also involves controlling one's emotions and impulses so that the emotions would not control him/her. When working with children, a caregiver ought to manage his/her emotions. Self-management involves how one regulates to sustain emotional balance when faced with a difficulty a maintain equilibrium in the face of any problem or incitement that can be faced. The competence that enables a person to remain calm even when confronted with provocative situations (Almheiri, 2021). It involves redirecting one's disruptive feelings and adjusting to varying situations. It also involves controlling one's emotions to manage pressure and persevere in overcoming obstacles (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). Emotional intelligent caregivers show the capacity to shift negative emotions to more positive ones (Yiyimo, 2009; Almheiri, 2021). The construct would be utilised to ascertain the teachers' abilities to manage emotions when confronted with obstacles. ******** split

Social awareness includes understanding emotions of others, needs, concerns of others, the person's capacity to empathise with others (Ott, 2017; Segal et al. 2021) and organisation awareness (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). For teachers with emotional intelligence, being aware of emotions of people around, would make them empathise with others including children, and consider their feelings especially when making some decisions (Jais & Mohamad, 2016). It has been noted that individuals with elevated EI display a higher level of empathy as an EI skill (Boyatzis, 2006; Wahyuddin, 2016). Empathy facilitates interpretation and Goleman. 1995; comprehending the emotional responses of others leading to prosocial behaviour (Eisenberg et al. 2010; Ugoani, 2015). Empathising with others including children is a way of utilising emotions. *Relationship management* involves the utilisation of consciousness of one's emotions and those of others to create everlasting relations. Therefore, the construct has to do with establishing and upholding healthy and gratifying cooperative relations (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). It includes developing others through feedback and coaching. Relationships with children can be built by managing and training them to have good relationships. It incorporates one's ability to communicate, persuade and lead others. Generally, the competencies revolve around proficiency at including necessary reactions in others, encompassing general communication skills, influencing others, managing conflict, and encouraging team effort (Yiyimo, 2009; Ugoani, 2015).

Critics of Goleman's model have observed that the model has gone beyond the measurement of emotion and emotional development to include other components such as service orientation, initiative, teamwork under social awareness, self-management, and relationship management respectively (Kumar, 2014; Odukoya et al. 2020). The afore mentioned observations tend to question the content validity of Goleman's measure of EI and that as an amendment, the scale need to cover the absent personality and cognitive domains mentioned (Odukoya et al. 2020). The validity of EI needs to be enhanced by refining the construct through incorporating some principles of psychological processing (Kumar, 2014). However the current study did not utilise Goleman's measure of EI as the study was qualitative in nature. The study also noted the minimal utilisation of the additional components of Goleman's model by ECD caregivers.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) developed the emotional intelligence ability model which describes four distinct intellectual skills or constructs that embrace EI. The constructs include emotion

perception, use of emotion to enable thinking, comprehending emotion and emotion management. Each of the four constructs represents a group of emotional abilities which proceed developmentally from simple tasks to more complex ones (Beukes, 2014; Mayer et al. 2016). The abilities or competencies are related to that particular construct; for example, the self-awareness include the ability of recognising one's own feelings, whilst emotion regulation would involve expression and understanding of emotions (Vaida & Opre, 2014; Tejeda et al. 2016). The first construct involves *perception of emotions* and accurate expression of emotions (Carter, 2015). The ability involves identifying, recognising and differentiating emotions in self and other people (Brackett et al. 2014). Awareness of emotion also consists of some capacity for emotion recognition in facial and postural expressions in others (Mayer et al., 2004), non-verbal observation and the manifestation of facial expressions, vocal tone, gestures, body pose, colour and other cues (Kremenitzer, 2005; Yiyimo, 2009; Brackett et al. 2013). The second construct is *emotion integration and utilisation* for facilitation of thought (Brackett et al. 2011; Mayer, et al. 2016)**.** It denotes exploiting emotions to assist mental activities such as deductive thinking, problem-solving, creativity and relational communication showing a link between emotions and thinking (Yiyimo, 2009; Cheshire, 2013; Mayer et al. 2016). Information on the connection between emotions and thinking can be utilised to guide one's planning. This skill empowers one to recognise other people's emotions and making decisions based on the impact that emotional experiences may have on actions and behaviour (Brackett et al. 2022). Again, the ability enables one to utilise feelings to prioritise thinking by focus on critical facts about the surroundings or other people.

The third construct comprises *emotion understanding* for comprehending and reasoning with emotion (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer et al. 2018). It concerns understanding and analysing emotions using emotion understanding (Rust, 2014). The ability involves understanding and using emotional knowledge; for example, recognising similarities between liking and loving, annoyance and anger (Cheshire, 2013; Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018). The main skill in this area embraces labelling emotions with appropriate language including recognising likenesses and variances amongst labels and emotions themselves (Brackett et al. 2011; Cheshire, 2013), thus, understanding emotional knowledge in which teachers use appropriate words to help children label their feelings (Kremenitzer, 2005; Housman, 2017). Finally, *emotion management* deals with the deliberate management of emotions, leading to emotional and mental development and includes the capability for openness that allows feelings to enter into

the mental system centring on self-emotional management and emotional management in others (Fiori &Vesely-Maillefer, 2018). It involves the capacity to reduce, avert, improve or alter an emotional reaction in oneself and others in addition to the ability to practise an array of emotions meanwhile deciding about the suitability of or utility of a given emotion in a certain circumstance (Brackett et al. 2011). The essential emotion ability on regulating emotion involves attending to and staying with positive and negative feelings. One has the capability for openness to feelings and controlling them in oneself including others to enhance one's understanding and growth (Yiyimo, 2009; Fiori et al. 2018). The Mayer- Salovey's model however focused more on the concept of emotion but the model treated EI as a cognitive process (Odukoya et al. 2020). It is recommended that the concept of emotional intelligence should be focused more on the ability to control emotions (Odukoya et al. 2020)

Specific learned emotional competencies, abilities or capabilities are nested within clustered constructs in EI models in Goleman's mixed ability model (2001) and Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model respectively and make up emotional intelligence (Kremenitzer & Miller 2008; Yiyimo, 2009; Dolev, 2012; Galler, 2015). According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), an emotional intelligence competency framework may be specifically appropriate for schools where conduct and results are the main concern and this aligns with several researchers who have found the competencies relevant to most professional teaching standards (Dolev, 2012; Al-Busaidi et al. 2019; Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021). Emotional intelligence competencies as per the models, therefore, serve as the framework that informs this study as shown below.
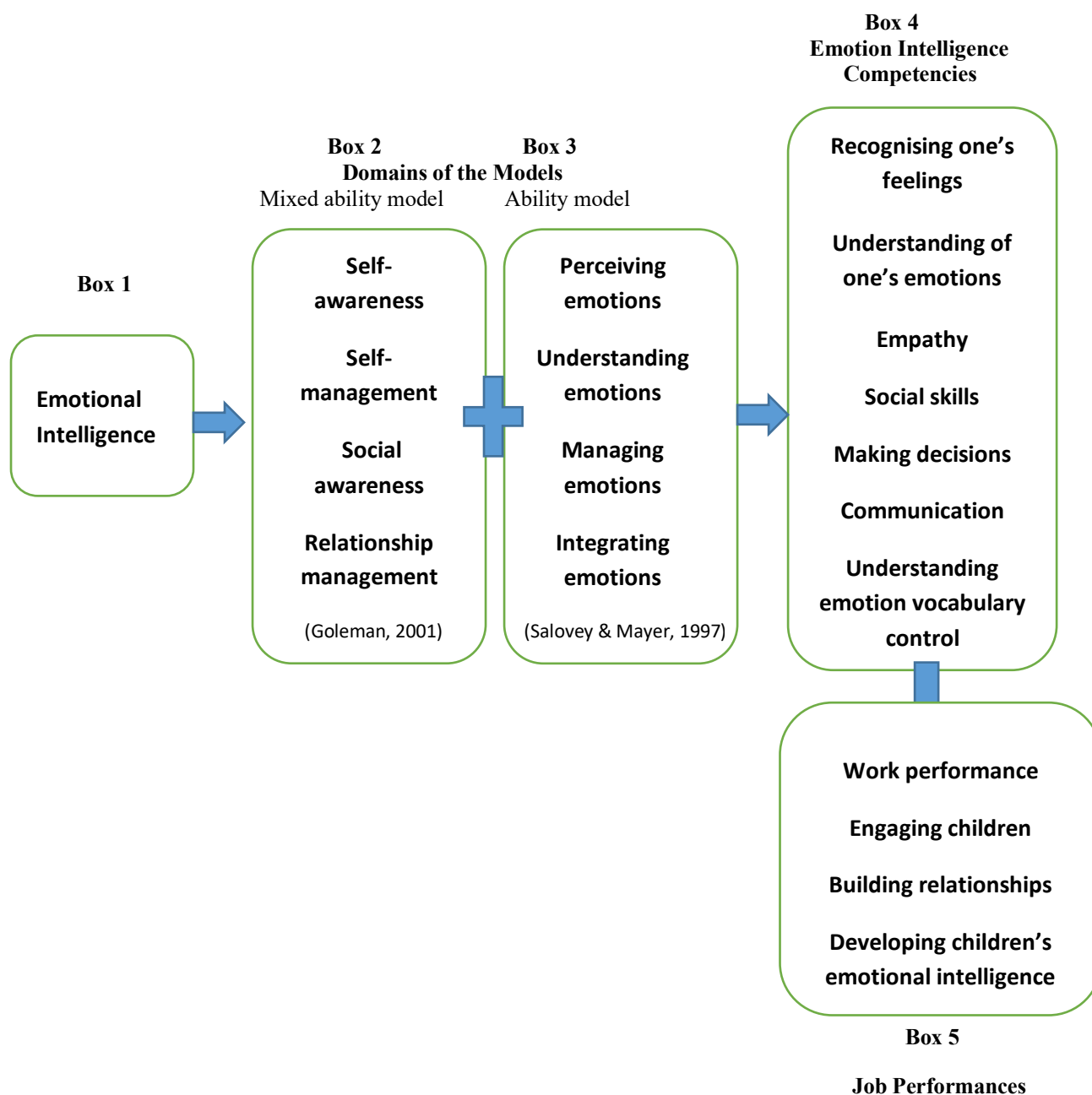
Figure 2.5: The conceptual framework for the study

The figure above illustrates emotional intelligence according to Goleman (2001) and Salovey and Mayer (1997). Nested within each of those constructs on the second and third boxes are the specific, learned emotional competencies, abilities or skills to be worked on and be developed to attain excellent performance (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). The fourth box shows the abilities associated with the constructs which displays the emotional intelligence competencies which this particular study intends to ascertain in their use by ECD caregivers to

enhance their job performance. Leading on from the emotional intelligence competencies is how ECD caregivers can engage children in a classroom situation.

This conceptual framework was designed to guide the research into how ECD caregivers' ability to perceive, manage, understand emotions enabled them to create relationships with children, enable them to make children interact or engage children in the learning process in order to develop emotional intelligence.

2.8   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented and reviewed views and findings from academic books and journals, as well as related research, on issues that relate to EI as it relates to the roles of early childhood development caregivers. The chapter outlined the background of ECD in Zimbabwe, showing its development, justification and its structure indicating the roles of the caregivers and teachers-in-charge. The literature reviewed the construct of emotional intelligence revealing its conceptualisation as viewed by renowned models of EI and several other authorities. The conceptualisation also included its relationship with EI competencies, which is regarded as a symbiotic relationship. Helpful emotional intelligence competencies necessary for ECD learners and ECD teachers learning and teaching, were outlined. Research showed competencies utilised by teachers in certain EI models such as Goleman's and Mayor and Salovey's frameworks were presented. The chapter also outlined the relationship between job performance and EI which showed that teacher performance is perceived from the EI of a teacher in the teaching process. Discussion centering on several research studies which revealed relationship between EI and teacher effectiveness, leaders, student and school performance resulting in work performance, was presented. A detailed review was conducted on the roles of ECD caregivers and EI. Literature revealed that various roles require emotional intelligence competencies. Research revealed how teachers utilise emotional competencies to create healthy teacher relationship and effective classroom organisational variables that generate a constructive classroom atmosphere. The chapter proffered the Goleman's four branch mixed model and Salovey & Mayer's four branch ability model which served as the conceptual framework guiding the study. Specific competencies were shown to be nested within clustered constructs in the EI models. A detailed analysis of the capabilities within the competencies which enable the ECD caregivers to conduct their duties effectively was undertaken. Prior to that, research revealed varied levels of emotional abilities different teachers have utilised and discrepancies regarding particular emotional competencies required

for different positions in the workplace, which prompted the researcher to investigate emotional competencies ECD have from the EI models outlined. In addition, research reviewed in the chapter highlighted relevance of emotional intelligence competencies to various categories of students, teachers, and leaders and varied learning environments creating the need to explore the utilisation of the competencies specifically by ECD caregivers in their own learning environments. The research design and methodology are discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the research was to explore how caregivers utilise emotional intelligence to enhance engagement in a learning environment. Chapter 3 provides an outline of the framework of the research methods undertaken in the study which was guided by the main research question: *How is an intelligence framework used to enhance job performance for early childhood development caregivers?*

This chapter presents the research questions guiding the study from a methodological standpoint as provided on section 3.1. The chapter also identifies and highlights the interpretivist paradigm that guided the study and epistemological and ontological philosophical perspectives on section 3.3 of this chapter. Section 3.4 examines the qualitative research methodology underpinned by the paradigm and philosophical orientation. This study intended to explore the importance of emotional intelligence on ECD caregivers' job performance entails all behaviour employees engage at work (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015).

The chapter describes the research paradigm (3.2), approach (3.3), design (3.4), research methods (3.5) and participants including the sampling strategies (3.5.1). Data generation instruments such as in-depth interviews (3.5.2.1), focus group discussions (3.5.2.2) and observation (3.5.2.3) underpinned by the paradigm, have been suggested to investigate the importance of emotional intelligence on early childhood development caregivers' job performance. Information on the population sample and sources of data is provided. Purposive sampling strategies (3.5.1) were employed to select eighteen ECD caregivers and nine teachers-in-charge. Data collection procedures (3.6) and data analysis strategies (3.7) employed are shown. Methodological (3.8) norms such as trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability transferability and reflexivity are described showing how they are addressed to have quality results. Lastly, ethical considerations (3.9) including informed consent, confidentiality and consent of participants are discussed, showing their fundamental roles in protecting the rights of participants.

Various sub-questions were posed to gather data during the current research:

1. *Which emotional competencies do early childhood caregivers use to enhance their work performance?*

The research question focuses on emotional competencies caregivers can utilise in their practices since emotional competencies have been found to be relevant to professional teaching standards as alluded earlier (Dolev, 2012; Al-Busaidi et al. 2019) and that different jobs demand different emotional competencies (Goleman, 1998; Boytzis & Goleman, 2017). Chapter two addressed the research question focusing on the emotional competencies for teachers including ECD caregivers on section 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 (children's competences and teachers' competences). To investigate issues relating to competencies caregivers use, observations and interviews were undertaken. In-depth interviews were held with experienced ECD professionals. Unstructured observations were utilised to observe situations involving emotional reactions to ascertain the caregivers' emotional competencies. Specifically, the competencies caregivers would exhibit during teaching and learning situations would reveal components of the emotional intelligence constructs of a framework. During in-depth and focus group interviews, ECD caregivers were asked about their emotional competencies in different situations.

2. *How do caregivers utilise the emotional intelligence framework competencies to improve their job performance?*

Experienced teachers who participated in the study, were involved in interviews and observations to address the research question. Literature, which also addressed the research question, was discussed in Chapter two. Since the study employed qualitative methodology, it involved interviews and observations to determine how emotional intelligence competencies were utilised during teaching and learning situations. Specifically, the research question sought to establish teacher behaviour when confronted with various emotional situations. Teacher behaviour can be characterised within each element or construct of emotional intelligence (Galler, 2015). Thus, the behaviours within each of the elements of emotional intelligence can be used to determine how teachers utilise emotional intelligence competencies (Mayer et al. 2004). To answer this research question, it was prudent to observe children and their caregivers in learning situations to take note of how the caregivers used competences during teaching and learning situations and how they handled negative emotions/ varied emotions. The study employed unstructured observations where verbalisations and actions during teacher

interactions with children were noted during teaching and learning situations. Behaviours associated with emotions were recorded and transcribed. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were also utilised to establish how caregivers utilised emotional intelligence competencies. Caregivers, for example, were asked how they responded to frustrating classroom behaviour. It was essential to interview them to explain their emotions when confronted with obstacles and how they managed to calm down when they experienced negative emotions. Focus group discussions also solicited information on how caregivers utilise emotional intelligence in a classroom. Themes were then extracted from interviews and triangulated with coded data from observations.

3. *How do teachers-in-charge perceive the role of the emotional intelligence framework in enhancing ECD caregivers' job performance?*

The research question focuses specifically on the perceptions of teachers-in-charge of the emotional intelligence framework's role in improving ECD teachers' performance. Teachers-in-charge as supervisors of ECD teachers who monitor teachers' work for efficiency were included in the study to obtain additional information on the use of the emotional intelligence framework and as a form of triangulation. Literature addressing their role was discussed in Chapter 2. In depth interviews were held with each teacher-in-charge at each of the selected ECD centre. The teachers-in-charge were asked for example, how ECD caregivers worked with emotions and handled negative emotions (Galler, 2015; Chen, 2016; Molatodi, 2018; Rodrigo-Ruiz, 2016). Results of exploring their perceptions can be found in Chapter 4 section 4.3.1 to 4.3.4 and in Chapter 5 section 5.3.3 respectively.

3.2   THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) consider a paradigm as a conceptual lens through which a researcher examines the methodological aspects of his/her research study in order to determine the research methods that can be used and how the data can be analysed. Guba and Lincoln (1994) renowned leaders in the field, view a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs or worldview that guides research or an investigation. Other researchers prefer to use philosophy instead of paradigm. The paradigm therefore defines the researcher's philosophical perspective or belief which influences decisions concerning methods and how results of the study should be interpreted; hence, it becomes a set of assumptions that guide the research. Various researchers have proposed a number of paradigms grouped into three or four core taxonomies thus

Positivist, Interpretivist, Critical and Pragmatic paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). It becomes imperative that research be based on some underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes valid research (Khatri, 2020). This study is not an exception, as it was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm.

Various paradigms that underpin the research process are characterised through the ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba, 1990; Renham & Alharthi, 2016). Interpretivism and positivism have different views concerning ontology and epistemology. Ontology and epistemology create a holistic view of how knowledge is viewed. Ontology focuses on the nature of reality; it answers the question of what reality is to put it simply, refers to what exists (Maxwell, 2011; Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017). During research, ontology requires the researcher seek to answer questions such as what is the nature of the situation being studied (Khatri, 2020).

Ontology is the philosophical view concerning the nature of existence including the basic categories of things that exist, while epistemology is a philosophical view that refers to what people know, how they know it and assumptions on the nature of knowledge and reality (Crotty, 2003; Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017). Traditionally, basic epistemological questions have been concerned with the origin of knowledge (Soini & Kronqvist, 2011; Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017) and how people know the relationship between the knower and the known (Maxwell, 2011; Al Riyami, 2015). During research, it is the knowledge the researcher interprets from participants' understanding (Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017). Thus, interpretivism holds that there is no single reality and that reality comes as a result of interpretation. To understand multiple realities, researchers rely on qualitative methods (Vanson, 2014). A subjective view of reality rejects the positivist thrust of knowledge favouring an epistemology that underscores the significance of understanding the process in which humans concretise their relationship to their world (Aliyu et al. 2014). The interpretivist paradigm values subjectivity as compared to objectivity (Thanh & Thanh, 2015), but it is subjective and is likely to show bias in its findings. This is catered for by multiple sources producing multifaceted information. According to Willis (2007) and Al Riyami (2015), interpretivism relies on multiple perspectives, which lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the situation. This facilitates researchers eliciting in-depth and insightful information instead of numbers by statistics. This current study adopted a subjective view of reality underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm and it thus, followed a qualitative approach. In this current study, therefore, the reality concerning caregivers' emotional intelligence was not subjected to any measurement.

Table 3.1: Overview and characteristics of interpretivism

Overview	Interpretivism
Characteristics	
Considerations of the participants' views and interpretations on the use and importance of emotional intelligence competencies - Predetermined theories are not valued (Vanson, 2014) Knowledge is socially constructed (Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017) Researcher and informants are interdependent (Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017 - Interpretivist research is subjective (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). - Interpretivist researcher interprets human behaviour (Newman, 2000; Aliyu et al, 2015) - Development of knowledge continues throughout the research, that is, the researcher remains receptive to new knowledge - Leads to in-depth information - Researcher uses participants' experiences to create and interpret his/ her conceptualisation from gathered data (Thanh & Thanh, 2015)	

Ontology	Epistemology
Asks questions on the nature of reality and whether reality exists out there in the social world or whether it is a construction created by one's own mind (Khatri, 2020). - Ontology is the philosophical opinion about the nature of existence including the basic categories of things that exist. - A researcher would seek to answer questions concerning the nature of the situation understudy (Khatri, 2020). - Getting reality through qualitative methods will be without subjecting participants to any measurement. - There is no single external reality (Al Riyami, 2015)	Considerations of participants' subjective views of what they know and how they know it (Khatri, 2020). - Epistemology deals with how knowledge is gained from varied sources. - Multiple perspectives from teachers-in-charge and caregivers to cater for the subjective knowledge - Socially constructed knowledge (Al Riyami, 2015) - Understand through perceived knowledge (Al Ri yami, 2015) - Knowledge got through interpreting the understanding of participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017

Methodology
Research techniques are qualitative (Vanson, 2014).

(Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2020)

An interpretivist approach to research prioritises the conceptualisation of human experiences (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017) viewing reality as socially constructed

(Al Riyami, 2015). Interpretivism approaches reality from individuals' perspectives and acknowledges their experience as being part of a group or culture (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This means that the interpretivist researcher depends on the participants' opinions of the issues under investigation (Creswell, 2003) and recognises the effect on the study of their own background and experiences (Schwarz-Shea & Yanow, 2011; Al Riyami, 2015; Renham & Alharthi, 2016). Interpretivism rests on the assumption that all participants involved, the researcher included, bring their own understandings of the world or creation of the condition to the study, and this means that the researcher needs to be open to the meanings, attitudes and values of the participants (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Hiller, 2016). With this paradigm, conclusions are derived from participants' interpretations without taking cognisance of the researchers' abstract predetermined theories (Vanson, 2014). Practicalities found are therefore based on perceived realities, experiences, feelings   and not the objective truth measured or observed (Willis, 2007; Gemma, 2018). Critics of the interpretivist paradigm view it as being associated with the subjective nature and a great room for bias on the part of the researcher (Dudovskiy, 2022). The subjectivity of the paradigm was catered for by multiple sources producing multifaceted information as interpretivism relies on multiple perspectives, which leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the situation (Willis, 2007, Al Riyami, 2015). The data generated by the interpretivist study cannot be generalised as the data is impacted by personal viewpoints and values, undermining reliability to a certain extent (Dudovskiy, 2022). To cater for the dearth of generisability the researcher relied on managing various opinions and thoughts of the participants without regarding their personal biases or made up choices and incorporated them in conclusions (Pervin, & Mokhtar, 2022).

Once the theoretical perspectives have been put in place, the researcher has to think about the procedure he/she can employ to acquire the knowledge particularly as the identified paradigm has specific research methods to employ when conducting empirical investigations. This means that the paradigm and philosophical assumptions of a study guide and underpin the choice of its methodology that answers the question, how can we get the reality? The paradigm became the lens that determined the research methods used (Kuvhinga & Bawa, 2017). Thus, the paradigm and philosophical assumptions deemed a qualitative approach as most appropriate (Creswell, 2014).

3.3   RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative research is a way for exploring and understanding the meaning people or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative approach is viewed as a systematic and subjective way of explaining life experiences and circumstances intended to give meaning to them (Flick, 2014; Mohajan, 2018). Qualitative research is an inquiry that depends on how humans interact, interpret, understand and make meaning from their world life experiences (Walia, 2015).

Qualitative research emphasises exploring the phenomenon in the natural settings in which they are found (Ahmed et al. 2011, Eyisi, 2016), which is appropriate, as this study utilised a qualitative approach to explore the behaviour, perspectives, experiences and feelings of participants on emotional intelligence. Caregivers' emotional intelligence competencies and their job performance in a natural learning environment were examined in this research.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Creswell (2009), qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic method to the world. Therefore, it follows that qualitative investigators study issues in their natural locations trying to make sense of phenomenon through meanings brought to them by people. The researchers thus collect data at participants' sites rather than taking them to a laboratory (Creswell, 2014). In these natural settings, qualitative researchers rely on face-to-face interactions with participants during data collection (Creswell, 2014). This seems to imply that knowledge is gained through interpretation of data from participants, hence the interpretivist approach. The interpretivist approach allows for methods which are qualitative, naturalistic and subjective in nature (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Flick, 2014; Al Riyami, 2015). Qualitative research seeks to comprehend a research problem from the local people's perspectives (Guest et al. 2005; Mohajan, 2018).

The qualitative inquiry has an advantage of providing human sides' issues which are often the contradictory behaviours, beliefs, emotions and relationships of people (Guest et al. 2005; Mohajan, 2018). In these issues, the researcher interprets the participants' meaning and does not consider what researchers or writers express in literature (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research is therefore a form of interpretative inquiry wherein the researcher uses their own backgrounds, past and previous understandings to interpret what they hear and see.

Another characteristic of qualitative research is that the researchers collect data themselves hence they are the key instruments of data generation (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, qualitative research methods do not depend on sample sizes as quantitative methods, a case study, for example, can produce meaningful outcomes with a small sample group. However, qualitative data is more prone to personal view and judgement; hence, it gives observations rather than results. This however, can be catered for by triangulating sources of information and methods. The researcher can utilise two or more methods and data sources to investigate a specific topic inorder to increase the credibility and validity of the data (Alamri, 2019). Methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, observations and data sources such as teachers and teachers in charge were utilised in the study.

The word qualitative indicates an emphasis on qualities of entities and procedures and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, intensity or frequency (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Flick, 2014). Therefore, a qualitative researcher is worried about conceptualising the phenomenon rather than controlled measures (Delport et al. 2011; Rahman, 2017). The researcher in this particular study sought to understand how caregivers utilised emotional intelligence competencies for successful learning. It has the subjective investigation of reality from an insider's standpoint as opposed to that of an outsider participating in the quantitative paradigm (Delport et al., 2011; Rahman, 2017).

Qualitative methods are mostly used to generate new theories rather than testing hypotheses, as with quantitative methods (Guest et al. 2005; Eyisi, 2016). Besides, qualitative research aims at gaining a rich and difficult understanding of a specific phenomenon rather than gaining data with the intention of generalising it to other populations (Guest et al. 2005; Lam, 2015).

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is observed as an inquiry which offers specific direction for procedures in research (Creswell, 2014). In other words, it is the design that sets the processes on the essential data, methods to be employed to collect data and analyse the data in order to answer the research question (Asenahabi, 2019). Creswell (2014) views the research design to be the different types of inquiry within different research approaches which are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Almalki, 2016). Research designs vary from Non-

Experimental, Experimental, correlational, surveys and case studies. This research considered the case study design within the qualitative research approach

The case study is a detailed and thorough investigation of an issue, phenomenon or a few cases (Creswell, 2014; Yazan, 2015). Asenahabi (2019) describes the case study design of inquiry as one in which a researcher creates an in-depth analysis of a case which entails a process, animal, household, organisation, group, industry, culture or nationality. Maree (2007) views a case study as a systematic investigation into an incident or set of related events that target describing and explaining the phenomenon of interest. The current case study was intended to thoroughly investigate the use of the emotional intelligence framework by ECD caregivers to enhance their job performance as they work with children. An in-depth analysis of the use of emotional intelligence competences in an early childhood development environment was created.

The issue emphasised is the contextual investigation of something or a phenomenon (Yazan, 2015). It can be considered equivalent to the qualitative research method (Karlsson, 2016). Although case studies can be considered to be part of qualitative research, they can also be quantitative or both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Yin, 2003; Shareia, 2016). Researchers distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research based on different philosophical beliefs and purpose of study (Mohajan, 2018). Stake (1995), Merriam (1998), Yazan (2015) and Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018) suggest the exclusive use of qualitative data which the current study chose. Researchers who employ a qualitative case study should be viewed as interpreters and collectors of interpretations which need to be reported to develop their construction of the constructed reality they collect through investigation (Yazan, 2015). All forms of qualitative research are centred on the notion that reality is constructed by persons interacting with their social worlds.

Since qualitative researchers are concerned with the meaning that participants give to their life experiences, they have to utilise a certain type of case study to immerse themselves in the activities of a single individual or the small number of people to gain familiarity and to search for patterns emerging in the study participants' lives, words and actions (Delport et al. 2011). Some case studies are exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Baškarada, 2014; Yin, 2003, 2018). An exploratory case study is used when a researcher wishes to understand how a phenomenon occurs whilst the descriptive describes a phenomenon in the context it occurred.

The third type, which is the explanatory case study, seeks to explain casual links between the case and its context in a real-life situation.

An explanatory case study was selected for this study as it sought to explain the link between ECD caregivers' emotional intelligence and what transpires in the environment. This type also involves explanations that can link programme implementation with programme effects or how events happen (Yin, 2003). The explanatory case also seeks to understand why a phenomenon occurs (DeMassis & Koltar, 2014) and in this research, the researcher sought to understand how emotional competencies are used.

As an empirical inquiry, the case study addresses the 'why' and 'how' questions concerning the phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2002, 2009) using a full diversity of evidence such as documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2009; Yazan, 2015). In addition, the case study adds two sources of evidence not regularly incorporated in the historian's repertoire: direct observation and systematic interviewing (Yin, 2003; Yin et al. 2015). Furthermore, case studies permit investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful features of real-life events (Yin, 2003).

The case study was the preferred strategy as it focused on a modern phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2003; Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). It offered the opportunity to study the phenomenon of emotional intelligence competencies in the ECD context to develop a deep understanding of how it relates to its context (Halinen & Törnroos, 2005; Heale & Twycross, 2017) within in real-life classroom interactions. Furthermore, cases are an investigation approach wherein the researcher explores a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more persons in-depth. In this study, the case was concerned with exploring in-depth processes involving the utilisation of emotional intelligence competencies in teaching and learning situations. A case study is viewed as an exploration of a bounded system (bounded by time, activity and place), and researchers collect in-depth data from several sources of information-rich in context over a sustained period (Creswell, 2009; Beverland & Lidgreen, 2010).

Critics of case studies view some cases as insufficient or an inappropriate inquiry strategy. Some critics feel that the intense exposure to the study of the case biases the results. Another concern is that a case study provides little basis for scientific generalisations (Yin, 1999, 2003). Case study researchers have the challenge of failing to generalise from their cases (Yin, 1999;

Yin, 2018), this means that case studies are not generalisable to other populations but to theoretical propositions. Considering the bias created by the failure to generalise findings of the research, Yin (1999) is of the view that considering the case as a design will alleviate the problem.

However, case studies can encompass triangulation through multiple sources or a broad range of techniques. Multiple perceptions are used to clarify meaning, verify certain observations, and achieve triangulation (Jurisch et al. 2013; Yazan, 2015). Use of many techniques can result in a strong case study (Stake, 2003). Another critical issue is that a case focuses on a choice of what to study (Creswell, 2014; Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018; Stake, 2000). According to Patton (2002) and Adriana and Luis (2020), a case study is not an ethical choice but a choice of the issue to be researched. The emphasis here is that case studies are not defined by the inquiry method (Stake, 2003; Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). Case studies are also referred to as units of analysis which becomes the basis for purposeful sampling. For example, a unit of analysis can be sampled schools; for example, the case studies of three schools (Larrinaga, 2017; Patton, 2002). In this case study, nine ECD settings were selected, and sampling was purposive which is unveiled in the following sections. A case study can also contain lesser units of study within it (Yin, 1999). This means the caregivers and their children, teachers-in-charge in the ECD centres, were considered lesser units of study.

3.5   RESEARCH METHODS

In this section, the selection of the population, the sample and sample selection are discussed. In addition, data collection instruments are presented and justification for their use.

3.5.1   Participants

How emotional intelligence framework is utilised in children's learning was the key research question to be addressed in the study. In qualitative research, when deciding about the sample, the consideration was that the sample provides adequate, rich and relevant data to permit research questions to be thoroughly addressed (Yin, 2011; Sargeant, 2012; Patton, 2015).

The sample in this study comprised pre-school children aged four to five years, pre-school caregivers and teachers-in-charge (TICs). Nine primary schools with pre-schools or ECD centres were purposefully selected as they were located within an urban community because the study was carried out in the urban area of Gweru. The centres were selected for convenience

as they were all situated in a similar area, which would reduce travel time to attend focus group sessions. Therefore, the researcher selected a cluster of nine centres that were located near each other, thus selecting the centres as data collection units because of their availability. The sampling technique was purposeful and intentional to best understand the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014).

Sampling decisions are made for the purpose of obtaining the richest data to address research questions (Nieuwenhuis 2007; Yin, 2011). Purposive sampling is a common strategy that groups participants according to pre-selected criteria appropriate to specific research questions (Guest et al. 2005; Yin, 2011). The sampling's logic and power are in its choice of information, that is, rich cases for an in-depth study (Patton, 2015). Purposive sampling also means that researchers deliberately select participants who have experience in the central phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007).

Eighteen ECD caregivers were purposively selected, with the criterion being that as they were teaching classes of 4-5 year-old children in emotionally charged environments, they were deemed to be information-rich (De Vos et al. 2011; Palinkas et al. 2015; Patton, 2015), and had substantial experience in teaching ECD children who at this stage, have not yet fully developed emotional skills. Information-rich cases are persons or events or settings from which researchers can learn extensively about the investigation matters. The experience of the topic, problem, or research question under investigation can be regarded as an essential criterion for selecting participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Kabir, 2016). For the expected richness and relevance of information, the consideration was that the sample provides adequate, rich and relevant data to permit research questions to be thoroughly addressed.

As pre-school learners are persistently exposed to a wide variety of potentially arousing emotional stimuli in a classroom setting (Tyng et al. 2017; Alzahrani et al. 2019; Bradley et al. 2000), they need to develop basic emotional skills such as managing and expressing emotions appropriately in order to get along well with others in the school setting.

In this study, both females and males were considered for selection. Teachers ranging in age from twenty-five to sixty years were also eligible and recruited to participate as they had accumulated some experience working with ECD children. To qualify for selection, teachers therefore needed to be well experienced in teaching ECD children. ECD educators' positions require people with a minimum of two years of childcare experiences. The experienced

participants were also qualified to work with the three- to five-year-olds (ECD 'A' and 'B') as seven of them had a Diploma in ECD whilst two had a Degree in Early Childhood Development. Statutory I (SI) 106 of 2005 stipulates that teachers of early childhood development children will have been trained and should have attained a Diploma or a Degree in Early Childhood Development. The heads of the schools assisted in identifying participants who held appropriate qualifications and those with at least more than two years working in ECD. The heads of schools were the gatekeepers (members in positions of authority) to assist in identifying the experienced, qualified, male and female ECD teachers in the age range twenty-five to sixty. The four- to five-year-old children in the selected caregivers' classes were automatically part of the sample. Teachers in charge in each selected school also became part of the sample. In all out of the sampled nine female teachers in charge only seven participated. These were also experienced to be supervisors of the ECD caregivers. Most of the teachers in charge were nearing retirement being in the fifty to sixty five age range. Their qualifications ranged from certificates or diploma in education to degrees in education. Three teachers in charge had certificates in education, one had a diploma in education whilst three had degrees in Physical Education and Sports and Administration respectively. Overally, twenty seven participants were sampled including ECD teachers and the teachers in charge with twenty three who participated.

3.5.2   Data Generation Instruments

Data generation techniques, employed to collect data, include interviews and observations and are dominant in the naturalistic paradigm (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Kivunja & Kuyini 2017) while further qualitative methods such as non-participant observation and focus groups could also be used (Guest et al. 2005; Mohajan, 2018). All of these methods were used in the context of this study as well as the maintaining of a research diary.

3.5.2.1   *In-depth interviews*

In-depth interviews are one of the chief data gathering methods used in qualitative research (Legard et al., 2015). This study was not an exception as it intended to achieve the breadth of coverage across key issues of this research. In-depth interviews are also interactive. It is through the interactions that the researcher can make use of probes to get in-depth answers on responses warranting explanations. Yiyimo (2009) conducted in-depth interviews with

experienced construction professionals to understand how EI is applied in their daily work. In this particular study, it was important to understand how ECD caregivers apply EI intelligence framework in their daily work with children.

A self-prepared semi-structured interview guide was used to guide the interview process. The interview guide questions from Boyatzis and Goleman's (1999) emotional intelligence test items used to measure and recognise competencies of individuals in association with work performance were incorporated. An Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) is a primary instrument used by researchers for the measurement of Emotional intelligence competencies (Fatum, 2008). Likewise, ECD caregivers' emotional competencies were considered through the adapted and adopted question items from the instrument. The ECI was selected to guide construction of the interview guide as it supports correct measurement of the behaviours contributing to effective performance (Boyatzis, 2007).

The Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) comprises four dimensions of EI, that is self-awareness, self- management, social awareness and relationship management which is further divided into twenty different emotional competencies. Some of the questions were adopted and adapted to be used during interviews where perceptions on competencies utilised by caregivers to enhance their job performance were sought. The process for constructing the questions was guided by the EI model by Goleman, which forms the conceptual framework of the current research and the research questions guiding the study. Goleman's model of EI offered a framework for analysing how an individual's potential for mastering emotional competencies help to determine success or failure in the workplace (Fatum, 2008; Ott, 2020).

In a related study, Ashworth (2014) developed a two-part emotional skills questionnaire (ESQ). The first part was the Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) inventory which was used to measure emotional skills. For the qualitative aspect, participants responded to open-ended questions in the ESQ and the ESQ questions also served as lead questions for the focus group in that particular study. In the current study, some open-ended questions were constructed from the ECI, which formed the interview guide.

Interviews were deemed most appropriate since the study followed a qualitative methodology approach. Questions with relevant emotional competencies were targeted to caregivers. One of the competencies targeted during the interview was self-awareness which includes competencies such as an ability to be aware, understanding of ones' emotions, awareness of

others feelings and how to handle relationships (Yiyimo, 2009; Dolev, 2012; Mohamad & Jais, 2016) (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2.3 on understanding emotions). Caregivers were asked how they recognise children's emotions and were also asked to identify emotions they exhibit when encountering difficulties in the classroom to ascertain their awareness of their own emotions.

Self-management, containing competencies such as self-control, being trustworthy, regulating one's emotions to handle stress and persevere in overcoming obstacles (Yiyimo, 2009; Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Mayer et al. 2016) (see Chapter 2 section 2.4.2.4 on management of emotions), was also focused on during interviews. Caregivers were asked to ascertain their abilities to manage emotions in the event of some obstacles and to identify emotions they utilised in the face of problems and how they would calm down when they experience negative emotions.

On social awareness as the other construct in Goleman's' model of EI, caregivers' awareness of emotions of people around and whether they could empathise with others including children was sought (Mohamad & Jais, 2016) (see Chapter 2 section 2.4.2.4 on emotional intelligence competencies of social awareness, comfort and empathy). They were asked, for example, to explain why empathising with children is important in enhancing their performance.

Caregivers were also interviewed on the last construct involving competencies such as establishing, maintaining relationships, having desired responses, including the ability to influence others, manage conflict and promote teamwork (Yiyimo, 2009; Brackett & Rivers, 2014) (see Chapter 2). Specifically during the interviews, the caregivers were asked to identify the competencies necessary in facilitating relationships with children.

Interview questions also centred on Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model competencies. For example, on the construct of using emotion to facilitate thinking (Brackett et al. 2011; Mayer et al. 2016) in which emotions are exploited to assist cognitive activities (Yiyimo, 2009; Cheshire, 2013; McMahon & Winch, 2018), it became imperative to find out whether the caregivers could identify emotions in children and generate feelings to better facilitate interpersonal communication by identifying the emotions.

For the emotion management construct, which involves preventing, reducing or modifying an emotional response, caregivers were asked how they managed to cool down in a learning environment. They also needed to relate or identify what triggers emotional responses. Emotion management also entails the ability to manage one's emotions through regulating how one

focuses on a negative emotion as opposed to a positive one (Cheshire, 2013; Borders, 2019). Therefore, caregivers were interviewed to ascertain emotions they used to keep themselves calm in the face of the stress they faced in a classroom.

The participants could give his/her own words, thoughts and insights in answering the questions from semi-structured interview. It has been found to be the best since the study is set to explore the importance of EI of caregivers in ECD settings. The study required identifying and examining emotional competencies exhibited by caregivers to ascertain whether they enabled children to learn effectively and develop their EI as well. Thus, the performance or non-performance of these competencies were sought to see whether they would affect caregivers job performance which encompass the behaviours they engage in within the context of the classroom (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015).

When holding an interview, researchers pose questions, listen attentively to the participants' responses and probe for further clarifications on issues based on their responses. For the qualitative aspect, Ashworth's (2014) emotional skills questionnaire had open-ended questions indicating the probes to the questions. The same questions in the particular study were also used as lead questions for a focus group, as indicated earlier. The current study also had open-ended questions for the interviews with some probes indicated. The flexibility of the interview permitted the researcher in the current study to utilise the probes to seek clarifications on the respondents' use of emotional competencies.

Interviews were conducted in sessions most suitable at the participants' sites. This was done to overcome their limiting effect of being intrusive to the respondents (Evaluation Briefs, 2018). The Interview venues were thus selected by the interviewees as they needed to feel safe and comfortable during the interview (Elhami & Khoshnevisan, 2022). Interview sessions lasted from thirty to forty-five minutes. The researcher records an interview using an audio or video recorder (Guest et al. 2005; McMullin, 2021) and this research was not an exception as the interviews were audio recorded. A digital device to record each interview to ensure accuracy in the data review and analysis (Kelley, 2018) was used, except where interviewees did not

consent to be recorded. Audio recording the interviews became very valuable in this study as it helped with transcription, coding and analysis of data (Alamri, 2019).

3.5.2.2 *Focus group interviews*

Three focus group interviews were conducted with ECD caregivers. Each focus group comprised a maximum of six ECD caregivers. Focus groups normally consist of six to twelve individuals who are interviewed simultaneously; however, sometimes they comprise three to fifteen people with a group of four and eight being ideal (Kitzinger, 2005; Manju, 2020). However, it may be more difficult to moderate a focus group with high numbers of participants (Pearson, & Vossler, 2016). Several researchers argue that focus group discussions produce data rich in detail that other research methods are hard to achieve (Maree, 2007; Dube, 2015). De Vos et al. (2011) and Ngozwana (2018) contend that focus groups have the capacity of producing complex information at a low cost in the least amount time. The possibility of generating such information is high as participants are capable of building on each other's ideas to provide an in-depth view not attainable from the individual interview.

This study conducted focus group interviews to get in-depth information on caregivers' emotional intelligence and how they utilise it in their practice. Focus groups are viewed as effective in eliciting comprehensive ideas on issues of concern to the groups represented (Creswell, 2014). The interview comprised unstructured and open-ended questions (Creswell, 2014) which required in-depth responses. A wide range of views on a precise topic can be obtained (Guest et al. 2005; Manju, 2020) and a variety of opinions on a certain issue (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). It was anticipated that such a scenario would identify/highlight emotional intelligence competencies need in caregivers' work performance. The focus group interactions enriched the quality and quantity of information and the interactions were able to generate insights on the use of emotional intelligence competencies more quickly than interviews (Garbutt et al. 2017).

During the focus group discussions, a moderator might intervene to ensure that all members are included and that they all participate (Pearson & Vossler, 2016). In focus group discussions, some participants could dominate the discussions, and a moderator is needed to manage the

discussion by asking other group members questions to participate (Pearson & Vossler, 2016) using a polite but firm style to assert control the over talkative participants and at the same time stimulating the reticent ones (Yin, 2011). The facilitator needs to keep the discussion focused (Search for Common Ground, 2021) and bring the non-dominant participants into the conversation (Pearson & Vossler, 2016). The researcher as the moderator had the responsibility for presiding over the focus groups, initiating debate, inspiring participants and noting the discussions (Kruieger, 2014). Inspiration of introverts was through asking of questions as mentioned before to stimulate them to participate, otherwise the dominant would take control impacting the end result or even introduce bias. Focus groups can also be time consuming to plan and implement. Transcription and analysis of a focus group is also more difficult as multiple voices are involved (Mishra, 2016; Sutton &Austin, 2015). In the absence of another facilitator who could either guide the participants through the discussion or take notes, the researcher had to audio tape the focus group discussions (Mishra, 2016). Disagreements can also arise if groups are not homogeneous (Garbutt et al. 2017. The researcher had already formed groups that were comfortable discussing issues with one another.

3.5.2.3 *Observation*

Observation is an organised process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and incidences without necessarily questioning or interacting with them (Nieuwenhuis, 2011; Kabir, 2016). Observation is seen as a powerful check against what individuals report about themselves during interviews and focus groups (Guest et al. 2005; Yazan, 2015). In the current research, observation was also utilised to verify what participants said during interviews (Galler, 2015).

Observations could be either participant or non-participant. In participant observation, the researchers become part of the situation and submerge themselves in order to become part of the group without changing anything in the situation (de Vos et al. 2011; Gautam, 2016). This would require the researcher to work with a colleague which was not feasible in this study. This study utilised non-participant observation and concentrated on being the observer remaining uninvolved without affecting the dynamics of the setting (Nieuwenhuis, 2011; Gautam, 2016).

As a non-participant observer, the interactions were observed to ascertain the use of the participants' emotional competencies in the learning environment. Non-participant observation

occurs when an observer observes events without communicating with the individual(s) being observed. During non-participant observation, the researcher views the experience whilst standing to one side, which can be done through direct or indirect observation (Ciesielska et al. 2018; Ekka, 2021). In direct non-participant observation, the researcher remains in the position of an outsider, allowing people to forget about him/her, creating a conducive condition to investigate describing behaviours fully (Ciesielska et al. 2018). In this study, direct observation was conducted in order to ascertain how caregivers utilised the emotional intelligence framework in the learning environment. Non-participant observation can further be classified as structured or unstructured (Thompson, 2015; UK Essays, 2018). Structured observation makes use of predetermined checklists and produces quantifiable data. Since this study adopted a qualitative methodology, unstructured observation was thus employed which assisted in understanding behaviours in participants' physical and socio-cultural context (Creswell, 2012).

Specifically, the caregivers were observed to ascertain their emotional intelligence in the classroom environment when working with children. Behaviours displayed by caregivers when interacting with children with the focus on caregivers' behaviours and the responses from children were observed. For example, how caregivers responded to stressful situations and the behaviour they encountered in the learning environment was noted. Observations also ascertained whether caregivers show empathy, influence competencies and any other emotions that would enhance their interaction with children. Recognising of others emotions was established through observing the caregivers' responses to children's emotions. Observations also gave an indication of how caregivers handle their own emotions since the ability to remain calm when aroused by challenging situations reflects self-management competence (Jennings & Greenberg, 2011; Jennings & Siegel, 2015). The caregivers were then interviewed as a follow up on the observed behaviours as the interviews focused on the same competencies utilised in a learning environment.

3.5.2.4 Research diary

Annink (2017) and Nadin and Cassel (2006) suggest that researchers need to keep a research diary. During the process of collecting data, researchers maintain a diary in which details of events, reactions to the events and any changes to the researchers' views are recorded. Events that transpire during observations and interviews were recorded in this tool. When using the diary, the researcher began by entering the date, time, place and the type of data collection event (Annink, 2017; Guest et al. 2005).The research diary contributed to the transparency of

the research process (Valéau & Gardody, 2016) through the stage-by-stage recording. It allows the readers to judge the reliability of the research process. The diary was an important tool that permitted reflexivity (Valéau & Gardody 2016), which is an on-going process enabling reflection in any other areas as it permits an on- going conversation about the experience (Nadin & Cassel, 2006; Alase, 2017). Reflections, thoughts and feelings are recorded to provide insights that can inform methodological and theoretical decisions related to the study (Austin, 2014; Nadin & Cassel, 2006; Subramani, 2019). Thus observations, interviews, and focus group discussions were supplemented with reflexive notes (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflective notes on the interviews described aspects of the interview noted during the interview process and while transcribing the audio tape, including analysing the transcript (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflexivity allows the researcher to question and correct his/her practice (Journé, 2012; Morrison, 2015). Thus, the reflections made in the diary prompted the researcher to revisit issues surrounding the methodology. For example, rephrasing of questions during interviews to facilitate understanding of the questions. The reflective notes of the interview described aspects of the interview that reflected the knowledge gap that existed among participants, which included the researchers' subjective responses to the relationship with the interviewees (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The research journal helped to record and reflect on my emotions on the teachers' use and understanding of emotional intelligence (Runhare, 2010). Sometimes researchers would be making reflections on individuals they know. In the diary, friends or family members for example, are considered as research participants and their identity must therefore be kept confidential (Research Journal, 2015). Though the researcher did not have friends or family members as participants, their identities were kept confidential. The diary also allowed me to carry out analysis at first level during the data collection process as well as keep track of my own biases (Annink, 2017).

3.6   DATA GENERATION PROCEDURES

Data generation commenced after permission and approval to carry out research in the ECD centres had been sought and granted by the Ministry of Education and heads of ECD centres, respectively. Permission to visit the schools in the Midlands Province by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) was granted in April 2019. The Provincial Education Director Midlands Province (PED) granted the researcher authorisation to carry out the research in primary schools with ECD centres in May 2019. Prior to that, the ethical clearance and approval for the study by UNISA had been sought and granted in February 2019.

Participant selection commenced soon after the local permission and approval to collect data was granted. The researcher worked in close consultation with community leaders and gatekeepers so as to develop a strategy to identify and recruit possible participants for each site (Guest et al. 2005; Singh & Wassenaar, 2016).

According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), participants need to have capacity to provide descriptions of the essential ideas concerning the topic under investigation. The gatekeepers being referred to are members in positions of authority. The researcher worked with heads of the identified centres to select the knowledgeable caregivers on the topic under investigation. On arrival at each centre, the head assisted in identifying the potential participant or referred the researcher to the teacher-in-charge who then assisted in selection of the participants. Thereafter, an initial visit was paid to each of the participants to seek consent. The researcher explained the research study to the participants, invited them to participate, and sought their consent or refusal to participate in the research.

Before carrying out the observations and interviews, participants were briefed as to the purpose of the research, how the data to be collected would be used and the potential benefits of the research. Dates for observations and interviews between the researcher and participants were agreed upon and set. Before the visits, appointments were made with the potential participants. The researcher held focus group discussions followed by observations. Observations were to verify what participants said during focus group interviews. Lastly, interviews were carried out with participants to follow up on observed behaviours.

The caregivers were observed to ascertain emotional intelligence competencies they use in a classroom environment when working with children. For example, observing whether the caregivers would resolve conflicts experienced by children in a learning environment. The researcher observed interactions from three minutes to start and one minute to end of the lesson. Observations focused on caregivers' interactions with children before and after class, during the class and responses to children's behaviours. As illustrated in Galler's (2015) study, observations were done prior to interviews so as to strengthen the credibility of the study's findings. The study videotaped observations of classroom interactions and caregiver behaviours. This is because, in the process of recording aspects of observation, researchers are unable to both observe and record in detail (Kawulich, 2005; Johnson, 2017). Conducting observations included keeping field notes in a research diary.

3.7   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis encompasses the processes of examining, classifying, tabulating and testing qualitative evidence to address the research study's propositions (Yin, 2003; Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). In general, it can be referred to as a search for patterns in collected data. The process of data analysis in qualitative research is considered as an ongoing process implying that data gathering and analysis are interwoven. Both processes of data gathering and analysis are thus worked on together in an iterative process (Creswell, 2014; Yazan, 2015). A variety of approaches are utilised that involve interpreting the data by sorting, organising and reducing them to more manageable pieces of information then exploring techniques to reassemble them (Schwandt, 2007; Kabir, 2016; Akinyode, 2018). Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis are the two main approaches used in a qualitative study (Vaismoradi et al. 2013; Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019).

Thematic analysis is regarded as a technique of recognising, analysing and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is viewed as a reliable qualitative approach to analysis. After data collection and transcription, thematic analysis was performed to analyse the data for patterns and relatedness of lived experiences (Yin, 2016). The process involves transcription, reading through to familiarise, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes defining and naming themes and finalising analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Azungah, 2018; Meyers, 2019). According to Creswell (2007), the whole procedure is referred to inductive analysis involving building codes, categories and patterns into themes. Inductive analysis, which is data driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Azungah, 2018), is a procedure of coding the data without fitting it into a pre-existing coding frame or the investigator's pre-analytic pre-conceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Alase, 2017).

In this research, thematic content analysis was employed to analyse observation data for patterns and relatedness of lived experiences (Yin, 2016). All recorded interviews and observations were transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were read to check on patterns, themes and concepts from the content. Coding was then conducted. Inductive analysis is the most common approach used to analyse qualitative data (Burnard et al. 2008); hence this study was not an exception. The process of inductive analysis involved analysing transcripts, identifying themes within the data, and gathering examples of those themes from the text (Burnard et al. 2008; Creswell, 2007). However, after reading through each transcript, coding was the next step. Coding refers to a process by which raw data are transformed to helpful data

through identification of concepts or ideas connected to give the researcher to an opportunity to focus findings in a meaningful manner Braun & Clarke, 2013; Austin & Sutton, 2014). There are various approaches to coding. Yiyimo (2009) and Vollstedt and Rezat (2019) considered three approaches for coding data, namely descriptive coding, topic coding and analytical coding. Topic coding, which relates to labelling text according to its subject and analytical coding, are both dominant in qualitative investigations (Yiyimo, 2009). This coding leads to theory emergence and theory affirmation (Richards, 2005; Saldaña, 2015). The other types of coding include open coding and axial coding. The researcher utilised open coding since the intention was to generate theory rather than confirm a theory. Open coding involves identifying distinct concepts and categories since it also refers to a word or phrase taken from a portion of data (Saldaña, 2009; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). In this study, open coding involved making notes in the margins using words and short phrases (Saldaña, 2009; Medlyan, 2020), summing up what was being narrated in the text (Burnard et al. 2008; Maher et al. 2018). All the phrases and words were collected and crosschecked for some duplication to reduce categories (Burnard et al. 2008).

The codes were then categorised. Coded materials that share the same characteristics were categorised and used to identify themes (Ashworth, 2014). Categorising is used to divide the coded material into groups with the same features (Saldaña, 2009; Creswell, 2014). Data from qualitative transcripts can be hand-coded using colour code schemes, though, it is a laborious and time consuming (Creswell, 2014). The concepts or codes were identified through the use of highlighters which is tantamount to categorising. For example, if participants mentioned socialisation and other related concepts to develop children's emotions, the concept was highlighted green. Each category was allocated its own coloured marking pen and the data that matched a particular colour were marked according to the relevant hue (Burnard et al. 2008; Creswell, 2014; Maher et al. 2018).In qualitative studies, all data are reviewed to make meaning of it and organised into categories that cut across all data sources (Creswell, 2014).

Data from interviews and observations were organised and, as such, the coding was used to generate themes that are used in reporting the main findings. The data relevant to each identified theme were gathered (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Austin, 2014) and, thus the last stage in data analysis comprised making an interpretation or meaning of data. Data related to identified themes were then presented to tell a story of the data in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Sage Research Methods Datasets, 2019). Themes were

analysed and shaped into a general description or made connections in themes and developed into a theoretical model. The final report, in which the story is presented, is combined with relevant literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Sage Research Methods Datasets, 2019) and reported in Chapter 5. During the story's presentation, the interpretation could be guided by the researchers' personal understanding from his/her own culture or experiences or sense derived from a comparison of findings with existing literature (Creswell, 2014). The research process is summarised in the table below:

Table 3.2: The research process

Research Questions	Methods Used	Data Analysis
Which emotional intelligence competencies do ECD caregivers use to enhance their job performance?	*In-depth interview and focus group questions* on emotional intelligence competencies caregivers use in different situations *Observations* on the competences caregivers use.	The researcher read through transcribed data to search for patterns Data collected through interviews was analysed through thematic analysis. Observations were recorded as handwritten detailed verbatim field notes Thematic approach was utilised to search for recurring themes
How do caregivers utilise emotional intelligence framework competencies to improve their job performance?	*Interview question* on how caregivers use emotional competencies when confronted with varied emotional situations; for example, they were asked how they reacted to provocative situations, how they recognised emotions in children, how they cooled down in a learning environment, how they helped children to cool down *Observations of caregivers* and children in learning situations to establish how caregivers use emotional competencies and handle negative emotions; for example, how they use emotion	After verbatim transcription of interviews, data sets were reviewed and coding done. Inductive analysis was employed in which coding was not guided by a pre-existing coding frame. Recorded observations were read in search of themes in field notes in diary

Research Questions	Methods Used	Data Analysis
	recognition, conflict management, empathy,	
	Observing how caregivers manage their and children's emotions	
How do teachers-in-charge perceive the role of emotional intelligence framework in enhancing ECD caregivers' job performance?	*In-depth interviews* - asking teachers-in-charge their views on the importance of using emotional intelligence competencies by ECD caregivers; asking teachers-in-charge their views on which competencies caregivers should use to enhance their job performance	Inductive scrutnisation of the raw data to identify themes on participants' perceptions Thematic analysis was employed to identify codes that expressed similar ideas and consistencies in views of participants.

(Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2020)

3.8   METHODOLOGICAL NORMS

Methodological norms are procedures in which qualitative researchers engage to create trustworthiness within their research activity and in their reports (Stahl & King, 2020). They are the quality criteria used to judge the quality or validity of qualitative research (Korstjensa & Moser, 2018). This section focuses on issues of trustworthiness of the current study.

In qualitative approaches, the issue of reliability and validity are better addressed as trustworthiness. Guba and Lincoln (1985) and Stahl and King (2020) postulate that the trustworthiness of a research is imperative to evaluate its worth. Trustworthiness is used to assess and establish quality and a sense of confidence in a narrative study (Loh, 2013; Stahl & King, 2020). Trustworthiness is judged based on findings' truthfulness, authenticity, dependability and credibility in responding to research questions and addressing the research problem. While validity and reliability are consistent with quantitative paradigms in qualitative paradigms, neutrality or conformability, consistency or dependability and applicability or transferability are the necessary criteria for quality in qualitative study (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Stahl & King, 2020).

According to Cohen et al. (2007) and Nowell et al. (2017), validity in qualitative data might be through the honesty, depth, and richness of data achieved, participants used and the extent of

triangulation. Trustworthiness involves establishing credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and reflexivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Stahl & King, 2020) each of which are discussed below.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility of data includes establishing that the findings of qualitative study are believable information from participants' original data in the researcher's perspective (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Credibility can be established through prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, negative case analysis or member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lub, 2015). This study's credibility was established by adequately engaging with participants to acquire meaningful data. This was made possible by spending prolonged time in the field (Creswell, 2014). Spending prolonged time on site or in the field, allows the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and convey detail about the site and the people. This lends credibility to the narrative account. According to Creswell (2014), the more experience that a researcher has with participants in their actual setting, the more accurate the findings.

Qualitative researchers also utilise peer debriefing to improve the accuracy of data accounts. According to Creswell (2014), peer debriefing involves finding an individual who reviews and asks questions concerning the qualitative study. This is meant to make the account resonate with people other than the researcher. Peer debriefing enhances the credibility of qualitative research by providing an external check on the enquiry process (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Barber & Walczak, 2009; Hongjing. 2015). It involves an interpretation beyond the researcher, and it is intended to add validity to an account (McMahon & Winch, 2018). This has been deemed necessary as research in qualitative study can be a lonely task as the researcher is the primary means of data collection and analysis (Barber et al. 2003; Meyers, 2019). Peer debriefing is predominantly advisable because of the distinctive characteristic of qualitative research in which the researcher is the main instrument (Peer debriefing: who, what, when, why, how, n.d.; Creswell, 2014; Meyers, 2019). The peer debriefer provides a new set of eyes that can offer a different perception to refine and sharpen the results.

The researcher in the current research had to identify a peer debriefer to improve the accuracy of the data account. The peer debriefer needed to be someone with some formal training and experience in qualitative research (McMahon & Winch, 2018). The individual should be a

qualified expert and independent (de Kleijn & Van Leeuwen, 2018). Having expertise in qualitative research will enable him/ her to appraise a qualitative study and ensure the success of the research by providing external perspectives (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Fife et al., 2010; McMahon & Winch, 2018). The peer could be a colleague or a primary researcher who is a knowledgeable other (de Kleijn & Van Leeuwen, 2018). The researcher identified a peer debriefer who was knowledgeable and had experience in qualitative research. Thus, my supervisor assessed the data gathering instruments and transcribed data, including the research process. Peer debriefing was also carried out by a peer who has experience in research and holds a PhD in the field of Psychology.

Member checking is used to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the final report or specific descriptions to participants to determine whether the participants feel that they are accurate (Creswell, 2014). The process can involve a follow-up interview with participants in the research and allowing them to comment on the findings. The researcher took the transcriptions and the extracted themes to participants to allow them to ascertain its accuracy. Zach and Rosenblum (2021) also employed triangulation, peer debriefing and member checks to establish validity in their qualitative study as they had found convenience sampling a limitation in their study.

3.8.2   Dependability

Dependability refers to obtaining the same results if the same thing can be observed twice, thus being consistent across time and scrutinising results obtained to make them trustworthy (Anney, 2014; Stahl & King, 2020). Dependability was assessed by employing multiple methods of data gathering. To cater for dependability, the study employed observation, in-depth and focus group interviews. In addition, variation and diversity in sample selection allowed for a greater range of application of the study's results by readers of the research (Yiyimo, 2009). The sample comprised ECD caregivers and teacher-in-charge of various age groups, experience and levels of education.

Techniques for establishing dependability also include audit trail. In the interpretivist paradigm, the researcher is part of the research process hence the researcher might not be completely objective (Creswell, 2014; Meyers, 2019). Walsham (2006) and Schutt et al. (2018) posit that the researcher's mind is his/her best tool for analysis supplemented by the minds of others. Given that it becomes imperative that the researcher employs the use of an audit trail,

which represents a means of assuring quality in qualitative studies (Akkerman et al. 2008; Meyers, 2019). An audit trail is a transparent description of the research stages taken from the beginning of a research project and reporting of results. In implementing an audit trail, an independent auditor, on becoming acquainted with the qualitative study, its methodology, findings and conclusions can audit the research decisions, methodological and analytical processes of the researcher on completion of the research, hence confirming the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Holloway & Galvin, 2016).

The process of maintaining and reporting an audit trail of methodological and analytical decisions gives room for the assessment of the research's significance (Carcary, 2020). The researcher thus maintains and reports an audit trail of methodological and analytic decisions, which allows the auditor or others to assess and study the transparency and significance of the research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The audit trail documented the course of development of the completed analysis. The researcher developed the audit trail by giving the supervisor an account of all study's decisions and activities throughout the research (Carcary, 2009; 2020). This was done by maintaining a record of all research activities, documenting steps of the research study from identifying the problem to reflecting key methodology decisions to the study's findings.

3.8.3 Confirmability

Confirmability involves issues of neutrality in which one has to secure the data's inter-subjectivity (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The research employs confirmability intending to reduce the subjectivity associated with qualitative research. Triangulation to promote confirmability is employed to limit biases and increasing the possibility of reproducing findings (Abdulla et al. 2018). Thus, different methods with their strengths and weaknesses can converge, and the researcher can confidently be assured that she/he is getting a true picture (Creswell, 2014).

In the current study, observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed. Again, in confirmability, reasons for adopting various methods and certain decisions are explained (Shenton, 2004; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher should provide a set of notes on decisions made during the study including reflective thoughts, sampling, study materials adopted, emergence of the findings and any information about data management to allow a search of data's transparency path (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The purpose of

confirmability is also to ensure that research findings emanate from the participants' ideas and experiences rather than the characteristics and preferences of the investigator (Kennedy-Clark, 2012; Maher et al. 2018). The focus was also on the interpretation during data analysis of which the interpretation done was not based on the researcher's preferences and views but rather was grounded in the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

3.8.4   Transferability

Qualitative researchers utilise transferability to establish trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Patnaik, 2013; Stahl & King, 2020). Transferability refers to a situation in which readers determine the extent to which they are confident in transferring the study's findings to other situations (Liamputtong, 2013; Korstjens & Moser; 2018; Maher et al. 2018). The researcher has the responsibility of providing information such that readers with the evidence that the study's findings could be applied to other circumstances, contexts, populations and times. In support of this view, Guba and Lincoln (1985) and Stahl and King (2020) posit that it is his/ her sole obligation to provide the database that makes transferability possible on potential appliers.

The researcher in this study provided detailed and appropriate explanations of the phenomena for the reader to make informed decisions concerning the transferability of the results to other contexts (Houghton et al, 2013; Kortjens & Moser, 2018; Maher et al. 2018). This is referred to as thick descriptions, including accounts of the contexts, study site (where interviews were conducted), participants, the research methods, and examples of raw data to facilitate readers to consider their interpretations. In addition, similar studies that employed the same methods but carried out in different environments could be regarded as of great value (Shenton, 2004; Eyisi, 2016; Consultores, 2020). In this current study, studies with similar attributes were considered in the final report. Transferability was also enhanced by including quotations, enhancing the richness of data in the presentation of findings (Eldh et al. 2020).

3.8.5   Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process of introspection that involves reflecting on oneself as the researcher through examining the misconceptions and assumptions that one might bring (Morrison, 2015; Willkie, 2015; Palaganas et al. 2017; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Since the research involved interacting with participants being researched, it could have influenced the research process and their outcomes. Interviewers, as human beings, are likely to react to specific responses

impacting on the research in a negative way. It becomes necessary to engage in reflexivity at each journey stage (Shaw, 2010; Morrison, 2015). In addition, during a study that may involve emotive issues, the researcher may project his/her feelings into the interview (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). As a result, reactions to the participants answers may influence questions to be asked and how to ask them influencing the answers as well. Therefore, this calls for reflexivity to mitigate the influence this will have on subsequent interviews, the analysis, the reporting and the rest of the project. Shaw (2010) interviewed a teenage mother who actually found relief in sharing her experiences with the researcher. The researcher indicated that she expressed situations in which she made exclamations as inappropriate responses to the interviewee. Therefore, as a researcher doing the study with people the objective was to proactively manage oneself in the interactions with participants. This was done through reflexivity.

Reflexivity provides mechanisms for avoiding unguarded responses that can take place in interviews because, in qualitative research, interviews are experiential. It is imperative to take a reflexive approach to interviewing in qualitative research, during analysis, and reporting (Gentles et al. 2014). For example, engaging in reflexivity during analysis assists the researcher in navigating through the participant's account. Another stage which needs consideration of reflexivity is during the process of writing up the report. The researcher needs to reflect on how he/she interpreted what was heard during the interview (Willkie, 2015).

In the current study, the researcher allowed critical reflection on the interview process and considered different perspectives during the process. Research which explores human experience, therefore, demands and benefits from reflexivity. Benefits of reflexivity are observed when the researcher shares the experiences of the study with participants and moves from being an outsider to being an insider during the course of the study (Berger, 2013; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In addition, experiences that are likely to influence the research need to be noted in the diary during the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher can record reflections and descriptive notes of events like an interview, meaning recorded data (Willkie, 2015). For example the recorded reflections on participants' responses during interviews influenced a revisit of the questions asked during the interview, facilitating an influence on participants' subsequent responses. Besides the diary, researchers recommend involving two practitioners in an interview and being as transparent as possible.

3.9   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section highlights principles of research ethics that underpinned this study. After the researcher had received approval to carry out research from UNISA (ref 2019/02/13/ 57667586/55/MC) (see Appendix B) permission to conduct the research in primary schools commenced. Permission to conduct research in schools was received and thereafter, permission was sought from the Midlands PED for the Gweru schools (see Appendix C). Field research commenced upon approval from the PED (see Appendix D). Heads of all the proposed schools referred the researcher to the teachers-in-charge who identified the ECD caregivers with whom appointments were set to do interviews and lesson observations. All the teachers-in-charge in all the centres opted to participate in the interviews. All participants were informed of the purpose and procedure of this research. Informed consent was employed in this research to refrain from coercing and deceiving participants (Litchman, 2010; Limptuttong, 2013; Wendler & Wertheimer, 2017). All participants were given an information letter with an attached consent form (see Appendix F). Consenting caregivers completed the forms, 16 agreed to participate and returned the consent forms. Seven teachers-in-charge agreed to participate. The other two indicated that they would not have time to participate as they had busy schedules.

The ethical considerations seek to protect the rights of participants. The fundamental rule of a study is that it must not cause harm to the participants (de Vos et al. 2011; Ngozwana, 2018). Researchers have the ethical obligation of protecting participants within all possible reasonable limits from any form of physical discomfort that may develop from the research project (Creswell, 2003, 2014).

Ethical considerations taken note of in this study included the right of privacy, the issue of informed consent, the issue of deception and the right to participate freely (Merriam, 2009; Ngozwana, 2018). Since this research involved observations, one ethical concern of the researcher was letting participants know that the purpose of the observation was to document their activities. Another ethical consideration was to preserve the anonymity of participants in the final report and field notes to avoid their identification (Kawulich, 2005; Dubois et al. 2018). The participants' privacy was treated in strict confidence and findings were used for research purposes only. An easy way to keep participants' identities anonymous when writing results was to create a pseudonym for them to protect their identity (Driscoll, 2011; Wirifai, 2019). Pseudonyms were thus created for all the participants to protect their identity.

Since the research involved children, the child's rights were fully protected in the research process. I ensured that children were observed at their own freewill. This is against the view that, in studies where children under 18 are involved, parents who give consent might force a child, resulting in feelings of conflict or guilt (Kirk, 2007; Maglio & Pherali, 2020).

3.9.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent involves explaining to participants what the research is about and its purpose (Nnbue, 2020) and the dissemination process (L.S.E., 2021). Furthermore, Guest et al. (2005) and Ngozwana (2018) posit that informed consent is necessary for all qualitative methodology, except in participant observation. It should also be made known to them of their right to refuse to participate, how confidentiality is maintained and how the collected data will be utilised.

Another option to address confidentiality is to engage in data cleaning. This involves removing identifiers by researchers to create a clean data set (Guest et al. 2005; Lobe et al. 2020). A clean data set must not have information relating to participant's names or addresses. Addresses can be deleted from the file if they are no longer needed. Qualitative researchers may rely on the find and replace tool in word processing programmes to change names of people and places (Kaiser, 2009; Saunders et al. 2015). The researcher removed any identifiers to create a clean data set.

3.9.2 Children Assent and Consent

In research, young children are considered too young or immature to consent to participation (Dockett & Perry, 2010; Hein et al. 2015). However, in research, informed consent allows participants to volunteer freely (Salkind, 2010; Manti & Licari, 2018). For children, their consent must be obtained from their parents or guardians. According to Article 12 of the CRC, all children, regardless of age, have the right to have a say about matters that affect them and for what they say to be listened to and considered (Dockett & Perry, 2010; Nigel, 2021). To this end, research needs to adopt a participatory rights agenda by seeking children's agreement to participate in the study. This agreement is said to take the form of assent instead of consent, which is an agreement obtained from those who are incapable of entering into a legal contract (Ford et al., 2007; Waligora et al. 2016). Since children should provide informed assent, they should be equipped with the necessary information. For an informed assent, children needed to access appropriate and sufficient information to support their informed decision. To facilitate understanding what the research is all about, researchers balance written and visual and then

support this with verbal information (see Appendix J) (Alderson, 2005; Ford et al. 2007; Conroy & Harcourt 2009; Lobat et al. 2016).

Dockett and Perry (2010) indicated how they got consent from pre-school children for their research seeking children's perspectives on attending school. Children who indicated assent chose the timing and nature of their participation. For example, some children talked about starting school, whilst others preferred to draw or dress up and described what they were doing. Therefore, this is an indication that children are prepared to make informed decisions concerning their own research involvement when afforded opportunities in familiar contexts. Besides providing assent to children, researchers ought to also acknowledge their right to dissent and therefore to opt out of the research (Dockett & Perry, 2010; Brown et al. 2017). This research did the same, as the children were afforded the opportunity to make informed decisions concerning their own involvement.

3.9.3   Withdrawal of Participants

According to Litchman (2010) and Klykken (2021), there are situations when research studies cause participants to become unwilling to continue participating. Such situations warrant a participant to withdraw from the study. In fact, people need to know that they have a right to withdraw from the research at any stage (Litchman, 2010; Limptuttong, 2013; Arifin et al. 2018). If for any reason, they decide to withdraw, they must not feel penalised (Litchman, 2010; Melham et al. 2014). Research participants have the right to withdraw anytime from the research without even giving a reason (Edwards, 2005; Melham, et al. 2014; Alase, 2017). In the event of withdrawal of a participant, the researcher may retain and analyse the data already collected. The researcher in the current research informed participants of their right to withdraw from the research at any time**.**

3.9.4   Confidentiality

The other aspect to consider is confidentiality. Confidentiality requires the researcher, the confidant, to desist from disclosing information unless authorised to do so and only in agreed ways (Arifin et al. 2018). Keeping confidentiality therefore means ensuring that certain individuals can never be linked to the data provided by them. In qualitative research, researchers ought to make a personal obligation to safeguard identities of the people they observe or interact with (Guest et al. 2005; Egbunike, 2019). Researchers need to demonstrate

an awareness of their process for deciding how to deal with confidentiality (Guenther, 2009; Yin, 2011). Several options have been established aimed at enhancing the protection of confidentiality of participants who contribute their personal information to a study. These include gaining consent to archive data during fieldwork, anonymity and restricted access to data. Anonymisation of data is a traditional option that eliminates identifying information or disguises real names (Egbunike, 2019). Therefore, one must avoid recording information, such as names and addresses of participants during observation and interviews or removing all identifying details, that is, first names, street names and other real names. In the current study, the names and addresses of participants were replaced with pseudonyms.

In addition, researchers need not reveal personal characters that could allow others to guess the identities of people who have played a role in the research. In this current study, I had to be careful in entering observation data into field notes and when interacting with people in the community. However, in a qualitative study, it might be reasonable to record names and locations of establishments during interviews (DuBois et al. 2018; Guest et al. 2005). For confidentiality, these were coded and eliminated upon entry of the field notes into the computer and the code list kept in separate, secure computer file with limited access.

3.10   CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the framework for the methods undertaken in this study. The research questions guiding the study were given from a methodological standpoint. The chapter has also identified and highlighted the interpretivist paradigm that guided the study along with the epistemological and ontological philosophical perspectives. The qualitative research methodology underpinned by the paradigm and philosophical orientation was examined. Methods such as observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions underpinned by the paradigm were used to investigate the importance of emotional intelligence competencies on early childhood development caregivers' job performance. Purposive sampling strategies were used to select eighteen ECD caregivers, and nine teachers-in-charge were. The need for a qualitative inductive approach in the study's data analysis was justified. Methodological norms such as trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability transferability and reflexivity have been proffered, showing their relevance in quality results. Lastly, ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality and consent of participants have been highlighted, showing their fundamental roles in protecting the rights of participants.

Data amassed in this study is presented in the next chapter. The results of the qualitative analysis and the findings are therefore reported in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This study intended to establish the use of the Emotional Intelligence (EI) framework to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance. The purpose of this chapter is to report on the data accumulated from in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The findings address the main research question: *How is an intelligence framework used to enhance job performance for early childhood development caregivers?* and the related sub-questions:

1.   Which emotional competencies do early childhood caregivers use to enhancee their work performance?

2.   How do caregivers utilise emotional intelligence framework competencies to improve their job performance?

3.   How do teachers-in-charge perceive the role of the emotional intelligence framework in enhancing ECD caregivers' job performance?

The chapter provides a narrative explanation of the key themes that emerged regarding using the emotional intelligence framework to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance. The identified vital themes also addressed the study's research questions presented above.

The chapter sections presented are as follows: participant information (4.2), thereafter the findings are presented according to the Emotional Intelligence domains and intelligences: self-awareness (4.2), self-management (4.3), social awareness (4.4) and relationship management 4.5). A discussion of the findings follows (4.4) and finally there is a chapter summary making up the final section (4.4).

4.2   STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 presents the study's participants, indicating pseudonyms or codes used for anonymity and given to the selected primary schools with ECD centres, teachers-in-charge and ECD teachers who participated in the study.

Table 4.1: Study participants

Primary School	Primary School Code	Focus Group Number	Focus Group Code	Caregiver Code	Face-to-Face Interview Code	Teacher-in-Charge Code
Takwirira	PS1	1	PS1-3 Fgrp 1	C1 C2	PS1C1 PS1C2	PS1 TIC1
Happy Day	PS2			C3 C4		PS2 TIC2
Mpumelelo	PS3	1	Fgrp 1	C5 C6	PS3C5	PS3 TIC3
Mkoba 4	PS4	2	Fgrp 2	C7 C8	PS4 C8	PS3 TIC4
Chikumbiro	PS5	3	Fgrp 3	C9 C10	PS5C10	PS4 TIC5
Takunda	PS6	2	Fgrp 2	C11 C12	PS6 C11	PS6 TIC6
Sandara	PS7	3	Fgrp 3	C13 C 14	PS7C13 PS7 C14	PS7 TIC7
St. Michaels	PS8	4	Fgrp 4	C15, C16	PS4C16	PS8 TIC8
Muunga	PS9	4	Fgrp 4	C17 C18	C17	PS9 TIC9

The first column indicates the name of the school followed by the primary school pseudonym (PS1 to PS9). The fourth column indicates the code of the caregiver (C) at the school/centre (from C1 to C18) and lastly, the pseudonym for the teacher-in-charge (TIC) at the same school (from T1C1 to TIC9).

The sample's demographic characteristics included nine primary schools, eighteen caregivers, and nine teachers-in-charge. However, during data collection only sixteen caregivers and seven teachers-in-charge were available. Due to their busy schedules, the other two caregivers and two teachers-in-charge could not manage. The ages of participants ranged from twenty-five to fifty-two years with the majority in the forty to forty-nine range. Their experience ranged from seven to twelve years. Those in the oldest bracket (50-59) had ten to twenty years' experience. This indicates that older caregivers are employed at ECD centres in Gweru. The younger ones were only two who were the least experienced. All caregivers had the basic required qualification such as a Diploma in ECD. Only two had attained the first degree in ECD with one of them pursuing a Master of Education in ECD.

Teachers-in-charge were found to be fifty years and above. The majority were either nearing retirement or in the retirement bracket. Although they were manning the ECD centres, none had a diploma or degree in ECD. Those who had an equivalent qualification had Certificates

in Education. However out of the seven, only three had degrees in different areas which were Physical Education and Sports and Administration.

Table 4.2: Study participants in focus group

Primary school	Focus group	Participants	Total
Takwirira	1	2	
Happy Day			
Mpumelelo	1	2	4
Mkoba 4	2	2	
Takunda	2	2	4
Chikumbiro	3	2	
Sandara	3	2	4
St. Michaels	4	2	
Muunga	4	2	4
Total	4	16	16

The table 4.2 above shows the number of participants in each focus group and the group per school.

4.3   FINDINGS EMERGING FROM THE DATA

Findings emerging from the analysis of data collected from individual interviews, focus group interviews and observations are presented in the following sub-sections according to Goleman's Emotional Intelligence domains and competencies (Goleman, 2001).

4.3.1   Self-Awareness

According to Brackett et al. (2022) and Mayer and Salovey (2004), emotional perception intelligence competencies include the domain of self-awareness which relates to the caregivers developing personal competence. This includes aspects such as self-confidence in one's

performance, awareness of one's emotional state, recognising how one's behaviour affects others such as one's co-workers and the learners in one's care and paying attention to how others influence one's emotional state. Emotional self-awareness relates to the ability to read, understand, identify one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and recognise their effects on performance and impact on others (Goleman, 2002; Ott, n.d.). In order for caregivers to be able to respond to certain situations that arise in the ECD environment, they will need to develop an understanding of their strengths and shortcomings, that is, develop self-awareness and confidence so that they are equipped to react appropriately, motivate their learners and create a fair and inclusive environment conducive to learning. With self-awareness teachers can be cognisant of their own emotions and activities in a workplace (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017) (see Chapter 2 section 2.5).

4.3.1.1 *Emotional self-awareness*

Self-assessment competence was viewed to be necessary when teaching. It was seen as imperative that caregivers assess themselves in terms of their feelings before they present themselves to learners. Assessing oneself would make the caregiver aware of the presence of their emotional state such as positive emotions as well as negative emotions. Awareness of the impact of emotions on others leads teachers to view themselves as responsible persons in the classroom (Kralj, 2018).

There is evidence that teachers in this study made use of emotion recognition and understood that there is a relationship on the use of the emotion competencies as reflected by TIC7 (24-7-2019): *Once you recognise your emotion, you are able to regulate or control your emotions as well as children's emotions. Caregivers should use love, emotion regulation.* Recognition of teachers' own emotions is necessary for enhancing performance; hence, C13 (24-7-2020) maintained: *... if you don't recognise your own emotions, you won't deliver well to children. Failure to recognise one's emotions is viewed as transferring a (mutoro) burden on children because failing to recognise anger on the teacher's part means the emotion might not be controlled which would trigger other emotions in the children.* Displaying negative emotions is like letting children carry your burdens (Kralj, 2018).

Children with behaviour problems often trigger emotions in teachers; for example, naughty children and those who do not behave well. When confronted with a naughty child, C9 (10-6-2019) shared on how one can control emotions: *The teacher can just sort of ignore the situation*

for a time and deal with other things, then come back to the situation after you have calmed down. At times, it is necessary to ignore the situation that triggers emotions: *The teacher can just sort of ignore the situation for a time and deal with other things, then come back to the situation after you have calmed down* C9, 10-6-2019). In such a situation, the caregiver acknowledged how the learner could have influenced her emotional state, but by waiting to calm down, she was able to manage the situation. Another participant confirmed this strategy: *I can control my emotions by leaving the learner at that time* (Fgrp 1).

As part of developing personal competence with self-awareness, the caregiver needs to regulate the emotions through self-management.

4.3.2   Self-Management

Self-management includes keeping disruptive emotions in check, acting in accordance with one's own values, handling changes flexibly and ensuring that goals and opportunities are reached even though there may be setbacks and obstacles on the way. It is the competence that enables a person to remain calm even when confronted with provocative situations (Almheiri, 2021). Self-management therefore involves controlling one's emotions to manage pressure and persevere in overcoming obstacles (Brackett & Rivers, 2014).

4.3.2.1   Emotional self-control

Teachers experience stressors which might come from struggles with students, other teachers, parents and administrators (Kralj, 2018), resulting them in utilising regulating competence or emotional self-control. Managing and regulating one's emotions within the classroom is an essential factor for effective and successful teaching (Kremenitzer, 2005; Calkins, 2016). Furthermore, emotion regulation competence also enhances a teacher's job performance. Responses from teachers reflect their knowledge and the importance of their regulation competence to control themselves and their learners. There is a relationship between emotion and learning process hence the need to employ emotion regulation (Fried, 2011; Tyng, 2017). Effective teaching and learning become possible when a teacher is able to regulate her emotions. In such a situation teachers' emotion regulation competence promotes both the teachers and learners' performance. C5 in Fgrp 1 (1-7-2019) described the situation vividly: *The child will perform to her best and the caregiver to her best… to control my emotions for teaching and learning to take place.* C 13 (24-7-2020) added: *When I calm down, when I*

control myself, I am to teach better, and they are able to learn better. Controlling will improve performance in teaching.

Emotion regulation competence is perceived as important in enhancing performance. Emotion regulation competence has a role in assisting teachers in delivering well. As supervisors, TICs have a duty of constantly overseeing the teaching process. TICs felt that teachers were able to deliver well if they were able to control their emotions. (T8 25-07-2019). S8 illustrated it this way: *If a teacher is able to control emotions, he/she is able to deliver what they are expected to do. You can find them teaching well. This can be possible when the teacher is able to control his/her emotions.*

Concerning teaching performance and emotion regulation, T5 (10-6-2019) described what teachers need to do: *You need to do your work well. You need to control your emotions.* Teachers go through intense emotions and must regulate them (Kralj, 2018). Failing to control emotions therefore affects a teacher's performance negatively as evidenced by T1 (19-7-2019) who showed concern for teachers' performance and, as a supervisor, she indicated: *... if teachers fail to control emotions, they will not perform well. Even if I won't be present in the classroom, the children are the little supervisors as they will tell their parents*

Teaching performance is facilitated by emotion regulation competence. Since emotions have an effect on learning and since schooling is an emotional process, teachers ought to employ emotion regulation strategies in the classroom (Fried, 2011). C2 commented on the use of emotional regulation competence: *I am able to control; I am able to drive whatever I want to drive into them because I am able to control them. Whenever I am calm, they are calm, I have their attention and it makes them learn better because they are focused, they grasp more because their minds are with you* (C2, 15-6-20). On the other hand, if a teacher fails to be calm: *... he/ she will not deliver as expected. And if a child is upset, learning will not take place* (C13, 24-7-2020).

Caregivers also use regulation emotion competence when facing problems with the children in the classroom. Regulating their emotions ensures that caregivers remain calm and their feelings remain hidden. C2 (15-6-2019) supported this saying: *I try by all means to be calm, so that the learners won't see that it's not going down well with me. So mostly I am calm.* C2 (15-6-2019) explained the competence she showed: *Its calmness, let me just say that, its calmness. I have realised that when you are calm, the children are also calm.* Children's behaviour problems

often trigger negative emotions in caregivers which warrant the use of regulation emotion competence. Teachers who regulate emotions are aware of the role of emotions in preventing disruptive behaviour (Kralj, 2018). When caregivers encounter children with behaviour problems that could affect their own emotions, they utilised emotion regulation competence. C17 (26-7-2019) emphasised: *Normally I use controlling of emotions.*

Since emotion regulation is critical in lesson delivery, teachers find ways of controlling their own emotions, which means that they need to show adaptability and flexibility in handling the situation to effect a change.

4.3.2.2 Adaptability

Adaptability involves having the flexibility to handle change, balance multiple demands, and adapt to new situations with fresh ideas (Youde, 2016). Talking about a specific feeling, for example, anger, to someone, can help one to understand it and has been seen as successful strategy for emotion regulation (Sutton, 2004; Reilly & Shopshire, 2019). At times when teachers are stressed or find themselves faced with a challenging situation, they use a number of strategies and approaches; for example, as TIC8 (25-7- 2020) reported, one teacher needed to have time to regulate her emotions and left her class to share with a friend while another set quiet work for the children so that she had time to sit and relax … *After that the teacher can be found teaching well.*

Switching to a different activity is a strategy of concealing anger. In turn, showing a happy face would become a motivating factor for the children as they would not have noticed the anger on the teacher's face. Negative emotions should not be shown to children; rather, the teacher needs to pretend that she is fine and not let them realise how bad she is feeling (Kralj, 2018). Some teachers at schools such as PS3, PS4 and PS5 indicated that it was imperative to desist from expressing anger or sadness to learners. Taking into account the need to conceal negative emotions, *If I don't control myself, learners will see, and they must not see* (C17, 26 -7- 2020) and *If they don't identify that I am in a sad mood, they will learn. If I strengthen myself by playing with them, they will be happy wanting to learn* (C13, 24-7-2019). Changing activities has assisted in relieving the teacher's stress as evidenced by the following view: *If I see that I am angry, and then I do something, play a game with them so that you relieve your stress or relieve that child's anger, and then you are able talk to the children nicely* (Fgrp: 1).

C13 felt that playing with the children was a way of turning emotions into strengths. Strengthening oneself by playing indicated a way to conceal the negative emotions. The same view was proffered by C5 (Fgrp1: 1-7-2019) during the focus group discussion when she said that there was a need to avoid displaying an angry face by switching her facial expression to a happy face. When a teacher is happy and uses humour throughout the day, students are more goal-oriented and motivated (Kralj, 2018). To that end, using a positive facial expression becomes an indispensable strategy or competence to encourage children to learn.

Humour, encouragement or laughter can be a major emotional support in a classroom (Yılmaz, 2019; Meyers, 2014). *Children can help by laughing, then you will be happy* (FGrp, 3). The caregivers indicated how teacher's emotions can be positively influenced by the learners in a classroom situation resulting in a change in the teacher's mood when they laughed, joked and enjoyed the teaching and learning process.

Management of emotions is viewed as positive which is a process that has the potential to benefit teachers' work and their relationship with their students (Kralj, 2018). Regulation competence is also another competence that can help build relationships with learners as TIC 7 (24-7-2019) reiterated: … *it gives rapport between them*. A teacher in high emotions is not able to deal with young children. There is a need to control emotions so that the teacher can work well with the children and preserve the relationship (Harper & Sutton, 2009; Chen & Liao, 2021). The way teachers regulate emotions have consequences on their social relationships with their students (Kralj, 2018). Teachers indicated that their social relationships with their students make them more effective and that the social relationship can be maintained through the help of emotion regulation (Sutton, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Villaseñor, 2017).

However, teachers might struggle with their own problems, which can affect students and it is also difficult to regulate emotions emanating from home in the classroom (Kralj, 2018). There is thus need for teachers to conceal emotions, as reported by TIC7; 24-7-2019: *Teachers' emotions should never be seen in the classroom because the child should not see that the teacher is not able to control emotions.* There needs to be a conscious modification of feelings in order to express the desired emotion (Sutton, 2004; Paz, 2019). TIC4 (31-7-2019) emphasised the need to conceal such emotions: *Problems they see at home, they must not bring them. As soon as they enter the school gate (vanozunza), they are left at the gate.*

Even though some teachers experienced negative emotions as a result of problems experienced in their personal lives, they indicated a need to modify their emotions to ensure that they are on the right track to achieve their teaching goals.

4.3.2.3   Achievement orientation

This competence relates to the caregivers being aware of the standards that they need to achieve and maintain, always striving to do things better. One of the aspects is understanding of the situation and finding ways in which to address these through various strategies and approaches. The other aspect involves being determined to improve or to meet a measure of excellence (Ambavale, 2018). Through employing achievement orientation, caregivers are enabled to make the learning environment a place which is quite friendly giving a healthy environment for best work (Raza & Kashif, 2011).

One TIC shared that it is imperative to find a way of turning the emotions into strengths. Concealing emotions, especially negative ones, is necessary to ensure that children are motivated in the learning process. A teacher can try to supress an emotion, for example, anger and appear calm so as not to exhibit an emotion that might inhibit on-going work in the classroom (Kralj, 2018). C13, 24-7-2019 expressed this view thus: *If they don't identify that I am in a sad mood they will learn (C13). If I strengthen myself playing with them, they will be happy and wanting to learn.*

Teachers' display of emotions can motivate students (Pekrun, 2005; Méndez-Aguado et al, 2020). Observational data revealed the extensive use of facial expression to motivate learners (PS3, C6, PS4, C7 and PS7, C 13). Lessons were delivered whilst caregivers expressed cheerfulness which made learners feel safe, secure, included and eager to participate. To substantiate the observed view, C7, 11-6-2020 explained: *A smiling face motivates children. If you show a sad face, children won't be happy. For a lesson to go on well, you need to smile for the children to know that what they are doing is enjoying. It was good to smile to make children know that what they are doing is enjoying. Expressing a sad face, they will have fear. They will not listen.*

Seeing a happy face would make children eager to learn as it makes all of them feel safe and secure as well as involved. In that state, *"the children get motivated and can improve their performance"* (C5, 1-7-2020 and C15, 25-7-2020). Several teachers were observed expressing

happiness through a smiling face when teaching, as evident in several classrooms (PS4, PS3, PS5, PS1 and PS8). The positive emotions of smiling enhanced the teachers' performance as learners responded and were confident in participating during the teaching and learning situations. C7 (11-6-2019) substantiated the observations when interviewed: *If you smile, the children will be eager to learn.* It seems to indicate that the children would utilise their imitative behaviour to show happiness when the teacher does so. A general concurrence among the caregivers was that when one is happy, learning goes well. Teachers therefore put a great emphasis on the need to express positive emotions in order to motivate children to learn. When a teacher is happy and uses humour, students are more goal-oriented and motivated throughout the day (Kralj, 2018), as has been mentioned earlier.

Expressing emotions can therefore improve performance. Teachers' expression of emotions attracts learners' attention which can facilitate teachers' good performance on the part of the teacher, as just noted by C16 (25-7-2020)

Observational data witnessed expression of both positive and negative emotions by caregivers. Expression of happiness in which being cheerful, displaying smiles was evident during teaching (C10, 10-6-2020). In response to the caregiver's expression, most learners were very eager to answer the teachers' questions. Over excitement on the part of learners disrupts teaching and learning. Responding to such excitement through expression of sadness, anger and clapping of hands calmed one such learner (C14, 24-7-2020). Expression of anger and sadness made the learner to settle down and answer a question being asked by the teacher during the lesson. C14 clarified the need to express negative emotions when teaching learners: *Anger can also control their attention. I will be forced to be angry. They need my attention* (C14, 24-7-2020).

In contrast, a sad face would have a negative effect and defeat the purpose of learning on the children's part. The study revealed that negative emotions should not be visible. Negative emotions should not be shown to children but that the teacher should rather pretend that one is fine and not even to tell children how bad one is feeling (Kralj, 2018). C17 explained why it is necessary to conceal emotions: *If they don't identify that I am in a sad mood, they will learn well. If I don't control my emotions, learners will see and they must not see* (C17, 26-7-2019). Concealing emotions can be done by: *Avoiding displaying an angry face by switching on to something else in order to show a happy face instead* (C5; FGrp 1, 1-7-2019).

However, using negative facial expressions indicates that bad behaviour from children is not acceptable, as denoted by C13 (24-07-2019): *If children are naughty, I will show a sad face or angry face so that they will stop. They will stop and interact.* Observational data from the classrooms substantiated that regulation emotion competence was used by caregivers during teaching. At one school (PS7), one teacher displayed sadness because of the poor behaviour of a child. Use of this competence, was able to ensure that the child stopped being naughty and the lesson continued. The sad facial expression enabled the teacher to successfully modify the child's bad behaviour. At PS9, one teacher also responded to a hyperactive child using an unhappy face; this child later settled, interacted with the class and participated by answering the teacher's questions.

During storytelling, ECD caregivers make use of facial expressions (PS1, C2, and 15-6-2019). The facial expressions such as smiling motivate the children to be attentive while the expression of sadness encourages the children stop the behaviour not wanted in the classroom that distracts others from paying attention and listening. In some cases, storytelling causes much excitement resulting in the children laughing and playing up during the process (C11; 11-7-2019). Calling the children by name accompanied by a certain facial expression has the effect of calming them down and drawing their attention to listen attentively to the story once again. Regulation of teachers' emotions have a bearing on children's learning (Kralj, 2018). The teachers expressed that they could find ways to regulate emotions to enhance children's participation. Participant C7 (11-7-2019) explained: *By making learners sing a rhyme, I would be controlling my temper whilst the children are singing and when they are singing, they are also participating.*

Teachers-in-charge reported that emotional competencies such as emotion regulation and empathy were utilised by caregivers and used in place of punishment. Emotion regulation competence is important as teachers utilise it to avoid reacting badly towards children with behaviour problems. One teacher-in-charge explained what she had witnessed when a teacher failed to control emotions: *We have had incidences where (asingagoni kucontroller, ndopaanorova vana) one who fails to control emotions will beat children* (TIC 4, 31-7-2019). Other teachers-in-charge expressed the following sentiments: *Ill-treatment on the child could be as a result of failing to control emotions. Without regulation competence you will harm the children* (TIC 6, 11-6-2019) and that: *If you can't control your emotions, you can't treat them well. You can have high emotions and treat them wrongly* (TIC 7, 24-7-2019).

Corporal punishment is prohibited in Zimbabwean schools and any other unfair treatment should not occur. The use of emotion competencies can assist ECD caregivers in dealing with behaviour issues and avoiding corporal punishment. Teachers' professionalism might be compromised when students are misbehaving, having arguments, or not following instructions (Kralj, 2018). Teachers should be able to control their emotions. Failing to control emotions would in turn lead to corporal punishment, which is against the law. Teachers control emotions so that they do not hurt the children either physically or emotionally, thus hindering their effectiveness in teaching. Controlling their emotions could assist teachers in preventing themselves from punishing children. Naughty children in a class behave in awkward ways, which trigger anger on the part of the teacher. If he fails to regulate the anger, that calls on the teacher to inflict corporal punishment (C9, 10-6-2019). One participant expressed the importance of emotion regulation: *It is important because as a teacher you could hurt the child in the process of learning. You want to do your work well. As you are always emotional, you need to control emotions.* (TIC5, 10-6-2019). C9 reflected that: *The caregiver has to control his emotions, if you just deal with that situation without regulating emotions you might end up even hurting the child, harming that child in trying to deal with that situation, so it needs a lot of regulating of emotions* (C9, 10-6-2019); thus, teachers, therefore, urged that: *Teachers should control anger, temper because it's dangerous* (S6, 11-6-2019).

Temper was sighted as one of the most dangerous emotions a teacher needs to regulate in a classroom. The caregivers use the emotion regulation competence before they act on a child with behaviour problems that triggers anger on their part. Regulating the emotions would have been facilitated by self-assessment competence (Fgrp 3). *Self-assessment competence helps me as a facilitator to protect my job because once I react to the child or take action before I control my emotion, I can end up breaking the rule of the job, so you have to first control your emotions before you act to the learner* (C10: Fgrp, 3).

It was noted that in some cases, schools have issues of absenteeism. Absenteeism among learners can be checked through competencies such as conflict management and empathy. Empathy competence can influence children to attend school: *By being sympathetic, children would like to stay at school and listen to the caregiver* (S6, 11-6-2019). Reduction of absenteeism through the utilisation of emotional competencies contributes to teachers' performance. Fgrp, 2 reinforced: Conflict management is necessary in enhancing job performance because it will eradicate absenteeism.

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Children may resent going to school when teachers fail to resolve conflicts among learners. If such situations occur, children involved feel neglected and would not want to go to school (Fgrp, 2). Conversely, managing conflict creates environments conducive to learning, making learners live harmoniously, which would decrease absenteeism. One participant (PS4: C7) shared an ordeal where a parent visited the centre complaining that her child no longer wanted to come to school. The reason given by the parent was that the child's classmate who sat beside her always pricked her child. The child's words, as said by the parent, were that: *He prickles me when I want to learn, prickling me disturbing me* (C7, 11-6-2019). If such conflicts are not managed, children who are victims end up not coming to school (C7). The child would rather not come to school than face the ill-treatment by a peer and lack of recognition by the teacher.

Teachers' emotional outbursts can also cause children to withdraw from school. Instead, utilising emotional competencies such as empathy would guard the teacher against emotional outbursts, which has negative consequences on learners as one participant indicates: *... when I empathise with children, I come to a point that these children need awareness and that is what I should give before I burst, causing them to withdraw or before I cause them to resent coming to school* (C2, 15-6-2019).

Research indicates that teachers who have highly developed emotional intelligence have the capacity to establish good working relationships with their students (Galler, 2015). Participants shared that they viewed situations from the students' perspective and hinted that it builds long-lasting relationships with the students (Morton, 2014). Most of the teachers-in-charge (TIC 1, TIC 4, TIC 5, TIC 6, TIC 7, and TIC 9) expressed that empathising with learners assisted caregivers in creating good relationships with their learners. Empathising with the child ensures that the child feels loved who in turn feels at home in the school environment. In addition, when the child feels that he/she is loved, he/she feels free to talk to the teacher which means the child gets closer to the teacher. T5 (10-6-2019) explains: *The child is feeling loved. There is now a good relationship between the teacher and the child.* In addition, TIC9 (26-7-2019) emphasised: *The child will feel that the teacher loves me. The child will be free and talk to you as a teacher about a problem.* The caregiver at S7 (24-7-2019) articulated what the child can say: *I will find love at school. I will talk to the teacher. I have someone to talk to.*

The child can confide in the teacher as they feel that the teacher understands him/her (TIC9) giving the child room to open up. TIC4 (31-7-2019) concurred: *The person can tell that*

'arikundi understander' (he/she is understanding me) and now he/she is free to open up. Other participants remarked that*: If you don't empathise with the child, you will not know child's background. If you are not empathetic, they cannot open up their problems to you as a teacher* (TIC7, 24-7-2019 & TIC5, 10-6-2019).

Teachers utilised emotional competencies to improve on their teaching methods as a measure of excellence aspect in achievement orientation ((Ambavale, 2018). Most teachers indicated that emotional competencies such as recognition of emotions, conflict management and self-assessment were used to enhance teaching methods and, in turn, their job performance. The diverse emotional competencies were utilised to vary activities in a learning environment. The practice of varying activities and methods is consistent with good performance in teaching.

It is important to recognise children's emotions as some experience emotional struggles to attend to their individual needs (Kralj, 2018). Regarding emotion recognition and teaching performance, C5 (1-7-2019) shared the need to be observant in order to address the learners' concerns: *It is important to recognise children's emotions during teaching and learning situations. This improves my methods of teaching and it also improves the activities that I am going to give to my learners.*

The importance of recognition of emotion competence is such that will allow teachers to utilise methods that can engage learners. C11 (11-6-2019) felt that it is imperative to switch to other such methods after noticing negative emotions in a child hence: *It will make me change methods to make her involved.* C13, 24-7-2019 also considered the need to match the child's disposition with teaching approach: *You can know the methods to use. If I know that Nicole doesn't want to participate, I can devise another method. I can give her toys.* Mere observing or looking at children during teaching and learning can facilitate recognising children's emotions. C5, 1-7-2019 elaborated: *By simply looking at them, I can easily see that this child is not happy and this child and another child today she/he is very excited.*

Observations at PS4 (11-6-2019) revealed teachers changing some activities after recognising children's emotions. Noticing over-excited learners made the teacher switch to reciting rhymes meant to calm the learners down. The reason behind employing the use of the rhymes is that it helps children calm down and lower the level of noise and ensure that their attentions is not diverted from the lesson. Therefore, *for them to listen, you have to do a rhyme so that your lesson will be successful* (C7, 11-6-2019).

A change of activities is considered as a way of calming down in the learning environment: *I will tell them stories, play cartoons. I will be cooling down. If I am angered, if I am feeling angry, I can even change an activity, I can shift an activity, I can engage learners in rhymes. They can even watch TV if resources are there. I can also engage them in ICT activities whilst I am freeing myself* (C5, 1-7-2019). C15 (-7-2019) added: *You can create a simple activity that calms you down.*

Emotion regulation therefore is another emotion competence that ECD caregivers possessed and utilised. Using emotion regulation might be important for teachers to find alternative teaching strategies, ideas and problem-solving strategies which have an influence on their teaching goals (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Collie et al., 2017). Emotion regulation can enhance the seriousness of instruction or make students understand a concept (Kralj, 2018). When reacting to provocative situations, caregivers employed emotion regulation competence which includes the use of activities that occupy the learners. A provocative situation can trigger emotions to both the caregivers and learners.

A change of activities such as rhymes are meant to cool down either the caregiver or the learner: *I think before you react emotionally you can engage or make learners sing a rhyme to break the monotony so that the learner will begin to participate happily before he or she will disturb others in their learning* (Fgrp3, 11-6-2019). In addition, one participant reflected on the use of rhymes: *By making learners sing a rhyme so that I can control my temper whilst they are singing. They can participate* (Fgrp 1, 1-7-2019).

Conflict management competence, when utilised, can also improve on strategies. Teachers agreed on grouping learners to avoid conflicts. C2 (1-7-2019) said: *... if I group them in groups depending on the number of my learners then learning will take place each and every learner will have a chance to go to a merry go round, swing, slide, see saw.*

The caregivers in each of these cases were aware of their personal aims and objectives but took the needs of the learners in the class into account to ensure a positive outcome

4.3.2.4 *Positive outlook*

A positive outlook involves developing a resilient mind-set of seeing the positives in people, situations or events, even if they appear negative (Watagodakumburu, 2019). The positive outlook relates to caregivers acknowledging their challenges and setbacks, but working with a

positive attitude to ensure their professionalism in the ECD environment. As problems could stress teachers and thereby affect their teaching performance, caregivers need to be assured of a great deal of support. T4 TIC4 (31-7-2019) suggested that: *Teachers needed to join some support groups from churches for counselling because teachers should not mix problems from home and those from school.* In relation to challenges that caregivers come across, the need to even alert their superiors was necessary, hence the participant shared that *Teachers to talk with their authorities and talk with them Mkoba 4 TIC 4 (31-7-19). The TIC 4 added that: The admin should empathise with teachers.*

Although EI is viewed as an inborn ability or human talent (Ugoani et al., 2015), emotional competencies are abilities that are learned and worked on to be developed and put into practice to attain exceptional performance. As these competencies allow for good performance in the workplace (Boytzis & Goleman, 2017), professional development through workshops and courses, could help the explicit learning and development of emotional competencies that caregivers need to work effectively within the ECD environment. One participant hinted that the issue was not being considered in teacher education therefore she suggested that; *Emotions should be taught in colleges (TIC7*; 24-7-2019)*. It was also observed as an issue which would require research even by ECD caregivers in colleges as TIC9 suggested that: They end up doing researches to find causes. They help teachers so that they carry out researches (TIC9; 25-7-19)*

4.3.3   Social Awareness

Social awareness relates to the ability to pick up on the mood, care about what others, such as their colleagues and their learners, are going through and really hearing what others are saying even though they are not really able to articulate it clearly. The construct involves the skill to notice emotions and feelings of others appropriately (Ott, 2017). Social awareness includes empathy and organisation awareness. Being aware of emotions of people around would make teachers empathise with others including children, and consider their feelings during necessary decision-making processes (Jais & Mohamad, 2016).

4.3.3.1 Empathy

Empathy is the skill of understanding how others feel and what it means. Teacher empathy is important in maintaining a safe and inviting classroom environment (Deane, 2018). The notion of empathy was alluded to by some caregivers as showing love and

understanding to children. In turn, children become attentive as an indicator of being motivated. In reciprocity, learners feel obliged to listen to the caregiver who empathises with them. C2 (15-6-2019) shared her feelings that: *Learners 'pay back' the teachers' love through listening to the teacher.*

The learners, therefore, pay attention to make the teacher happy. Getting children's attention is an assurance of good during lesson delivery by teachers. In addition, out of love, the children would be willing to do any activity assigned to them by the teacher. It is also the love that the children feel that can learn without fear. C13 (24-7-2019) shared her view on sympathetic competence: *Sympathising shows love to them and they will listen and they will feel they want to make you happy so they will pay attention. It will make me to deliver my lesson well. The child will be motivated to participate, to learn to do whatever activity is being done.*

Empathy was one competence which teachers can utilise to improve their performance. Empathy engages students optimally in learning (Wahyuddin 2016) and can bring children close to their teachers to feel loved and wanted. C5 (1-7-2019) explained the impact of empathy on children's learning by saying: *The child will perform to her/his best.* Expressing empathy makes children feel loved by their teachers, facilitating the learning (TIC4, 31-7-2019). *If a teacher empathises with children, it will make him/her wanted and learning will not be difficult. The children like listening to the teacher. Children will therefore do well if they listen to the teacher* (TIC6, 11-6-2019). The necessity of a teacher's empathy emotion competence is seen in the classroom: *I will change the situation from a bad situation to a better way. Teaching can improve. I need all of them not to be absent minded. I want them to be part of the lesson* (C17 26-7-2019).

In addition, TIC1 and TIC4 expressed sentiments on the impact of empathy on children's well-being and learning: *Listening becomes a way of appreciating their teacher's love* (T1, 15-6-2019) and *they will pay back by listening* and *the child likes listening* (T4, 31-7-2019). Emphasis therefore was put on listening emanating from the teacher's empathy that performance is enhanced. To that end, TIC1, 15-6-2019 commented: *They will feel loved and wanted. They will listen attentively. They perform better because they will listen.* And T4, 31-7-2019 added: *The children will say 'munhu uyu anodida' (this person loves me). I should pay back by listening.* When they listen, they understand whatever is delivered by the teacher as T6

(11-6-2019) reiterated: *Kudzidza kuye kotobuda zvakanaka kwave ne positive results.* (This learning is now coming out well. It is having positive results.)

When children notice that someone has taken notice of them, they start participating (T8). The participation is evidence of the teacher's improved performance which occurs when children pay attention and do well. Children's behaviour towards the empathetic teacher was described thus: ... *Will now be doing what the teacher wants and can even show the teacher* (TIC, 25-7-2019) and this makes the child feel accepted. By empathising, TIC 6, (11-6-2019) said that the child feels accepted, learning would not be difficult. In addition, the child has a feeling of being acknowledged and valued as a member of the class. T4 (31-7-2019) described the child's feeling: *Now that person can tell that the teacher is understanding me and now is feeling free to open up. (That person can tell that munhu arikundi understander, ava kufeeler free to open up).*

Empathy is also viewed as a natural competence which T4 feels is a gift of the 'Holy Spirit'. In support, TIC4, (31-7 2019) said: *Empathy allows teaching to be viewed as emanating from passion. It improves the teachers' job because some of us have a calling in the teaching field. Most of teachers are called for that. They are the people who are empathetic.*

In contrast, use of sympathy can derail children's progress. TIC 1 (19-7-2019) expressed this view thus: ... *it's not necessary to feel for the child. Some children are lazy. You can over empathise. You can hinder performance.*

As previously indicated, the competence of empathy relates to maintaining a safe and inviting classroom environment which is reinforced by organisational awareness.

4.3.3.2 *Organisational awareness*

Organisational awareness is when the caregiver has the ability to 'read' the emotional currents and relationships within the classroom, and identify influencers, networks and dynamics (Youde, 2016). The observational and interview data revealed that ECD teachers had specific emotional competencies that assisted them in carrying out their jobs.

For example, C15 recognised children who were shy and withdrawn. The skill of emotion recognition supported the teacher in including the learners in the lesson and encouraging them to participate during the lesson by employing influence competence (C15). The teacher was able to assist the learners to participate during the lesson TIC 8 felt that: *All of the emotion*

skills should be used to teaching TIC 8 (25-07-2019). However, besides recognising children's emotions, the ECD teachers mentioned that they had to recognise their own emotions, as previously mentioned, as this was of prime importance in order for caregivers to be able to react to the children's emotions. TIC7 (24-7-2019) reflected, *once you recognise, you are able to regulate or control your emotions as well as children's emotions.*

It is thus important for the teacher to recognise children's emotions in order to attend to their individual needs as some learners experience emotional struggles (Kralj, 2018). Recognition of emotions can motivate learners. One participant explained that after recognising emotions (no matter the kind) in the child, the teacher should respond accordingly: *You can know how to motivate so that they can learn* (S7, C14-24-7-2019). Emotion recognition was a competence ECD caregivers used. For example, when teachers recognised that over-excitement in children could escalate if left unchecked, they were able to calm the children down. Teachers used the skill of emotion recognition to react in a positive manner, which enhanced the caregivers' performance.

At times teachers rely on learners who have recognised and identified emotions in other children. For example, in the class of C18 (26-7-2019), learners reported an angry child. The teacher had not noticed as she seemed to be overwhelmed with seventy-four ECD 'B' children in her class, but with the help of other learners (teamwork), she was able to address the situation.

Recognition competence was also noted to have an impact on the teachers' job performance. After observing and identifying children's emotions, the teacher can take measures to help the learners, for example counselling. T7 (24-7-2019) reflected: *Recognition of emotions is the starting point for a teacher to know what to do with a child.* It is imperative to treat the children as individuals because they vary in the display of emotions (Kralj, 2018). T4 (31-7-2019) echoed that recognising emotions helps a teacher to deal with the child; for example, giving enough teaching time to the child: *She (teacher) is going to plan teaching for the child based on the emotions (recognised).*

Some children get stressed because of their life style and are not given the necessary attention at home; for example, *those who stay with stepmothers* (T6, 11-6-2019). Recognising these children experiencing various emotions, allows them the opportunity to open up to the teacher. Recognition competence helps the teacher to *learn much about the child* (TIC, 10-6-2019). It

becomes important for teachers to recognise children's emotions as some are experiencing emotional struggles and without someone attending to their individual needs (Kralj, 2018), it may hinder the learning process.

It is imperative for teachers to recognise different emotions affecting learners in a class (C10, 10-6-2020), acknowledge them and treat each learner as an individual because they vary in display of emotions (Kralj, 2018). The reason teachers need to recognise the emotions that affect children is expressed by C10 (10-6-2020), who explained the predicament of some children who were stressed due to certain situations emanating from their home background: *Some children stay with their stepfathers and they won't be receiving the right treatment. So, when the child comes to school, the teacher should show empathy, love and understanding after having recognised her. The child will in the end like coming to school and learning will be enhanced.*

It is in such cases, that the caregiver is responsible for conveying feelings of care for their students in order to create environments conducive to learning at the same time building close relationships with them (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Galler, 2015;) through showing sympathy.

4.3.4 Relationship Awareness

All dimensions of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, social skills and motivation were viewed to be related to job performance (Mwathi, 2010; Mohamad & Jais, 2016). The study revealed that relationship awareness which relates to getting on well with others, using sensitivity as a coach and mentor, managing conflict can improve both the teachers and learners' performance, particularly if the leadership of the caregiver (teacher) guides the learning in successfully managing the process and classroom interactions. Relationship management comprises influence, conflict, developing others, communication, coach and mentor, team work and competencies and inspirational leadership (Youde, 2016).

4.3.4.1 *Influence*

Influence is a social competence which relates to meaningful and effective competence in supporting others to complete a task or effect a change. The competence in the skill of influence leads to learners being motivated. C5, 1-7-2020 pointed out that persuading a child has a resultant effect of building a sense of belonging in the child or making the child feel like part of the group. Controlling emotions was also seen as a way of ensuring that children are comfortable in a safe and secure environment (C17).

C5 (1-7-2019) emphasised what an environment conducive to learning enables the children to do: *If I manage to control my emotions, this will in turn help the learners to be in a position to even come to me to be free to approach me in any way.*

Controlling emotions and using influence is recognised as necessary for creating a free environment that allows children to *play freely and explore* (C16). It is essential for an ECD caregiver to allow children to explore and play freely as during the early years, it is their way of experimenting, exploring, investigating and learning. Participant C9: FGrp, 3 (10-6-2019) shared her perception on the use of influence competence: *If I persuade a child, he/she will like school. And that the child will be motivated to participate, to learn and to do whatever activity is being done* (C9, 10-6-2020). Ways in which teachers show their emotions has an effect on the students and all the activities in the classroom (Kralj, 2018). In addition, caregivers' expression of *good emotions makes children participate* (C11, 11-6-2019). The good emotions refer to positive facial expression of happiness, for example. In agreement to the importance of expression of positive emotion in enhancing participation in children C7 (11-6-2019) reiterated: *These learners are very sensitive, if they see you happy, they will be able to participate well.*

Learners experiencing varied emotional states have difficulty in fully participating in class. It is the responsibility of the teacher to recognise what is happening with the learners and this is hinged on teachers' emotional recognition competence. Observational data revealed that withdrawn and shy children were often reluctant to participate in class (PS8). Recognising such emotional states in children allows the teacher to utilise other competencies to enhance participation in the affected children. Teachers' expression of emotion affects the learner and his/her interaction with the teacher (Frenzel et al, 2021). C15 (25-7-2019) carefully assisted the withdrawn and shy children through the use of influence competence after recognition of the emotional state to encourage the children to participate.

Influence competence was also observed being used by some caregivers. For example, C13 (24-7-2019) was also observed persuading learners to participate after she recognised some negative emotions being displayed. On identifying children who were shy and withdrawn, the teacher influenced the children by using humour and persuasive language to make a withdrawn child re-join others in learning activities; for example, she said to a shy child: "*tauraika mainini*" (can you talk auntie). Through persuading a child, the teacher managed to coax the child to come back and interact with others. One participant in Fgrp 1 (1-7-2019) provided

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some explanation: *The moment I am able to influence the child to come back to other learners, the child's performance is improved. It is improved, socially; also the moment the child interacts with other learners, then learning is taking place.* Showing love to children has been seen as a foundation for all learning at ECD level, including when confronted with children's behaviour problems (C5, 1-7-2019). Showing love is done through utilising empathy in the face of problems. In addition, capturing the children's attention is viewed as important and also utilising competencies such as co-operation, communication skill and self-control which motivates children.

Calm and interested children understand what is being taught: *Children will now be willing to do what the teacher wants. Once they have calmed down, the children are able to concentrate. Children will not be hearing before, after, the children will be hearing* (TIC8, 25-7-2020) and this resonates with TIC5, 10-6-2019 who reflected: *Yes, it helps, learning takes place well and there is good participation. If they are calm, they manage the lessons.* On the other hand TIC1 (19-7-2019) commented: *If you don't calm them down, that lesson won't progress. You have captured their attention.* The TIC at PS7 emphasised the importance of calming children in order for learning to take place. It was also felt that other children could also learn to control other children's emotion. It is therefore imperative that the caregivers have knowledge on how to control children's emotions. T7 (24-7-2019) emphasised and illustrated: *If a child is crying it draws everyone's attention and no learning will take place. Other children will learn to control. They will know that he/she should be part of us ... controlling him so that he learns.* When asked how children are assisted in calming down, one participant said: *... if a child is crying, I can call the child and comfort that child and the child will perform to her/his best* (C5, 1-7-2019).

Observational data revealed that during teaching and learning, children often display various emotions which can disrupt the learning process. Children tend to laugh at each other's errors, (PS1) which demoralises and discourages the one being laughed at. When that eventuality erupted at PS7 then C14 (24-7-2019) tried to calm them down, saying: *don't laugh, don't laugh.* It becomes imperative to calm learners to make them listen and be attentive, resuming or continuing participation in the lesson. Caregiver 17 at PS8 calmed children who were too excited by instructing them to put fingers on their mouths. The silence was also the response that facilitated continuation of their activity. A teacher can down regulate positive emotions to keep the emotional climate in the classroom neutral (Kralj, 2018)

When faced with children's behaviour problems, the teacher has to control emotions rather than succumb to the emotion-triggering behaviour. C15 (25-7-2019) provides some explanation: *You control the emotions to create an environment that calms everyone down. You can create a simple activity that calms them down.* When controlling emotions, teachers can switch to something else as one participant says: *Tactfully I can think of a song or a rhyme* (TIC1, 19-7-2019). On calming children down, teachers can also utilise varied activities: *If children can't settle, the teacher has to formulate games, activities to help excited children and deal with them using different tasks.* To control their emotions, teachers changed and engaged children in certain activities whilst they cooled down. C17 (26-7-2019) described what teachers do: *Singing rhymes or to say that I am not feeling well. Ask the learners what their view on what to do so that my emotions can change.* C15 (25-7-2019) adds that children: *Go for outdoor activity where they can play alone.*

Conflicts affect the quality of the learning environment and the teachers' performance (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). The study therefore revealed the need to utilise conflict management competence. Teacher participants concurred that an environment conducive to learning results from conflict management competence. C9 in (FGrp 3, 10-6-2020) shared her viewpoint thus: *It (conflict management) also helps learners to live harmoniously and socialising well.* S5 (FGrp 3, 10-6- 2020) then added*: Once they come to school, where there is an environment conducive to learning, they will participate happily.* C11 (10-6-2019) concurred by saying: *Learners will be motivated to learn without fear, thereby creating an environment conducive to learning.*

Since children are imitators and often play up, imitating the story characters, using emotion regulation competence would allow children to learn how to calm themselves. C2 elaborated on what the calming involves: *I can start singing or I can call and talk to the child…. When I realise that I am not stable emotionally, I give them free play.* Observational classroom data substantiated caregivers' use of some regulating emotional competencies when carrying out operations in the classroom situation. Too much excitement makes it challenging to deliver lessons (PS3 and PS4) and teachers were observed using emotion regulation competencies to calm over-excited children down (CI, C7, C13, C14 and C15). Teachers use strategies such as rhymes which seemed to have a calming effect on the children. Rhymes such as '*bata musoro*' (touch your head) '*umwe wacho*' (the other one) and '*maoko mudenga*' (hands up hands up)

were used. Once the children had calmed down, the lessons then continued. C13, 24-7-2019 shared: *I use games rhymes and songs that draw their attention. They will be happy.*

The caregiver, as well as being the one who influences emotions and behaviour in the classroom, is responsible for being the coach and mentor and working with the learners to develop their emotional intelligence.

4.3.4.2 *Coach and mentor/developing others*

The role of a coach and mentor is taken on by the caregiver who has the ability to foster long-term learning or development. Social and emotional skill development is a key component of ECD programmes, and ECD teachers need to have developed the relevant skills to nurture emotional intelligence abilities in young children (Kremenitzer, 2005; Anastasiou, 2020). One of the key roles of ECD educators is to develop children in all facets. Thus, they have to develop the physical, intellectual, social and emotional domains (Alzahrani et al. 2019). It is pertinent to explicitly teach and train children to be able to manage their feelings. C17 (26-7-2019) reiterated: *You need to teach them to control their feelings.* Children need to develop emotion regulation ability so as to handle situations they encounter at school. C11 (11-6-2019) emphasised: *My duty is to make children develop their emotions. So, I should be able help them develop and control their emotions. If they cannot control their emotions, they might not come to school because some children bully others.*

It is imperative to embark on teaching emotional regulation by modelling to the class (Jackson & Peck, 2018). Participants expressed that the children would learn to control their emotions. The teachers model the emotion competence in the process of controlling the emotions. C17 (26-7-2019) expressed: *When I am controlling my emotions, children will also learn to control themselves. If I control emotions even in my absence, they can control their emotions*. And C1 (15-6-2019) added: *When I am just calm, they are also calm.* ECD teachers should therefore act as good role models for regulating emotions under stressful situations (Kremenitzer, 2005; Villaseñor, 2017).

The empirical data revealed that it is imperative that ECD teachers teach their children to control emotions. Teachers-in-charge expressed that emotion regulation competence was necessary for ECD caregivers. *Emotion regulation competence by the teacher is important because he/she is dealing with small children who are not able to control their emotions* (TIC,

24-7-2019). And these children need to be assisted to control their emotions. Teachers can use emotion regulation competence to teach children to control themselves (TIC, 11-6-2019). The teacher is perceived as the role model of children. From the teachers' use of emotion regulation: *The child will start to learn to control his own emotions* (TIC 7, 24-7-2019). Besides making use of emotion regulation competence, the teacher can use other strategies such as to: *Pair with children who can control themselves. They can learn from others, especially group leaders* (TIC S6, 11-6- 2019)

Children can also learn to control their emotions from their counterparts (C 9, 10-6-2019). As it is imperative to calm children's emotions, over-excited children could be paired with those children who know how to control themselves and behave accordingly. Over-excited learners would eventually learn to control themselves. C9 explained how it can be done: *You can make those ones group leaders, those who are steady so that they work with those over-emotional children. In the end, you keep on emphasising that 'I want you to listen to what your group leaders are telling you'. A caregiver can then coach the one that should learn to control emotions* (C9, 10-6-2019).

Conflict management can also be utilised to help learners develop the ability to manage conflicts too. Teachers can model emotional competencies so that learners copy the behaviours and develop the competencies themselves (Fgrp 2). C12 (11-6- 2019) narrates the way children exhibit conflict management competence themselves: *I see that conflict management is good in that the learner him/herself will be able to manage conflicts even when they are alone playing. You will see that another child will be able to say if other children are in conflict, she/he can stand in between saying, 'No stop that play well because you will hurt one another', because that child will have learnt from his/her teacher seeing the teacher doing the same.*

In as much as teachers' own emotion regulation is important, teachers' responses indicate that teachers' skill to control children is necessary, as concepts will be mastered. Children grasp whatever is taught because calming them makes them attentive because: *You know when a child is withdrawn, another is just anxious, you don't have their attention, so when they are calm, I have their attention.* C2, (15-6-2020). *And if they make noise, I will control them (kuti vagone kudzidza) so that they are able to learn* (C13, 24-7-2020). The importance of calming learners in learning is evident in yielding the learners' engagement through the teachers' provision of tasks. Caregiver 13 reflects: *If I calm him/her down, if I make her come closer to*

me, give him responsibility. It will make him/her busy (anonyarara ndakutoshanda nevamwe). And another view on the necessity of calming a learner: *... so that she can calm down a little bit so that she can learn or she can benefit* (C9, 10-6-2020).

Observational data also revealed the effectiveness of calming learners during lessons. Excited children are calmed by persuading them as shown by C13, 24-7-2020 who said: *Chinyararaika* (can you be quiet). Whilst C 14, 24-7-2020 told learners to place their fingers on their lips as a strategy to quieten them. When the learners were quiet in both classes, the teachers progressed with their activities. Generally, it was observed that caregivers calmed learners who were excited through the use of rhymes (C6, 1-7-2020). Observations confirmed as most participants put in a lot of effort to calm learners using varied strategies during teaching and learning situations (C5, 1-7-2020; C10,10-6-2020; C13, 24-7-2020; C14, 24-7-2020). It becomes important to calm learners as it makes children learn, concentrate and grasp concepts, hence the need for teachers to calm children and teach them the emotional competence.

People who are able to identify others' emotions are more successful in their work (Molatodi, 2018). When asked how they recognised the emotions, TIC 5 (31-7-2019) said: *At times, the teacher recognises children's emotions by observing them as they learn at break time and by looking at the child's behaviour.* Having the skill of emotion recognition will support the teacher in helping develop their learners' emotional competencies.

Recognising children's emotions enables teachers to make use of conflict management which is a further competence of emotional intelligence.

4.3.4.3 Conflict management

Conflict management is the ability in helping others through tense situations, acknowledging the views of all sides, and collaboratively working towards an agreeable resolution. As an emotional activity, teaching requires educators to manage conflicts that arise in the teacher-student relationship (Lourenço & Valente, 2020). Conflict management competence assists learners to work together harmoniously and encourages learner participation in class activities (Fgrp, 3). Managing conflict creates a peaceful situation leading to an environment conducive to learning, offering a safe and secure space for learner participation. C9, 10-6-2019 expressed the impact of conflict management on children's learning: *Children will socialise well and*

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teaching and learning will flow and they will participate. C8 adds another dimension to the discussion on the use of conflict management competence: *The child feels comforted and knows that the teacher is concerned and so the child will participate happily.*

Empirical evidence from caregivers reveals practical utilisation of conflict management with an emotional situation that occurred in the classroom environment. During observation at school PS4, for example, the teacher recognised a child who was crying. After realising that another child had hurt the child, the caregiver intervened. To show how competence in conflict management can resolve the situation, the caregiver asked: *Why are you crying?* Once the problem was established, she counselled the child: *I will call the child and ask. I will talk to the child and the concept of fighting will be understood.* (C7, 11-7-2019). *Can you say sorry? To the child who had hit the other child ...* The caregiver then requested the culprit to apologise to the crying child. The hurt and crying child was comforted, and after the apology, quietened down and then joined the rest of the class. Thus, the strategy satisfied the offender who had to apologise and the apology was good for the victim. It was the teachers' emotional intelligence that allowed for conflict management supporting the development of interpersonal relationships in the classroom enabling a favourable environment for teaching and learning (Valente et al. 2020). In such a situation, teachers ought to help children feel accepted (Basit et al., 2010; Parker, 2020). One participant from the focus group indicated: *The child who will have been hurt would feel happy because the teacher will have given the other child a punishment, the hurt child will say 'so the teacher has protected me' then the child is motivated* (Fgrp, 2: 11-06-2020).

The study revealed that caregivers regularly used conflict management competence in the classroom. ECD learners tend to fight over the use of certain pieces of equipment or materials in the classroom. After recognising children fighting over a toy (keyboard), the learners were encouraged to do 'turn taking', in an attempt to solve the conflict (C17, 26-7-2019). In an ECD class, emotions were observed being triggered by children's need to possess others items, as evidenced by the child's crying (PS9). In this case, removing the relevant items (papers) and hiding them, became the solution to the problem. Caregivers teach learners rhymes about sharing so that they practise the sharing, which helps to modify their behaviour in an attempt to get them to stop fighting over items in the classroom. C5 (1-7-2019) further elaborated on how to solve such conflict: *Let's say in my class there are a few crayons for learners and they*

are not enough for them and they are fighting for them as they are not enough. I will say let's share.

Observational data revealed a teacher distributing material (crayons) to learners whilst they (learners) were singing a sharing song (PS4). C7 (11-6-2019) clarified: *The rhymes were meant to make children aware of the need to share and to manage conflicts that take place when distributing learning materials*. One participant indicated another strategy to manage conflicts: *I will make sure there are enough resources. I will improvise so that I avoid conflicts* (FGrp, 1: 1-7-2019). C17 (in FGrp 4; 24-7-2019) emphasised: *If they are fighting for crayons, I will give them enough resources.*

Conflict management at an outdoor play area, would involve grouping learners in such a way each one would have a chance of going to a merry-go-round, slide and seesaw (Fgrp1, 1-7-2019). Knowledge of situations that trigger emotions becomes crucial for a caregiver and developing the skill of how to solve problems amicably, is vital. Giving the learners enough resources or ensuring that everyone has a turn and shares resources would be an amicable way of solving the problem (FGrp 4) and manage potential conflict in the classroom or in the play area. Empirical data revealed that various emotional intelligence competencies are helpful in motivating learners. The study revealed that managing conflict would ensure that the children are equipped with the skills to respond to conflicts, use self-control and calm themselves.

By managing conflict, the element of fear would no longer prevail as the children would feel a sense of protection from the caregiver. Managing conflict by caregivers on its own creates an environment conducive to learning which would nurture children to learn, as expressed by one participant, that utilising conflict management competence *'will motivate children to learn without fear'* (C11, 10-6-2019). The teacher would have employed a compromising strategy that satisfies the interests of those involved in the conflict (Valente & Lourenço, 2020).

Empirical evidence from caregivers reveals practical utilisation of conflict management on emotional situations that occur in a classroom environment.

Finding ways of helping children exhibiting different emotions can be sought after recognising the child's emotions. Therefore, recognising children's emotions would facilitate or pave way for the use of other emotional competencies or techniques to help the child learn. *When you know the way that the child is feeling, you know how to make that child learn. For instance, if*

a child is not happy, if a child is withdrawn, if a child is sad, you know how to bring that child close so that the child can be able to learn and socialise (C1, 15-6-2020). When asked how teachers can recognise emotions, the teacher C1 (15-6-2019) explained that emotions can be recognised through children's behaviours: *When one is teaching, it is possible to notice the child's behaviour for example, if the child is crying, aggressive, too excited or when a child is not concentrating one can tell whether the child is happy or afraid as exhibition and utilisation of emotion recognition competence.*

Conflict management was also noted to enhance caregivers' performance. Applying conflict management would allow children to continue learning, resuscitating the flow of the lesson whenever a problem or conflict has been resolved. Resolving conflicts results in enhanced interaction among the learners, as emphasised by Fgrp, 3 that: *... conflict management will help children socialise well ... teaching and learning will flow. There will be a flow and they will participate* (extract from the diary). Furthermore, one participant in FGrp, 4 added: *... they will concentrate. They will continue with the lesson.* The ability to manage conflicts therefore becomes vital on the caregiver's part.

A teacher who utilises conflict management may be able to handle varied situations depending on the children that she/he would be teaching that period because sometimes, it is possible to have children who will be more difficult to handle (Fgrp, 2, 11-06-2020). The teacher would be in a position to control the children differently. The participants in the same Fgrp also shared that, in subsequent groups of children, the teacher would now refer to conflict management competencies employed earlier to manage other conflicts.

Lastly, when influence competence is applied to withdrawn children, the teachers and learners' performance is enhanced. The persuasion influences the child to re-join others in participating. At the same time, the teacher would have improved her/his performance, through interacting and participating with others, and, in turn, the child would be socially developing. For teachers, influence competence was viewed as: *... it improves my performance. If I persuade children, they will like school. My performance will remain* (C18, 26-72019).

4.3.4.4 *Teamwork*

Teamwork is the ability to work with others toward a shared goal, building spirit, positive relationships and a sense of identity. Team work involves the understanding of the situation of others with regard to emotional intelligence, and by understanding the situation of others, the

leader can help the team member which then gives the motivating effect in the team and specially the team leader (Raza & Kashif, 2011). The team leader has to be one who is empathetic. For teamwork, all the competences can be used to steer the group towards achievement of their goals (Ott, n.d.). In this study, the caregivers work as a team to create an environment that is safe and secure and conducive to learning.

It is critical that teachers create a positive atmosphere in the classroom so as to encourage development and learning (Brackett et al. 2008). Empirical data revealed that emotional competencies can assist teachers in creating environments conducive to learning which means that the application of emotion skills would influence school climate (Morton, 2014). Self-assessment competence can be utilised to create an environment conducive to learning as C11 (10-6-2019) states: *I feel it creates an environment conducive to learning. The way I relate with my learners. They will instead of fearing me as teacher, they end up trusting me. It creates trust and the environment will be conducive to learning* (Fgrp3).

An environment conducive to learning is created because the teacher would have managed to control his/her emotions after self-assessing. Managing to control the emotions creates a non-threatening environment since the children do not fear the teacher. ECD teachers ought to employ strategies to control themselves to create a non-threatening environment. Another dimension relating to the environment being conducive to learning involves interacting with the children in friendly inclusive manner. Emotion regulation, therefore can assist in creating an environment conducive to learning (C8).

Another competence which is said to create an environment conducive to learning is empathy. Participants felt that showing sympathy makes the child feel loved. A teacher acting *in loco-parentis* should have the right temperament suitable for a classroom learning situation (Ohaka, 2017). The caregiver at PS5 expressed that these ECD learners are young and at a stage when they need love, such as the love they receive at home. The caregiver elaborated on the thought: *They should really not see the gap between the parental love and the caregiver* (C10, 10-6-2019).

When the child feels at home because of the teacher's love, the classroom environment is likely to be conducive to learning, making the child feel secure to approach the teacher. C 9 (10-6-2019) shared her view thus: *If one is hurt and if I say sorry, they will feel happy and loved. They will say the teacher cares for us. They will come to you if they have problems*. C10 (10-

6-2019) added: *The child will be able to open up to the caregiver and will, in the end like to come to school. That will make the child feel at home. The child might even end up liking to say at school better than she likes to stay at home.*

Emotion recognition was also seen to assist teachers in creating an environment conducive to learning. After having recognised a learner's mood, one can change the mood through talking and creating an environment conducive to learning. One participant elaborated: *We need to create a better environment for learners. If you make them fear they won't open up. You need to be friendly to them* (C15, 25-7-2020). Emotional expression can affect the classroom emotional climate for both the teacher and the student (Yan et al. 2011

The above sentiments expressed by caregivers from the different ECD centres shows that teachers can utilise a range of emotional competencies leading to the creation of an environment conducive to learning which is consistent with good performance.

4.3.4.5 *Inspirational leadership*

Inspirational leadership is guiding others towards a common goal achieving something meaningful. The teacher or caregiver in the ECD environment is the leader who needs to create an environment where learners are able to learn and develop their emotional competencies. Inspirational leadership involves leaders who pay attention to the needs of his/her followers by providing socio-emotional support, mentoring and motivating followers (Ott, n.d.).   The leadership trait is exhibited by being compassionate, empathetic and being responsive to the subordinates needs through appreciating their achievements (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). Participants indicated that teachers as leaders in the classroom, besides creating a conducive environment, have to meet needs of learners and motivate them, which they could do by being empathetic to the learners. C5 (1-7-2019) emphasised the need to feel for children and to put oneself in a child's situation. The caregiver at PS5 expressed that these ECD learners are young and at a stage when they need love such as the love they receive at home. The caregiver elaborated on the thought: C 9 (10-6-2019) shared her view thus: *If one is hurt and if I say sorry, they will feel happy and loved. They will say the teacher cares for us. They will come to you if they have problems.* A teacher acting *in loco-parentis* should have the right temperament suitable for a classroom learning situation (Ohaka, 2017). *They should really not see the gap between the parental love and the caregiver* (C10, 10-6-2019).

Showing empathy is a way of showing love to children. In turn, children become attentive as an indicator of being motivated. In reciprocity, learners feel obliged to listen to the caregiver, who is the inspirational leader who empathises with them. C2 (15-6-2019) shared her feelings on that: *Learners 'pay back' the teachers' love through listening to the teacher.* The learners, therefore, pay attention to make the teacher happy and are thus, motivated to learn.

4.3.4.6 *Building bonds*

A teacher with emotional competence can build bonds (Kremenitzer, 2005; Welmilla, 2020). Emotional competencies assist teachers to development attachment or bonds with their learners Caregivers concurred that the use of sympathy allowed them to be drawn closer to their learners. The perspective on the use of empathy centres around the issue of love, which makes children feel loved and cared for.

Participants showed that emotional competencies assist teachers in developing attachment or bonds with their learners, as evidenced by the following statements: *They will feel happy and loved. They will say because 'she loves us the teacher cares for us. When you show love, they will come to you if they have problems* (C9, 10- 6-2019). C5 (1-7-2019) elaborated on the importance of feeling for the children: *It is very important to put yourself in the child's situation. This will make learners feel wanted. It will draw the child closer to you. Children come closer and feel loved.* When caregivers utilise empathy competence, they can be assured of the attachment between them and their learners as reflected by C2 (5-07-2019): *... because you want to make children attached to you, to have that bond. The child will be happy and free to and communicate with me (empathy, comfort).*

Emotion regulation is also viewed to enable teachers to develop an attachment with learners. C2 also expressed that regulation competence could create an attachment between the teacher and children. C1 and C2 reflected on emotion regulation and attachment as follows: *Since you know that with these children, we deal mostly with attachment. So, when I am calm, when I control myself, we attach more ...* (C1- 15-6-2019). *Being calm most probably creates a non-threatening environment which can bring the children closer to their caregiver* (C2, 15-6-2019).

To sum up, the key themes concerning the use of the emotional intelligence framework and addressing the research questions of the study have been presented above within the competences in the EI framework (Goleman, 2001). The study through the participants' views

and observations revealed that competencies within Goleman's emotional intelligence framework can be used by caregivers during teaching and learning situations. Domains such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and the competencies within them, were found to be useful to caregivers.

Self-awareness was said to be utilised as caregivers would make an assessment of the emotions. Caregivers expressed the need to use self-management as they would control their emotions to enable teaching and learning to take place. Encountering children with behaviour problems would affect their emotions and this ensured that caregivers were able to calm down. Caregivers also indicated the importance of demonstrating adaptability and flexibility in finding strategies to calm themselves. It was found out that teachers would talk to others regarding their emotions, switching on to different activities and conceal their emotions through modification in order to calm down. Regulation competence was found to be quite useful as it assists in building relationships with children.

Caregivers utilised achievement orientation through the display of positive emotions which would in turn motive learners. For example, through observation and interviews, it was noted that caregivers had to express happiness, smiling to motivate learners. Therefore, avoiding negative emotions like anger was found necessary so as to motivate children to learn. However, at times, expressing negative emotions like sadness was said to be necessary to correct children's behaviour enabling them to be attentive during teaching and learning.

The data revealed that positive outlook competence was evident as it was noted to assist caregivers in having a positive mind-set. Participants noted the importance of support for caregivers as they are constantly stressed by their own problems too. The need for teacher development and consideration of emotional intelligence issues in teacher education programmes was highlighted by participants. It was revealed that EI was necessary to be taught and researched at teacher education colleges

The social awareness domain with competences like empathy, and organisational awareness was said to be crucial as it involved knowing and understanding how others felt. Some participants viewed empathy shown by caregivers as a natural competence enabling children to perform better. Reading emotions in children showed that the caregivers had organisational awareness which allowed them to respond to children's emotions. Thus, identifying and recognising children's emotions would enable caregivers to know how to handle children well.

Relationship management with competencies such as influence, conflict management, coach and mentor/developing others, teamwork, inspirational leadership and building bonds were found to useful in enhancing caregivers' job performance. Participants indicated that influence competence through humour and persuasive language enabled learners to interact with others. Through the participants' views, calming children was also noted as a way of influencing learners to learn. The data revealed that ECD caregivers had an important role of teaching children about emotional skills through coaching them and using the competencies so that the children imitate. Thus, engaging in conflict management and emotion regulations would make children learn and develop the skills. Conflict management was said to be utilised by caregivers as it would enable children to learn harmoniously in a peaceful environment

Through understanding others in relation to emotional intelligence, caregivers as leaders utilised team work. The competence helped them to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom. From interviews, it was noted that caregivers as leaders, needed to be empathetic which would make the children feel loved

Recognising children's emotions, controlling emotions and managing conflicts was said to lend itself in creating good learning environments enabling caregivers to employ effective and appropriate methods that engage learners being guided by children's emotions

Inspirational leadership was another competence utilised by caregivers by being empathetic, and being responsible to children's needs and appreciating their achievements. Building bonds as a competence within the framework was such that caregivers could build bonds through the use of empathy, emotion regulation. These were said to assist teachers to develop an attachment and bond with their learners.

4.4   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study sought to establish how early childhood caregivers utilised an emotional intelligence framework to enhance their performance. In this section, the findings of the study are discussed guided by themes that emerged from the collected data. The data were coded and analysed, resulting in several themes emerging across emotional intelligence framework competencies. The emergent themes are motivation and emotional competencies, building relationships with children, an environment conducive to learning, developing children's emotional intelligence, teachers and children's performance, participation/engagement, reducing absenteeism,

teaching methods, building emotional competencies and attachment, as well as emotional competencies which caregivers use.

4.4.1 Motivation and Emotional Competencies

Teachers take note of the value motivation in their teaching to meet the requirements of learners (Gill & Sankulka, 2017). Participants in the study revealed that motivation was necessary to increase performance in ECD classes. It emerged that several competencies, such as conflict management empathy, can be utilised by teachers to motivate learners. The use of competencies such as conflict management and empathy were said to enhance the teachers' performance by motivating learners to learn. This is in line with the fourth aspect of Goleman's emotional intelligence framework which is concerned with the fact that teachers have a role to play in motivating their learners and themselves (Gill & Sankulka, 2017). In the current study, it was reiterated that timeous management of classroom conflict would develop an environment conducive to learning and thus allow children to learn without fear.

Characteristics within self-awareness involve recognising one's own moods and emotions and taking into consideration the effect that these have on others (Gill & Sankulka, 2017). Education practices need teachers to maintain high levels of self-awareness for motivating the leaners they teach (Gill & Sankulka, 2017). Participants in the study also indicated that utilising self-assessment would motivate learners to learn. The teachers showed that it was necessary to assess oneself so as to avert negative emotions that would make learners resent learning. Negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, boredom, and anger have been said to disrupt the ability to give attention to the lesson and the ability to learn (Brackett & Simons, 2015). After assessing and seeing that one would be angry, participants said that they would find strategies to calm down and then express a positive emotion such as happiness, which would motivate learners. In earlier studies, Sutton and Wheatly (2003) and Molatodi (2018) found that teacher emotional self-awareness has significant implications for effective teaching. From their study, Gill and Sankulkar (2017) contend that self-awareness allows practitioners to become aware of their own emotions and actions in the workplace.

Teachers who are socially and emotionally competent display characteristics such as self–awareness, being aware of their emotions and being able to use emotions to motivate themselves and their students to learn (Greenberg & Jennings, 2009). Expressing happiness, for example, smiling, proved to motivate learners during teaching and learning situations in the

current study. One participant in that particular study said: *I love to laugh; I am comfortable laughing… When teachers make jokes and make jokes and laugh during lessons, I find much more comfortable and engaging.* Another indicated that, even though he was stressed, he would love coming to the class whose teacher is always making jokes, laughing and one who had something fun for students. In the current study, positive emotions such as the smile really motivated children. Learners' participation in the current study is similar to students' engagement, as found out by Deane (2018), that because of expression of positive emotions by teachers, the humour would make students laugh then they would be fully engaged in a lesson. Humour and emotions which were used by the instructor to activate learning during the teaching and learning sessions.

Students learn and perform more successfully when they feel secure, happy and excited about the subject matter (Roberts et al. 2008; Ainley & Hidi, 2014). Contrary to positive emotions, emotions such as anger, anxiety and sadness have been seen to have the potential to distract students' learning efforts by negatively affecting their ability to attend to given tasks (Pekrun, 2006; Mustafina et al. 2020)

4.4.2   Building Relationships

Building relationships is an essential component of teaching and learning (Gablinske, 2014). It emerged from the study that emotion competencies assisted caregivers in creating good relationships with learners. Empathy was one such competence which was said to enable teachers to create relationships. It was reiterated by most participants that empathising with the children would make them feel loved and wanted, hence could come closer to the teacher and feel that the teacher could understand them better. To that end, it was highlighted that children would be free to talk about their problems to the teacher. Kelley (2018) established that the use of EI would have increased levels of trust between a teacher and students. Further research also indicated that teachers who are high in emotional intelligence can establish good working relationship with their students (Galler, 2015)

The study established that empathising with learners assisted caregivers in building relationships with learners. It was highlighted that learners may feel wanted, hence a caring relationship as was observed, as indicated by Gablinske (2014). The latter established that it was imperative for teachers to develop a caring relationship with their students so as to develop an understanding of their needs and abilities (Gablinske, 2014).

In the study, showing genuine care and concern was said to help build relationships with students (Kelley, 2018) and ensure that the child would want to talk to the teacher. Participants in another study shared that they viewed situations from the students' perspective and hinted that it builds long lasting relationships with the students (Morton, 2014). Participants in the current study indicated that the teacher who shows empathy indicated that they understood their children. A caregiver can utilise empathy and emotional intelligence to work more effectively with angry and resistant students (Rust, 2014).

4.4.3 An Environment Conducive to Learning

It is critical to ensure that teachers manage to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom so as to encourage development and learning (Brackett et al. 2008). The correct environment for ECD is about creating an environment conducive to learning which guarantees children's safety, make them feel empowered and free to learn actively and flexibly (Adlerstein & Cortazar, 2022). Emotional competencies have been noted to assist teachers in creating environments conducive to learning. Some such competencies include emotion regulation, empathy, conflict management and self-assessment. Self-assessment, for example, may lend one into emotional regulation after realising one's anger. Calming down would then create an environment conducive to learning. These results are supported by previous research done by Morton (2014) in which teachers indicated that self-awareness emotion competence influenced school climate. It was affirmed that self-awareness prompted application of skills and knowledge related to EI. Application of the emotion skills would influence school climate (Morton, 2014), the purpose of which was to slow down one's reaction and let the emotional energy relax a moment. The application of emotion regulation in the current study was also prompted by self-awareness, resulting in an environment conducive to learning.

In addition, participants reported that conflict management would assist teachers in creating an environment conducive to learning. It was reported that, if conflicts are managed, learners would live harmoniously in the classroom environment and would actually learn without fear. In support, Diamanti et al. (2018) affirm that an optimal climate is observed by the low level of conflict, disruptive behaviour and appropriate emotional expression and respectful communication. The current study also noted that empathy is another competence which can assist in creating an environment conducive to learning. Empathising with learners would make the children feel loved, make children feel at home, happy and like to come to school. Children can open up and come to the teacher when they have problems.

It has been noted above that participants felt that showing empathy to the child makes him or her feel loved. The caregiver at S5 expressed that ECD learners were young and at a stage when they needed love like that which they received at home. When the child feels at home because of the teacher's love, the classroom environment would be conducive to learning making the child feel free to approach the teacher. The teachers also reported that they empathised with students in certain situations, for example, when students got frustrated (Galler, 2015). Such teachers are able to create environments conducive to learning by conveying feelings of care for their students and foster close relationship with students (Galler, 2015; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008).

4.4.4 Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence

Teachers are supposed to promote the socio- emotional development of children (Villaseñor, 2017). Having socio-emotional capabilities makes a teacher succeed in teaching socio-emotional competencies in children (Adibi et al. 2018).

The study showed that it was imperative that ECD teachers teach their children to control emotions. For example, participants contended that it was essential to teach children to learn to control their emotions. In fact, social and emotional skill development is a crucial component of ECD programmes (Kremenitzer, 2005; Alzahrani et al. 2019). Teachers-in-charge conveyed that emotion regulation competence was necessary for ECD caregivers particularly in dealing with small children who are not at this age, able to control their emotions. Caregivers need to assist children to control their emotions so they ultimately learn to control their own emotions

Children were said to learn from their teachers; thus, the teacher may model the emotion competence in the process of controlling his/her emotions. Supporting this, Greenberg and Jennings (2009) highlighted that caregivers may display competencies for learners and be regarded as role models for children's social and emotional behaviours. It was also noted that ECD teachers should serve as good role models for regulating emotions particularly under stressful conditions (Kremenitzer, 2005; Villaseñor, 2017). Furthermore, Kremenitzer (2005) and Ho & Funk (2018) observed that an ECD teacher needs strong skills in nurturing emotional intelligence abilities in the young and that early childhood is the prime time for these children to acquire and develop the emotional intelligence skills.

As small children are not as yet able to control their emotions, teachers, would be using their emotion regulation competence to let children learn how to control their emotions. Kremenitzer (2005) supported the findings, and indicated that by modelling emotion competencies like emotion regulation, it is envisaged that the young children will develop such emotion competencies. Likewise, as a strategy, outstanding teachers modelled emotions, for example, they expressed that they model passion to their students during the teaching and learning process (Galler, 2015). Previous research has noted that an important part of teaching emotional intelligence to young children is modelling and teaching the emotional intelligence skills children need to be ready to learn (Hagelskamp et al. 2013; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Rivers et al. 2013).

4.4.5   Teachers and Children's Performance

All dimensions of emotional intelligence, self-regulation, self- awareness, empathy, social skills, and motivation, were viewed to be related to job performance (Mwathi, 2010; Mohamad & Jais, 2016). The study showed that emotional competencies enhance performance of either children or teachers. Participants indicated that such competencies include influence, conflict, and emotion regulation competencies. It was mentioned that after influencing a withdrawn child to learn with others, a teacher would enhance participation on the part of the child. Assisting children to calm down would make the teacher have the children's attention resulting in them grasping concepts more. One participant highlighted that, after calming the children down, one can teach them anything. It was said that learners would grasp more because their minds would be concentrating on the teacher. Emotional dimensions of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and motivation are statistically related to teacher's job performance (Mwathi, 2010; Farah et al. 2021). Utilising emotional intelligence competence is necessary in a class where students were expected to misbehave because the class was being substituted. It was reported in that particular study that students did not misbehave due to the teacher's use of emotional competence. According to Kelley (2018), without emotional intelligence, one spends time disciplining students about paying attention.

It was observed that teachers with self-actualisation and stress management had their students achieving the highest gains in achievement scores indicating a relationship between teachers EI and student's achievement (Fatum, 2008). Through a qualitative inquiry, it was established that leaders' emotional skills were linked to school's performance (Ashworth, 2014). Positive influence would inspire and motivate students to work towards the success of the school. As a

result, Ashworth (2014) found out that principals with EI would work at developing a thriving campus.

4.4.6 Participation /Engagement

Children's participation is considered a part of a pedagogical process in early childhood education (Kangas, 2016). Participation is experienced in a secure environment where children's needs are taken into account and their initiatives are responded to. Utilising emotional competencies such as conflict management emotion regulation was said to increase learners' participation. On several occasions, teachers were observed calming children who were excited, or crying and then the children continued with participation. It follows therefore that children who are too excited and those who are crying will not want to participate.

Rupande (2015) also noted that when students are too excited or over enthusiastic, they are likely to work carelessly or quickly rather than systematically or carefully. Emotions such as anger, anxiety and sadness have also been seen to have the potential to distract students' learning efforts by negatively affecting their ability to attend to given tasks (Pekrun, 2006; Mustafina et al., 2020).

Participants also felt that resolving conflicts would make children participate and also would make the children live harmoniously. In support of the use of emotion competencies, the findings reveal that without emotional competence, a teacher could spend more time disciplining the children about paying attention. In McCuin's study (2012), as a benefit of emotional skills, the classroom environment was characterised by active participation, involvement and hands on activities, as also noted by Denham (2016). In the same study, it was noted that if students are shown love, care, concern, support and warmth by the teacher, they respond with increases effort and engagement (McCuin, 2012; Ainley & Hidi, 2014).

4.4.7 Absenteeism

Absenteeism results in damaging consequences as it costs children valuable individualised and instructional time (Ansari & Purtell, 2017). Children who have been found to be frequently absent in kindergarten are equipped with fewer academic skills (Ansari & Gottfried, 2018). Caregivers expressed views that emotional competencies could be utilised to eradicate absenteeism. Conflict management, for example, was seen to be very good at making children want to come to school especially when a teacher is able to resolve conflicts in a classroom

situation. Empathising with children would allow the teacher to refrain from angry outbursts which would make the child want to withdraw from school. In a study Deane (2018), students shared that one of the students who had negative experiences with the teachers ended up dropping out of the course. A similar incident emerged in this study where a parent had visited the school complaining that her child no longer wanted to come to school because of conflicts encountered with a classmate. It is thus important to manage conflicts because, if the conflicts are not managed, children may develop a dislike for school and not want to attend. Conflict management is necessary in enhancing job performance because it lessens absenteeism. However, Pool and Qualter (2012) and Diamanti et al (2018) submitted that students with emotional intelligence have better school attendance records, classroom behaviour and they like school more.

4.4.8 Teaching Methods

Socio-emotional skills are relevant in terms of their effectiveness to teach (Villaseñor, 2017) Results from the study showed that teachers utilised emotional competencies to improve on teaching strategies. Categories of the emotional competencies identified were recognition of emotions, conflict management, self-assessment that teachers have and use to improve their methods. Emotion competencies such as self-assessment and emotion recognition would make teachers choose proper strategies, for example, telling stories or rhymes, which would make learners pay attention. Conflict management was also said to improve teaching methods as teachers indicated that they would use methods that would suit their learners; for example, devising a method for a child who is unwilling to participate and grouping learners to avoid conflict. Participants noted that recognising children's emotions would improve methods of teaching and activities given to learners. Some teachers changed activities after recognising children's emotions. For example, when children were too excited the teacher switched over to rhymes to calm them and some would change activities and tell children stories, play cartoons or even engage them in ICT activities as a way of calming them down. Likewise, based on the emotional reactions of students, outstanding teachers changed the direction of their class regularly (Galler, 2015). In other research, Tom (2012) and Öznacar et al. (2017) established that higher teacher socio-emotional competency may be related to teachers' abilities to be sensitive and use an interactive teaching style.

4.4.9 Emotional Competencies and Attachment

The study established that emotional competence could enable teachers to create a bond between them and their learners. Participants reported that children feel loved, especially when teachers show empathy. It was said that the feeling of love made the learners closer to their teachers and in expressed empathy ensured that children created a bond with them.

4.4.10 Emotional Competence which Caregivers use

It emerged that empathy was an essential emotional competence for teachers. Motivation was valued in their teaching to ensure that children achieved the outcomes (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017). Use of empathy in education is said to be supportive to teaching practices (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017). Being empathetic would make children feel at home, ensuring that the child enjoyed being at school. With empathy, a child is motivated to participate and learn to participate in activities. Children are likely to pay attention if a teacher shows empathy to them as the children would feel loved. This is in tandem with Deane (2018) who showed that teacher empathy is important in maintaining a safe and inviting classroom environment.

In the current study, participants felt that being empathetic was necessary as a way of accommodating children who come from different backgrounds. In Deane's (2018) study, it students needed someone who understood what they bring with them and help them improve knowledge taking on board their different backgrounds. It was established that teachers had the elements of emotional intelligence enabling them to successfully work together as a collaborative group and create positive relationships within the classroom environment (Greenberg & Jennings, 2009; Housman, 2017). In particular, the teachers had social responsibility and empathy. Findings from previous research indicated that participants had self-awareness competence and that the participants could show empathy to others (Li, 2012; Valente & Lourenço, 2020).

The current study found that, in as much as teachers sympathised with learners on varied instances, it was necessary to be firm with learners at times, such as expressing a sad face so that children would stop any bad behaviour. The same view was noted by Galler (2015) whose noted that teacher need to be tough; they cannot be soft all the time and emotional.

It became evident from the study that teachers had the ability to express emotions which enhanced their job performance as children managed to participate well during the teaching

and learning situations. This was evident with the use of a variety of emotions such as smiles which would motivate them to learn or sad faces which corrected inappropriate behaviour. This aligns with other studies where it was indicated that participants had the ability to express emotions in their classroom to interact with their students (Li; 2012; Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021).

The study indicated that teachers had the ability to recognise and regulate the emotions of their learners; for example, to calm learners the teacher ask them to place their fingers on their lips. In some cases, learners were calmed by recited a rhyme. Besides calming learners, teachers expressed that they also employed emotion regulation competence to calm themselves. After recognising their emotions, the teachers would control themselves and then be able to continue with the lesson, ensuring that the learners were working in a friendly environment. In research conducted by Greenberg and Jennings (2009) and Housman (2017) findings revealed that teachers who are socially and emotionally competent display characteristics such as having self-awareness, being aware of their emotions and being able to use emotions to motivate themselves and their students to learn.

Caregivers also were able to manage conflict as a result of recognising emotions and regulating them. Teachers with well-development EI are able to use the specific competencies to ensure that conflict between their students is managed and that a safe and friendly environment is maintained that is conducive to learning. Working through conflict incidents with students ensures that they develop those specific skills as well.

4.5   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of the qualitative study was to examine the way emotional competencies are used to enhance the job performance of ECD caregivers. It sought to analyse the emotional competencies teachers have through interviews and observations.

Concerning participants' perceptions on the role of emotional competencies in enhancing caregivers' job performance, all caregivers believed that the competencies in the framework can be utilised to enhance their job performance. The competencies found to enhance the caregivers' job performance included self-awareness (emotional self-awareness), self-management (emotional self-control, achievement orientation, adaptability, positive outlook), social awareness (empathy, organisational awareness), relationship awareness, (influence, coach and mentor, conflict management, teamwork, inspirational leadership) and empathy.

During data analysis, various themes on how emotion competencies can enhance caregivers' performance emerged from the data. The key themes were presented within the EI conceptual framework competences. The study revealed that various competences within the EI framework could be utilised to enhance caregivers' performances. The study also found that caregivers could engage in various behaviours through the use of the competences in the EI framework. Perceptions from the participants indicated that the behaviours were an indicator of good performance on the part of the caregivers. The behaviours highlighted by the participants include motivation, teacher performance, creating conducive environments to learning, participation, attachment, teaching methods, building relationships, developing children' emotional competencies, reducing absenteeism and use of punishments. The participants' perceptions revealed that using the competencies in the EI framework would enhance the caregivers' job-related behaviours. The next chapter focuses on the summary, discussions and recommendations of the research

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The study aimed to explore the use of an emotional intelligence framework to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance. Emotionally challenging situations such as teaching difficult children and maintaining discipline in classroom settings are stressors that teachers frequently experience (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; McCarthy et al. 2015; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Having an emotionally intelligent teacher in the classroom is essential as the different characteristics of a teacher's EI are considered the dynamic factors for successful schooling (Lourenço & Valentine, 2020). The EC of teachers is necessary both in general for their own well-being and for effectiveness and quality in carrying out teaching and learning processes in the classroom (Sutton & Wheatly, 2003; Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021). Goleman (2001) proposed an emotional competence framework as part of theory of emotional intelligence (Punia et al. 2015).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the role of an EC framework in enhancing ECD caregivers' job performance. Therefore, the study explored the use of emotional intelligence competencies in a framework in teaching and learning situations in ECD 'A' and 'B' classes. The study, a qualitative study to investigate the everyday lives of different types of people and perspectives under different circumstances and in different situations (Yin, 2016), examined the perceptions of sixteen ECD caregivers and eight teachers-in-charge of eight primary schools with ECD centres concerning their use of the emotional intelligence framework. Based on data from interviews and naturalistic observations, several themes emerged that addressed the overarching research question of the study. Data were coded and analysed, focusing on emerging patterns, themes and categories. The themes identified in the data were emotional competencies and the specific caregiver behaviours leading to enhanced job performance or dimensions of job performance. These were emotional competencies and motivation, emotional competencies and environments conducive to learning, emotional competencies and learners' participation, emotional competencies and teacher performance, emotional competencies learner attachment, emotional competencies and building teacher-learner relationship. This chapter summarises the study's methodology (5.2), study results (5.3), gives reflections for methodology (5.4), presents the revised conceptual framework (5.5),

discusses implications for practice, offers recommendations based on findings of the study, and the chapter comes to a conclusion in Section 5.6.

5.2   SUMMARY AND A REFLECTION ON METHODOLOGY

This section summarises the design, methodology and methods for the data gathering and analysis procedures guided by the interpretivist approach, which was adopted in this research. The interpretivist paradigm allowed the researcher to focus on the participants' views rather than pre-determined theories (Vanson, 2014; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Interpretivism lends itself to the use of a qualitative method in order to elicit multiple realities (Vanson, 2014; Renham & Alharthi, 2016). In this research, the interpretivist approach allowed for methods which are qualitative, naturalistic and subjective in nature (Knipe & Mackenzie, 2006; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The face-to-face interaction with participants during data collection (Creswell, 2014) and a comprehensive understanding of the situation under study, emerged as a result of interpretivism offering multiple perspectives (Al Riyami, 2015).

The study utilised a case study strategy as it was an exploration of a current phenomenon within real-life context (Heale & Twycross, 2017). The case study, which was an empirical inquiry, addressed the why and how of the current phenomenon (emotional intelligence competences) (Yazan, 2015). The adopted qualitative case study design had some limitations likely to influence the results of the study. Case studies have the challenge of failing to generalise from their cases (Yin, 2018). The researcher had to resort to multiple perceptions used to clarify meaning, verify certain observations and achieve triangulation (Jurisch et al. 2013; Yazan, 2015). Many techniques employed by the researcher resulted in a strong case study (Stake, 2008; Harrison et al. 2017). Triangulation is viewed as an essential part of qualitative data. Another way of reducing bias and lack of representativeness is to conduct observations on multiple occasions (Yin, 2011). Lack of time however, could not permit conducting multiple observations.

A cluster of nine centres within close proximity to lessen travel time to attend focus group sessions, was selected (Guest et al. 2005; Odiema & Bero, 2014). This convenience sampling had a high degree of producing unwanted bias (Yin, 2011). Triangulation and member checks were employed to lessen the bias and establish a valid study (Korstjensa, & Moser, 2018.).

Early childhood development caregivers and the teachers-in-charge participated in the research. The sample comprised eighteen ECD caregivers and nine teachers-in-charge, who were purposely sampled to understand the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014), although only sixteen caregivers and eight teachers-in-charge who had experience with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007), eventually participated. All the caregivers who participated in the study were appropriately qualified as they were ECD Diploma holders with two having ECD degrees in early childhood development. The intentionally selected caregivers had experience of five to twenty years, working with ECD learners teaching classes of 3-5-year-old children.

The sample in this study was relatively low since qualitative inquiry focuses on small, purposefully selected samples (Liamputtng, 2013; Vasileiou et al. 2018). Due to the non-representative sample in this qualitative study, the results might not be generalised to the larger population. The homogeneity characteristics of the sample could have biased the results as there were only female participants which means that the sample was demographically homogeneous in gender, making the result less representative (Cheshire, 2013).

Different data collection strategies were employed in this research. The data collection methods therefore consisted of interviews, focus group interviews and observations. A minimum of eight in-depth personal interviews were carried out with ECD caregivers, who responded to open-ended questions. The interviews were audio tapped and later transcribed. The researcher also conducted three focus group interviews with a maximum of six caregivers, which offered the opportunity of generating complex information as participants could build on each other's views.

During the focus group sessions, the researcher had to manage the dynamics consistent with focus groups (Yin, 2011). For example, when the group went silent, the researcher would find some tactics of restarting discussions in the group and moderating the conversations (Yin, 2011). Additionally, the focus group had to be used with other methods such as in-depth interviews to strengthen the design (Mishra, 2016). Focus group results are viewed as exploratory and are said not to be suitable for projection to larger population. The researcher thus managed to get a variety of opinions on the issues under study (Magwa & Magwa, 2015).

Observation was seen as a powerful check against what people report about themselves during interviews and focus groups (Guest et al. 2005; Yazan, 2015). The study utilised non-participant observation to ascertain the competencies the caregivers utilise when teaching

young children. In addition, caregivers were observed to ascertain competencies they employed and as a follow up on what they said during focus groups and interviews. Fourteen lesson observations were conducted in eight sampled schools. Only two caregivers could not be observed as they purported to be busy with their schedules. Each lesson comprised a minimum of about 20 minutes. The researcher managed to collect data which was rich in detail (Maree, 2007; Barrett & Twycross, 2019).

However, time to observe was quite limited affecting the results. For example, utilisation of some competencies was not visible, for example, self-management, which consists of remaining calm when confronted with provocative situations (Ott, 2017; Serrat, 2017; Fountain, 2019). This could have been due to observer bias consistent with qualitative research as the researcher's presence may influence the other persons (Yin, 2011).

The observation results could have been strengthened if the researcher had been able to spend more time observing teacher-learner interaction. Spending more time observing teacher-learner interactions would offer more opportunities for teachers to exhibit more emotional competencies and a prolonged stay would also minimise observer bias. However, use of other sources affirmed the observation results, as stated by Yin (2011) that data from other sources had to complement observational data to strengthen the study.

After data collection and transcription thematic analysis was performed to analyse the data for patterns and relatedness of lived experiences (Yin, 2016). The study employed inductive analysis, as it is consistent with qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2007; Burnard et al., 2008; Woiceshyn & Daellenbach, 2018). Reading through each transcript facilitated open coding (Saldaña, 2009; Stuckey, 2015). The codes were later categorised to identify themes. All data from interviews, focus group interviews and observations were reviewed in order to make sense out of the data, and organised into themes, cutting across all the data sources (Creswell, 2004).

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ACCORDING TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study explored the use of an emotional intelligence framework to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance. Several themes emerged based on data from interviews and observations that addressed the overarching research question: *How is an intelligence framework used to enhance job performance for early childhood development caregivers?*

The examination of data found that ECD caregivers within the sample showed that emotional competencies in the emotional intelligence framework were used to enhance varied dimensions of their caregivers' job performance. Several dimensions of caregivers' job performance together with related emotion competencies emerged as themes from the interview and observational data. In this section, the findings from the analysis of the data are presented as per each of the sub-questions.

5.3.1 RQ1: Which emotional competencies do ECD caregivers use to facilitate their work performance?

The study sought to establish emotional competencies that caregivers employed in the emotional intelligence framework through caregivers' interviews and observations. Jennings (2011) and Korotaj and Mrnjaus (2019) found it critical to have knowledge on the emotional competencies that teachers possess so as to provide affective feedback for students. Teachers-in-charge were interviewed to elicit their views on the competencies caregivers use. Caregivers were asked the following questions: *Which emotional competencies do you display when interacting with learners? Which emotional competencies do you use in face of problems with children?*

The study revealed that caregivers use emotional competencies such as conflict management, emotion recognition, emotion regulation, influence and assessment competencies. The competences are within Goleman's model. It was noted that in a previous study, tutors in higher education also used individual competencies such as conflict management, influence, empathy, communication and conscientiousness competences (within clusters other clusters of competences) and clusters such as self-assessment, self–management, contributing to their effectiveness as tutors (Youde, 2016).

The current study a sought to establish caregivers' use of competencies from Goleman's emotional intelligence framework. The study revealed that caregivers show facial expressions (a smiling face, a sad face) regulation of emotions, and empathising when interacting with children, particularly with disciplining. One participant illustrated that she would show negative facial expressions rather than physical punishment to stop bad behaviour from children (see Chapter 4, section 4. 3.2.3). In previous studies on competencies, focus was also on within Goleman's model which revealed that teachers used some competences, for example empathy (Mamat & Ismail, 2021). The study was on integration of emotional intelligence in

teaching practice among teachers in higher education. Participants were said to put themselves in students' shoes at several phases of teaching and learning.

It was noted that the facial expressions were intended to send a message to the child so that he/she would stop or revise the behaviour. Observational data confirmed that caregivers used facial expression during teaching, for example, caregivers showed sad faces to children who were naughty (Chapter 4, section 4.3). Similarly, in Galler's study one teacher reiterated that a teacher needs to be tough and emotional rather than being soft all the time (Galler, 2015). At one school, after the teacher had displayed sadness because of behaviour, the child immediately stopped being disruptive and the lesson could continue and at another school, the facial expression of sadness was to stop or correct children's bad behaviour during storytelling. The behaviour disrupted the flow of the lesson, but the teacher's expression of a sad face had a positive effect on the flow of the lesson ensuring that the child stop behaviour that distracted others. Another teacher also responded to a hyperactive child with an unhappy face. This child later settled down and answered the teacher's questions. It was noted that sad facial expressions enabled the teachers to successfully modify the children's poor behaviour. The teachers therefore could express emotions in the classroom situation.

Observational data also substantiated teachers' positive emotional expression during teaching and learning. Teachers were observed expressing smiles as they were teaching which motivated children to participate thus enhancing the teachers' performance (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.3). One participant substantiated the observations when interviewed by indicating that when one smiles, children become eager to learn (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.3). Facial expressions such as smiling was also made use of during storytelling. The smiling facial expression, for example, would make children very attentive. The study therefore showed that the caregivers had emotion expression ability. In a previous study, it was noted that teachers could also express emotions, and it was easy for them to express positive emotions (Morton, 2014). The same scenario did not relate to pre-service teachers as in the previously mentioned studies, some pre-service teachers did not have exposure to socio-emotional competencies constructs of self- awareness (Forcina, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al. 2017). It was however noted that the teacher who was always smiling created an atmosphere of safety and knowledge in which students did not fear the classroom (McCuin, 2012; Frenzel et al. 2021). However, findings in one study indicated that it was not particularly significant whether positive or

negative emotions were exhibited as both would contribute to some participants' perceptions of effectiveness.

It emerged from the study that caregivers also used regulation emotion competence in the face of problems. It was noted that children's behaviour problems triggered negative emotions in caregivers which warranted the use of emotion regulation competence, as described by one participant who could regulate and control her emotions. Regulating emotions make caregivers remain calm and their feelings are hidden from learners. A participant emphasised her use of emotion regulation competence (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.1) when she reiterated that she tries by all means to be calm for learners and not to show that all is not well with her.

Through participants' views, the study established that caregivers have developed and use emotion regulation. In another study, management of emotions was considered the most relevant to teaching as a career (Corcorana & Tormey, 2010). The study found that, statistically, the mean score for managing emotions did not significantly increase from test one to test two in the practicing teachers as participants (Corcorana & Tormey, 2010). The result indicated that the practicing teachers had a low level of the competence. In the same study, it was reported that practicing teachers must learn to manage their emotions in order to meet the challenges of a demanding profession (Corcorana & Tormey, 2010; Tejeda et al. 2016). This findings however, was contrary to the current study in which caregivers indicated that they utilised emotion regulation which could be attributed to the fact that the trained teachers are now acquainted with the emotional labour of teaching (Corcorana & Tormey, 2010). The practicing teachers could not have been exposed to self-regulation competencies similar to 50% pre-service teachers in the above-mentioned previous study, who were not exposed to self-regulation competencies (Forcina, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al. 2017)

Besides emotion regulation, the current study revealed that caregivers used emotion recognition competence. Observational data affirmed that caregivers had emotion recognition which they utilised (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.2 and 4.3.2.2). The caregivers recognised learners who were excited, shy, withdrawn and upset. However, in Youde's (2016) study, tutors' awareness of other's emotions was difficult to assess or identify as the study involved online environments which lacked interaction. It was noted that, in the current study, the caregivers utilised other emotional competencies such emotion regulation, influence competence after recognising their learners' emotions. For example, most caregivers who had

emotion recognition competence utilised emotion regulation to calm learners in order to effectively continue the teaching and learning process. It was therefore evident that the emotion recognition competence helped the caregivers to perform well as together with other competencies, it facilitated the teaching and learning process. This relatedness of competencies was also confirmed in another study where it was mentioned that competencies could be supporting one another across clusters like self-awareness which could support conscientiousness which, in turn, service develop others (Youde, 2016). However, recognising children's emotions became a challenge in situations when the teacher-pupil ratio was high. In one class, for example, learners reported an angry child the teacher had not noticed, as she was overwhelmed with seventy-four ECD 'B' children in the class, which is above expected the teacher: pupil ratio.

Observational data could not substantiate clearly how teachers could control themselves as they could not display what was expected, due to observer bias. Similarly, it was difficult to evaluate self-control as in one study, as tutors indicated difficulties and resultant actions may not have been a true reflection of events (Youde, 2016)

It was observed that teachers had influence competence which they utilised to make children learn or participate with others. Teachers were observed persuading withdrawn, shy or crying learners to continue working with others. One participant, after recognising negative emotions in children, was observed persuading the children to participate through the use of humour. She had to persuade the child to talk by calling her auntie after which the child joined in the class activities done by the rest of the class (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1).

The study also revealed that caregivers had conflict management competence too. Some caregivers also observed conflict management. It was noted that after recognising children who were crying, fighting and shouting, for example, the teachers responded in varied ways to manage the conflict. Interview data also confirmed the use of various strategies to manage conflicts; however, the strategy employed depended on the nature of conflict.

Caregivers reported using rhymes to teach learners about sharing. These rhymes were strategies that caregivers would utilise to avoid conflicts among children, such as distributing resources. Teaching children rhymes was evidence of using conflict management competence. Observational data confirmed the use of the conflict management strategy in reciting poems

whilst distributing writing material. Both these strategies (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.3) made children aware of the need to share at the same time avoiding conflicts.

Other strategies to manage conflicts observed include counselling the affected and the offender, encouraging turn-taking to avoid fighting for materials, provision of sufficient resources and removing of items over which children fight. Grouping learners at an outdoor play area was observed as a strategy to manage conflict as this strategy ensured that learners would each be given a chance of using the playground equipment (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.3).

Managing the conflicts would ensure that children remain calm or settled within either the classroom context or on the playground. In one study, conflict management competence was also evident among tutor participants (Youde, 2016). It was found that the tutors identified trouble and took steps to calm those involved (Youde, 2016). Knowledge of situations that trigger emotions becomes crucial for a caregiver and, as such, one would know how to solve the problems amicably. ECD caregivers in this study therefore utilised conflict management competence to facilitate their work performance.

5.3.2   RQ2: How do caregivers utilise emotional intelligence framework competencies to improve their job performance?

Analysis of data on the utilisation of an emotional intelligence framework utilised by ECD caregivers to enhance their job performance revealed that several emotional competencies were found to assist the caregivers on performance on specific dimensions of their jobs. The revelation came from caregiver's perceptions and observational data on the caregivers' use of identified emotional competencies in an emotional intelligence framework. The sampled ECD caregivers had between five and above years' experience of teaching ECD learners, hence there was the likelihood of having utilised varied emotional competencies.

What emerged from the data was that various emotional competencies were being utilised to enhance caregivers' job performance through motivating learners. The competencies such as conflict management, self-assessment, emotional expression, empathy, influence competence and emotion recognition, when utilised, would motivate learners during the learning process. Use of management competence would enhance caregivers' performance as managing conflicts was considered facilitating learning without fear. After managing and resolving conflicts, children felt safe, secure and protected. Children can only be happy in an environment

where there is no fear. For example, when a child feels protected, he/she is motivated to engage with learning (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.4.3).

Caregivers indicated that children would learn without fear; hence a non-threatening environment conducive to learning would need to be created, thereby motivating the learners to engage and participate. In the conflict management example shown above, the teacher had involved the concerned individuals, the offender and the child who had been beaten. By utilising conflict management competence, the teacher punished the offender, making the victim feel protected by disciplining the offender. The same situation transpired in previous studies which established that teachers discussed the source of conflict and followed it by a power intervention (Basit et al. 2010; Özgan, 2015; Valente & Lourenço, 2020). The power intervention in the current study could have happened when the teachers punished the offenders.

Self-assessment competence was said to be utilised by caregivers as they would assess their own emotions in the context of the classroom, leading them to avoid negative emotions, such as anger. In a certain study, it was noted that to be aware of the impact of emotions on learners leads teachers to view themselves as the responsible person in the classroom (Kralj, 2018). After self-assessment, participants indicated that they would instead find ways of concealing negative emotions such as anger to display positive emotions that would motivate learners. Teachers would for example, avoid displaying anger by switching to another activity like singing, doing rhymes or playing a game with them in order to relive stress.to show a happy face (see chapter 4. Section 4.3.2.3 and Section 4.3.2.2 respectively). The teacher will then show a happy face instead of anger. Concealing negative emotions by displaying positive emotions was viewed as a way of utilising self-assessment competence. Teachers who are socially and emotionally competent display characteristics such as having self–awareness, being aware of their emotions and being able to use emotions to motivate themselves and their students to learn (Greenberg & Jennings, 2009; Villasseno, 2017). In the current study, it was the display of positive emotions which would then motivate the learners to engage and participate in classroom activities (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2.3).

The use of positive emotions to motivate learners was further affirmed in this study as caregivers indicated that giving a smile, for example, would make learners eager to learn. Observations substantiated the participants' opinions as most teachers who expressed the

emotion motivated learners to participate actively during lessons (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.3). Teachers expressed cheerfulness as they delivered lessons. This was noted by previous research that confirmed that teachers' display of emotions can motivate students (Pekrun, 2005; Méndez-Aguado et al. 2020). Schmutz (2017) made similar observations by noting that emotions such as interest or amusement can help to promote student engagement and interest in a lesson. In Deane's (2018) study, positive emotions such as humour and laughter were seen as tension dissolvers as they help students refocus on school. In the current study, participants reported that expression of positive emotions would increase engagement of learners which shows utilisation of emotion competence to enhance job performance (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.2 and 4.3.4.2).

It was evident from the participants that empathy was another competence which teachers can utilise to enhance their job performance. Empathy was noted as a way of showing love to children which would in turn result in children to be motivated to learn. It was said that through the use of empathy competence, children would be attentive during the lessons. Caregivers believed that paying attention during lessons would result from the teachers' love shown to them, thus the benefits of empathetic competence was evident for learning (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.1).

It also emerged from the current study that influence competence was said to motivate learners. It was highlighted that influence competence would allow a sense of belonging and in turn would motivate learners to be active participants. For example, if persuaded, a child would like school (Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1). The findings thus indicate that influence, conflict management, expressing positive emotions, emotion regulation and self-assessment are utilised to motivate learners in a learning environment.

The research also confirmed that emotional competencies can be utilised to enhance learners' participation. It emerged that when caregivers control their emotions and that of the children in their care, it would motivate learners to participate. The focus was on strategies that teachers used to control emotions which was seen as a way of engaging children in participating. For example, the teacher utilised management competence during the recitation of songs and rhymes. Controlling of emotions emerged as a means to increase learners' participation. Controlling them by calming them would ensure that learners become more attentive. Observational data confirmed the calming of children by caregivers. Over-excited learners, for

example, were calmed down by their teachers (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.1) and this was evident with teachers' calming words and interaction which helped to settle the learners (Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1.). It was observed that calming children would make them attentive and teaching and learning would continue with the learners participating which, in turn, facilitated the teacher's performance. In previous studies, emotion regulation was observed to enable individuals to remain engaged with the environment (Fried, 2011; Gershon & Pellitteri, 2018).

Participants' views also included the idea that utilising conflict management competence would allow participation on the part of learners. It was highlighted that resolving conflicts would result in children feeling comforted and that the teacher would have shown concern to the learners. The comforted learners were said to participate once again feeling much happier. Conflict management competence was therefore utilised to ensure that children participate and learn happily. Observational data confirmed learners' continued participation after caregivers' management of the conflict because thereafter, the affected child was comforted and then resumed participation with the rest of the class. Caregivers' perceptions and observed data on conflict management tallied on utilisation of conflict management where caregiver would talk to the child to resolve the conflict (See Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1).

Kelley (2018) also observed that the use of social awareness resulted in high student engagement. Both interviews and observational data confirmed that counselling would assist teachers in managing the conflict, which would comfort the affected. When comforted, the child participated because he was no longer stressed. Results of previous research established that during conflict management teachers provided guidance to students in solution to various problems (Basit et al. 2010; Kiebel, 2018). The caregiver reiterated that the child would grasp concepts taught. Both the caregiver and the child's performance would be enhanced. In other studies, as a benefit of emotional skills, the classroom environment was characterised by active participation, involvement and hands-on activities (McCuin, 2012; Cristóvão et al. 2020). It was also affirmed that teachers applied emotional skills when conflicts arise or when students express anger or sadness in the classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Valente et al. 2020).

Addressing the issue of absenteeism was another category of teachers' job satisfaction which was enhanced through the use of the emotion competencies. Participants reiterated that when utilised, conflict management and empathy competencies would put an end to absenteeism

among ECD children. Managing conflicts would result in creating environments conducive to learning in which children live, play and learn harmoniously. Conflict management would be used to create non-threatening environments which would mean that children would like to come to school where they are at peace (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2) that conflict management is necessary as it eradicates absenteeism. The caregivers therefore would utilise conflict management competence through resolving conflicts encountered by children to make them stay in harmony. Failing to effectively manage conflict could result in children refusing to attend school (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2).

Empathy was viewed as one competence which would be utilised when children would have done something wrong, and rather than being angry with the children, the caregiver would be empathetic (See Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2). The participant felt that bursting out angrily would cause children to withdraw from school, hence teachers would rather exercise empathy to sort out the problem and resolve it as a way to mitigate absenteeism. Empathy was said to be shown to children who would have acted in an unacceptable manner so as to not dislike school. Empathy was used to create an environment conducive to learning that would make children like school and feel at home while being at school.

Use of an empathetic approach ensured that children feel at home and loved and it creates an environment conducive to learning. When utilising empathy, the positive attitude the teacher shows the child would make him/her listen to the teacher. The teacher would then be able to deliver well. This was evident where the teacher changed the classroom situation through an empathetic approach from a bad situation to a better way so that effective teaching could continue. It was perceived by the teachers that using sympathy competence make the teacher and the child perform to their best (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.1).

Deane (2018) showed that teacher empathy is important in maintaining a safe and inviting classroom environment. It was also established that exceptional teachers who monitored children's emotions showed empathy to students' complaints and engaged in self-regulation techniques to create a favourable classroom climate (Galler, 2015). The outstanding teachers also reported that they sympathised with students in certain situations; for example, situations in which students got frustrated (Galler, 2015). Such teachers are able to create environments conducive to learning by conveying feelings of care for their students and fostering close relationship with students (Galler, 2015; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008).

Similarly, in a previous study, it was noted that empathy provides a closer connection to the relationship of affection necessary for the quality of teaching and learning (Loureco & Valentine, 2020) and in Deane's study (2018), participants stated that conveying passion to learners mattered in education. The current study revealed that the use of empathy enabled teachers and learners to become emotionally attached. By using empathy, teachers would make children feel loved, cared for and happy, hence they developed a close bond with their teachers. Emotion management was used to create a fear free environment facilitating attachment (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.6).

The study revealed that competencies such as self-assessment, emotion regulation, conflict management and empathy are utilised to create an environment conducive to learning, for example, on self-assessment. After realising that they are stressed, angry or sad, caregivers can employ activities to reduce these emotions to ensure a non-threatening environment where children would not fear the teacher (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.4.4). Self-assessment competence is said to be used to help teachers identify their emotional status. Teachers who participated in one study mentioned self-awareness emotion competence and how it influenced school as the study focused on the school rather than classrooms (Morton, 2014). Self-awareness includes recognising own emotions and cultivating strengths and positive qualities (Beland, 2007; Molatodi, 2018).

In the current study, emotion regulation competence through employing activities like games was said to relieve stress on the part of the teacher. The games would be used to control emotions and create an environment conducive to learning. The majority of caregivers concurred that emotion regulation competence creates a non-threatening environment where children are able to explore, play freely and learn (see Chapter 4, sections 4.3.4.4 and 4.3.4.1). This requires teachers with the emotional skill to recognise emotions and manage their own emotions and those of others to create an appropriate environment (Corcorana & Tormey, 2010; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). As has been mentioned earlier, emotion regulation would assist in creating an environment conducive to learning by ensuring that learners relate well after conflict resolution. In support, Valente et al. (2020) affirm that an optimal climate is observed by a low level of conflict and disruptive behaviour, appropriate emotional expression and respectful communication.

Overall, both teacher and learner performance were noted to be enhanced through the use of emotion competencies such as influence emotion regulation, conflict management, emotional expression and recognition. Emotion regulation facilitates a teacher's performance; teachers felt that if they manage to control themselves, their teaching would be better and thus teaching and learning is effective (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.1).

Controlling children was also said to be necessary as teachers felt that this could assist them in teaching whatever they wanted and they would grasp more since they would be attentive and focused. Practically, children were calmed by teachers resulting in them being attentive. Caregivers used emotion regulation competence to calm learners. It was noted that the caregivers used varied strategies to calm the learners, for example, use of rhymes and reciting poems. However, Fried's (2011) study found that response-focused emotion regulation strategies were negatively related to academic engagement in the classroom.

Expressing emotions was observed to attract children's attention. As they delivered lessons, teachers showed positive emotions such as happiness with a smile; and as a result, learners were quite active and responsive. Previous studies also established that students learn and perform more successfully when they feel secure, happy and excited about the subject matter, as mentioned earlier (Roberts et al. 2008; Ainley & Hidi, 2014; Tyng et al. 2017). In addition, in another study, a teacher expressed that humour and emotions during teaching activated learning (Deane, 2018). In the current study, besides happiness, sadness was also expressed to make children become more engaged during learning sessions. However, it was observed that if a teacher shows a sad face about the poor behaviour or inattentiveness, children would adapt their behaviour (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2).

Conflict management competence enables problems to be solved, allowing lessons to flow, assisting children in concentrating and activities to continue. Continuation and flow of a lesson relates to good performance on the part of the teacher. In McCuin's study (2012), as a benefit of emotional skills, the classroom environment was characterised by active participation, involvement and hands-on activities. If teachers were faced with problematic learners, they were equipped with conflict management competence. The teacher would use his/her experience when confronted with various children with diverse problem behaviours. Employing conflict management competence would also improve class control. The utilisation of social awareness in one study was observed to increase the level of engagement in one of

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the classes (Kelley, 2018). Social awareness is one of the emotional intelligence constructs or domains in which conflict management is a sub skill or competence (see Chapter 2, section 2.7). Emotional intelligence comprises four domains, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, which also have related competencies (Boytzis & Goleman, 2017).

Emotion recognition was another competence noted to enhance the teachers' performance. Teachers who are able to identify other's emotions were more effective and successful in their work (Singh, 2008; Molatodi, 2018; Ugoani et al. 2018). The research revealed that teachers had to recognise both their own emotions and those of the children and in this study, caregivers reported that they needed recognise their emotions in order to avoid 'burdening' children (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.1.1). Recognising emotions of affected children was viewed as necessary as teachers would then offer the necessary care for children to learn. Recognition competence was used to render necessary assistance to children as teachers were sensitive to children's emotions; for example, when learners were shy, withdrawn, anxious and scared, teachers could find ways of bringing them close and ensuring that they are integrated with other class members (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.2)

Deane's (2018) study revealed that being emotionally charged and aware leads to showing passion for one's work and being sensitive to learners' needs. In addition, Sutton and Wheatly (2003) and Molatodi (2018) submit that teacher's emotional self-awareness does have significant implications for effective teaching. A teacher is able to recognise children's emotions through their behaviour; for example, a child who is crying, afraid or aggressive when teaching (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1).

The findings of the current study revealed that varying teaching methods emerged from the use of emotional intelligence competencies. Caregivers' use of emotion regulation, self-assessment and emotion recognition competence ensured that teachers utilised improved teaching strategies and methods, which were varied and creative. For example, it was mentioned that recognising emotions in children would make teachers devise methods to ensure that they remained engaged and participative (Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.4). Caregivers expressed that emotion management was a competence that made teachers vary teaching methods. It was noted that teacher's delivery of lessons might be most effective when emotions are at moderate

level since the cognitive functioning is most effective when emotional level is safe and stable (Kralj, 2018).

Rhymes and reciting poems were seen as ways of breaking the 'monotony'. The 'monotony' being referred to could mean some event that trigger emotions or the state of displaying the negative emotion (Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.3 and 4.3.4.4) A change of activities such as rhymes were meant to cool down either the caregiver or the learner. Emotion regulation through a change of activities such as rhymes, was used to cool down the caregiver or learner. In other studies, teachers produced challenging and exciting activities delivered with passion, and this would mean that teachers would effectively engage the students (McCuin, 2012; Frenzel et al. 2021). In Lourenço and Valentine's (2020) study, it was found that when teachers perceive discouragement in students' faces, after decoding information about facial expressions, they changed the pace of the lesson, giving an example to make the explanation most understandable of the theme.

Self-assessment competence was also viewed as a competence that would improve on teacher's performance when used. It was expressed that assessment facilitated recognition or awareness of teacher's emotions. It was also mentioned that it resulted in change of activities to address the recognised emotions, especially if they were negative. Kelley (2018) found out that a better relationship with students resulted from using emotional intelligence in the classroom.

Emotion regulation was said to assist caregivers in teaching learners to develop their capacity to control emotions and teachers' ability to control emotions would be modelled for learners who would do likewise. Learners would therefore learn or develop emotion regulation competence from their teachers. Teachers therefore had a responsibility to model emotion regulation skill for learners to emulate. Hagenauer & Volet (2014) and Tom (2012) observed that teachers who are able to regulate their emotions act as good role models capable of setting expectations for the learners. By regulating their emotions, caregivers motivated children to imitate and develop the emotion regulation competence. Children were also believed to learn conflict management competence from their caregivers and thus develop the ability of managing conflict among themselves (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2).

5.3.3 RQ3: How do teachers-in-charge perceive the role of emotional intelligence framework in enhancing ECD caregivers' job performance?

This section presents views of the teachers-in-charge concerning the role of the emotional intelligence framework in enhancing ECD caregivers' job performance. The competencies in the emotional intelligence framework play a significant role in strengthening an ECD caregiver's job performance. Most of the views of the teachers-in-charge concurred with the caregivers' perceptions on the usefulness of the competencies that they utilise when teaching. Thus, teachers-in-charge found several emotional intelligence competencies in the emotional intelligence framework to be useful in creating a positive relationship between caregivers and learners, improving caregivers' performance, developing learners' emotional competencies and reducing absenteeism.

The views of teachers-in-charge were that emotional competence, when utilised by caregivers, would assist both teachers and their learners improve their performance. It was revealed that empathy was one competence which teachers use to enhance their performance. Teachers were said to express empathetic competence so that children would feel loved by the caregiver. When positive feelings are expressed, for example, it indicates that the caregiver loves the learner, and as a result, the learner would respond positively by paying attention and listening and following the teacher's directions (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.1). It was emphasised that listening attentively was the result of teachers' empathy and that the children would perform better (See Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.1). The current study considered that empathy competence was a gift from God as participants believed that teaching was a calling, with empathy improving teachers' performance (See Chapter 4 section 4.3.3.1).

However, the findings contradict Goleman's view that the competencies are learnt. It was noted that educators believe that socio-emotional competencies can be, and should be, taught (Goleman, 2001; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Although the teacher-in-charge viewed the competencies as necessary in assisting in teachers' performance, one participant felt that it not necessary to be over-empathetic, as pandering to children who are lazy could hinder their performance, (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.1).

In concurrence with teachers' views, teachers-in-charge stated that emotion regulation competence could assist teachers with their interactions with the learners, as they felt that, for a teacher to work effectively, they should be able to control their emotions. Teachers-in-charge

viewed emotion regulation competence as significant in enhancing teachers' performance. Emotion regulation competence was noted to facilitate the teaching process as teachers could deliver well if they could control their own emotions (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.1).

Failing to control emotions resulted in teachers not performing as expected. Kralj (2018) reported that if a teacher does not control emotions, that would affect the trust students have for teachers. Most teachers-in-charge related that teachers employ various ways of controlling their emotions; for example, sharing any form of stress they would have encountered with a friend. After the discussion with the friend, the stress would have been reduced. In previous studies, it became evident that as a teacher's ability to regulate emotions increased, her/his stress would decrease (Forcina, 2012; Donker et al. 2020)

It was also observed that teachers-in-charge felt that it was imperative for teachers to assist children in calming down. When children are calm, they listen, concentrate, participate and understand what is taught. There is a difference in behaviour between before utilising emotion regulation and after its utilisation. Thus, it was reiterated that once the children have calmed down, they would be able to concentrate (Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1.). Therefore, calming children was said to enhance the caregivers' performance as the teachers could manage lessons when children are calm. It emerged from the finding that even calming learners would help other learners learn to calm their classmates. The teachers-in-charge revealed that the caregivers needed to have knowledge on how to control children's emotions.

Recognition competence enhances teachers' job performance. The perceptions of the teachers-in-charge on emotion recognition competence echoed caregivers' views (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.2) that utilising emotion recognition would assist teachers in giving the necessary help that individual learners needed. Recognition of emotions is the starting point for a teacher to become aware of what to do with a child (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.2).

The teachers-in-charge stressed that children from different backgrounds displayed different emotions. The same views were noted in a previous study where findings revealed that it is important to recognise children's emotions as some experience emotional struggles in order to attend to their individual needs (Kralj, 2018). It therefore becomes imperative to treat the children as individuals because they vary in display of emotions (Kralj, 2018). For example, in the current study, it was noted that some learners could be experiencing stress from difficult home circumstances. After recognising the emotions that teachers would be able to render

necessary assistance (planning for the child is based on the emotions identified) and to learn about the child who with the right approach, would open up to the teacher. It can therefore be concluded that utilisation of other competencies by caregivers was hinged on emotion recognition (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1).

Most teachers-in-charge concurred with the caregivers' views on the use of empathy competence. They expressed the sentiment that empathising with learners would make them feel loved, wanted and understood. As a result, children in class would pay attention, feel motivated to listen, would pay attention, and learning would not be difficult (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.1). As part of empathy, ECs such as empathy, emotion regulation were utilised to build relationships between teachers and children, creating a good relationship between the teachers and the children. Genuine care and concern were said to help build relationships with students, with better relationships with students resulted from using EI in the classroom (Kelley, 2018). In addition, when the child feels that he/she is loved, he/she becomes free to talk to the teacher which means the child gets closer to the teacher (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.6) and a good relationship would develop between the teacher and the child (see Chapter 4 section 4.3.4.6). Empathising with a child allows the child to confide in the teacher understanding that they would be free to talk to the teacher about any problem he/she might have, particularly as the teacher would have developed a good indication of the child's background.

Controlling emotion was said to be useful in working well with pupils to create relationships with learners. Teachers in other studies indicated that their social relationship with their students make them more effective and that the social relationship could be maintained through the help of emotion regulation (Sutton, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). In the current study, it was noted that a teacher showing high emotions cannot deal with young children. Teachers-in-charge reiterated that there is need to control emotions so that the teacher could work well with the children in the classroom (see Chapter 4. Section 4.3.4.1).

Conflict management also assisted in creating a relationship between teachers and learners, that the teacher would be able to discover the reason for children behaving the way that they do and then finding solutions, leading to creation of rapport between the teacher and learners (Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.2).

The study revealed that utilising emotion competence would prompt teachers to think of varying methods and activities such as introducing a song or rhyme (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.1) to distract the learners from the situation and realign their attention. It was noted that teachers calm children down by using different tasks to regulate their emotions; for example, teachers could formulate games and other activities to help calm children.

It emerged that ECD teachers needed to explicitly teach their children to control their emotions. The teachers-in-charge felt that it was necessary for teachers to have emotion regulation competence which they would then utilise to teach children to control themselves. It was felt that the modelling of the caregiver's emotional regulations, would motivate the child would to learn to control his/her own emotions (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2), thus becoming a role model for the children in her care. This aligns with Galler's (2015) study where teachers were viewed as children's role models. In fact, it was as a strategy that the outstanding teachers modelled passion to their students during teaching and learning process (Galler, 2015). It was also noted that teachers would make use of other children to assist their peers in learning to control themselves. A teacher-in-charge suggested that children could be paired with those who can control themselves and that they can learn from others (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2).

The current research confirmed that it was imperative that teachers recognise children's emotions through observing their behaviour during break time, during class and during their interactions with peers (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2). In addition, it is important for caregivers to conceal their emotions. Empirical data showed that teachers encounter situations at home that trigger emotions; these however, should not be evident in the classroom as a child should not observe a teacher's inability to control emotions (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2.2), hence the need to control them. In previous studies, it was noted that teachers recognise the importance of emotion regulation, they usually feel making their feelings hidden in emotion regulation (Carson & Templin, 2007; Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). Concealing emotions, especially negative ones, was found to be necessary in the context of the classroom. Therefore, it was emphasised that teachers needed to refrain from bringing their problems from home to school. It was felt that teachers' home problems would stress them which would affect their teaching.

Perceptions that emerged from teachers-in-charge concerning emotional competencies utilised by teachers are that all competencies are essential and that they should be employed when teaching. Teachers need to recognise learners' emotions and empathise with them using

emotion regulation and conflict management to sort out problems in the class. Another dimension observed by teachers-in-charge was that emotion competencies were related and once the emotion is recognised, one is able to control his/her emotions as well as children's emotions see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.2). Youde's study (2016) established the interrelatedness of competencies as these supported one another across clusters, for example, self-awareness could support conscientiousness which in turn service developing others.

Competencies such as emotion regulation and empathy are necessary in enhancing the teachers' job in as far as children's attendance at school and avoiding punishments is concerned. Regulation of emotions was critical in making teachers avoid the use of corporal punishment. Teachers-in-charge expressed that without emotion regulation, teachers could harm, hurt and not treat children well. This means that controlling of emotions needs to be utilised to avoid inflicting corporal punishment on children (see Chapter 4, section, 4.4.4.2). The use of emotion regulation was said to assist caregivers in teaching learners to develop their own capacity to control their emotions. Teachers' ability to control emotions would in turn teach learners to do likewise. Learners would therefore learn or develop emotion regulation competence from their teachers. Therefore, teachers had a responsibility to model emotion regulation skills and conflict management competence for learners to emulate. This would result in children developing the ability to manage conflicts among themselves (see Chapter 4, section, 4.4.4.2).

5.4   A REFLECTION ON THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, the conceptual framework drew on the work of Goleman (2001) and Mayer and Salovey (1997). Emotional intelligence competencies in Goleman's mixed and Mayer and Salovey's ability models served as the conceptual framework that informed the study. Goleman's emotional intelligence model is said to be designed to identify a variety of emotional competencies in connection with work performance, hence it fulfilled the requirement of the current research (Yiyimo, 2009). The conceptual framework was useful in guiding data collection as the competencies are relevant to professional teaching standards (Dolev, 2012; Korotaj & Mrnjaus, 2021). A similar study also worked on a group of competencies from Goleman's framework which contributed to the effectiveness of tutors (Youde, 2016). However, these were measured by learner perceptions whilst the current study focused on the teacher and teacher-in-charge perceptions of the use of the competencies by ECD teachers. Gill and Sankulka (2017) also found Goleman's model to be conscious of

educational practices. The conceptual framework for this study also included Salovey and Mayer' model as the idea of teaching skills or competencies is related to emotional intelligence (Forcina, 2012). Figure 5.1 presents the conceptual framework which guided this research.
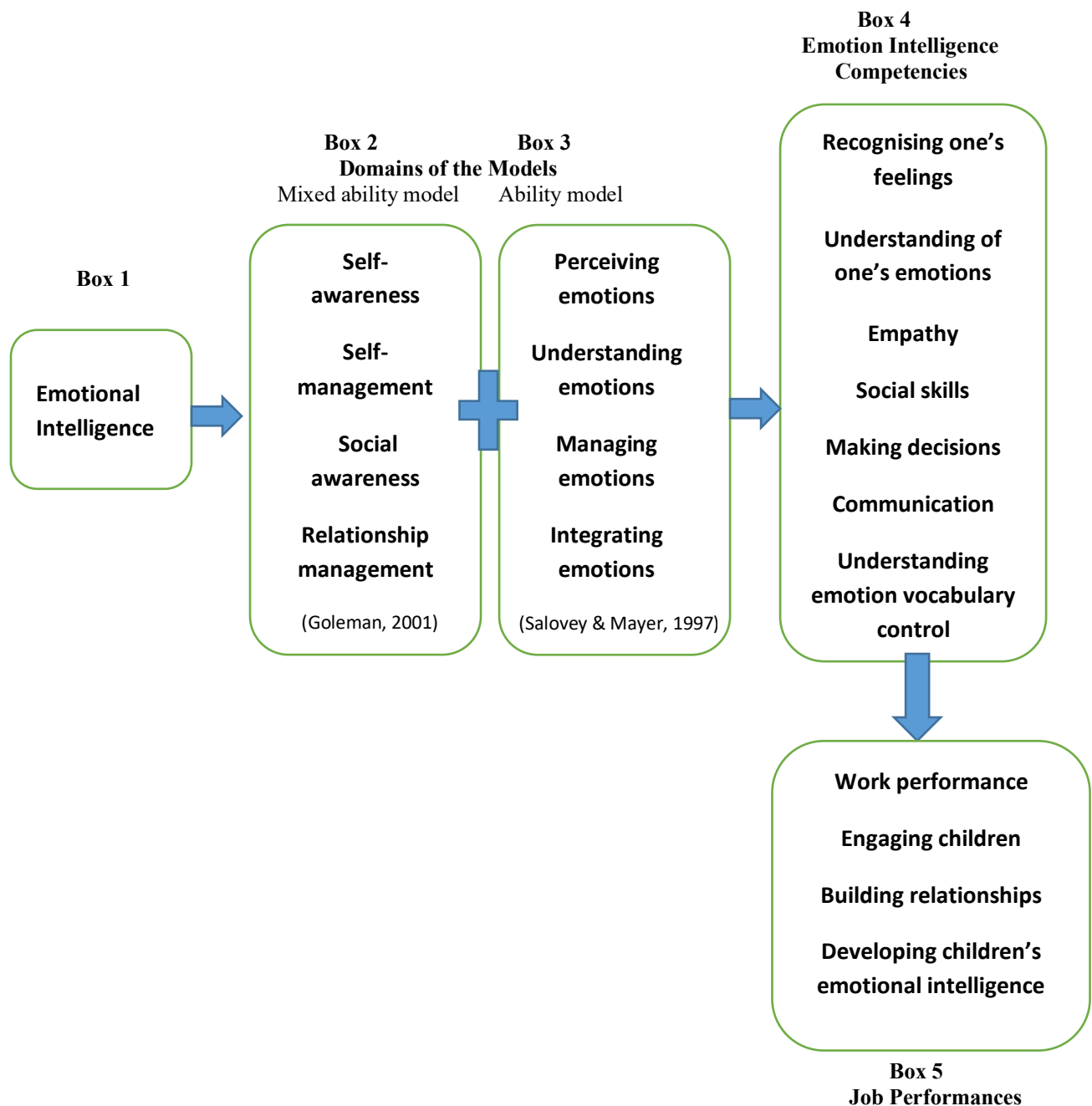
(Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2020)
Figure 5.1: The conceptual framework for the study

The diagram above illustrates emotional intelligence according to Goleman (2001) and Salovey and Mayer (1997). Nested within each of those constructs on the second level (Boxes 2 and 3) are the specific, learned emotional competencies, abilities or skills to be worked on and be

developed to attain excellent performance (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017) (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.1).

The fourth box of the conceptual framework comprises competencies or the abilities associated with the constructs which displays the emotional intelligence competencies which were investigated to ascertain their use by caregivers to enhance their job performance. Leading on from the emotional intelligence competencies is how ECD caregivers can engage in a classroom situation. The benefits of usage of the competencies are the job performance competencies indicated in the fifth box, which are the behaviours the ECD caregivers engage in within the classroom situations

Through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, the study revealed the perceptions of participants on the usage and impact of the emotional competencies indicated in Box 4 by ECD caregivers in a classroom situation. Having developed the competencies enhanced teachers' performance as caregivers through the enlightenment of the benefits of competencies when utilised in their interaction with their learners. Caregivers could ascertain how and why they needed to recognise others' emotion competencies. As self-awareness involves awareness of others feelings, the need, benefit of managing emotions, empathy and conflict management is utilised in a classroom. Therefore, the conceptual framework used in the study provided a lens that was useful in guiding data collection on the use of emotional intelligence framework to enhance ECD caregiver's job performance.

The developed conceptual framework comprising Goleman's and Salovey and Mayer's emotional intelligence framework outlined emotional competencies that can be used to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance. However, it has been noted that not all emotional intelligence dimensions or competencies interact with teacher performance (Wahyuddin, 2016). For example, on the whole Goleman's framework comprises twenty competencies but only a few were viewed as most relevant for this research with a group contributing to ECD caregivers' job performance.

Goleman's emotional intelligence theory outlines four domains of emotional intelligence., represented in Box 2 of the conceptual framework (Goleman, 2001) *Emotional self-awareness* showed that both caregivers and teachers saw the importance of being aware of their own feelings and their impact on children's learning and their performance. From their study, Gill and Sankulkar (2017) contend that self-awareness allows practitioners to become aware of their

own emotions and actions in the workplace. Some competencies on the self-awareness cluster were included in proposed framework, however, self-confidence was not included. In other studies, the effect of self-confidence was noted among, tutors, supervisors, managers and executives (Boyatzis, 1982; Youde, 2016). In this study which concentrated on ECD caregivers, self-confidence was excluded in the framework.

On the *self-management cluster,* emotional self-control was considered since it is evident through caregivers' lack of distress and disruptive feelings (Goleman, 2001; Youde, 2016). Most participants in the study indicated the importance of its use by caregivers as it was said to enable them to deliver well. Trustworthiness was another competence not included; the study revealed the importance of building relationship with learners. Trust emerged as coming from meeting needs of learners and utilisation of other competencies such as empathy and conflict management therefore caregivers could demonstrate competence in this area (Youde, 2016), resulting in learners trusting the teachers as a relationship would have been built between the teachers and learners, thus establishing trust (Goleman, 2001). Trustworthiness could be added on the revised framework. Other competencies in the self-management cluster, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement drive, and initiative, were excluded as the competencies were observed to require a longer-term analysis to establish their validity.

On the *social awareness cluster,* empathy was included in the framework and the study indicated this competence to be most valued by caregivers and contributing to their job performance. Teachers expressed the need to feel for learners and to meet their needs. However, service orientation and organisational awareness in the same cluster were excluded. Service orientation competence in future could be included in the framework as teachers are aware of learners' unstated needs. Organisational awareness was evident as ECD caregivers could read children' emotional states, apply influence competence. However, the competence did not have enough data to establish its validity.

Relationship management included commitment, influence openness, tolerance, conflict management, empathy, negotiation, building bonds and communication (Schuetz, 2011; Ugoani, 2015**).** It also included developing others through feedback and coaching. Relationship management included influence and conflict management which involves handling and managing emotions well in other people and to be persuasive (Goleman, 2001). ECD caregivers indicated that they ought to be persuasive when working with ECD learners and observation

data confirmed the use of influence competence when caregivers, for example, persuaded children showing negative emotions to participate with others. There was sufficient evidence to include conflict management in the framework.

The other competencies such as developing others, communication, change catalyst, building bonds, teamwork and collaboration were excluded from the framework. The competence of developing others involves reading other's developmental needs (Youde, 2016). Caregivers and teachers-in-charge seemed to sense children's developmental needs as they indicated the need for teachers to teach and model emotional intelligence. The competence therefore could be considered in the revised framework. Individuals who exhibit communication competence effectively give and take emotional information and listen well (Goleman, 2001). The ECD caregivers are likely to exhibit the competence as they can listen well and respond to children's emotional states. There was however insufficient evidence to include the competence in the proposed framework.

On the other hand, Mayer and Salovey (1997) developed the ability emotional intelligence model which defines four distinct mental abilities or constructs that encompass emotional intelligence. The constructs include *perception emotion, use of emotion to facilitate thought, understanding of emotion, and management.* Each of the four constructs is associated with abilities or competencies that are related to that particular construct (Cheshire, 2013; Boytzis & Goleman, 2017). The ability to *perceive and express emotions* was included in the framework as expression of emotions was quite common among ECD caregivers in enhancing their job performance as children were motivated to participate.

Understanding emotion involves understanding emotional knowledge, including using appropriate words to help children label their feelings (Kremenitzer, 2005; Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018). The competence was also excluded from the framework as there was not enough data to validate it and caregivers also needed more information on emotion description.

Management of emotions involves the capacity for openness that permits emotions to enter into the intelligence system focusing on emotional self -management and the management of emotions in others (Borders, 2019). It includes the ability to manage one's emotions. The competence was included in the framework as it tallied with self-management in Goleman's model. There was adequate information to show that educators use management of emotions

Lastly, the fourth construct, the *use or integration of emotion* to facilitate thinking refers to exploiting emotions to assist cognitive activities such as deductive reasoning, problem solving creativity and interpersonal communication (Yiyimo, 2009; Cheshire, 2013; Dhani & Sharma, 2016). There was insufficient data to include the competence in the framework. The following figure, Figure 5.2 shows the revised conceptual framework:

Box 5
Job Performances
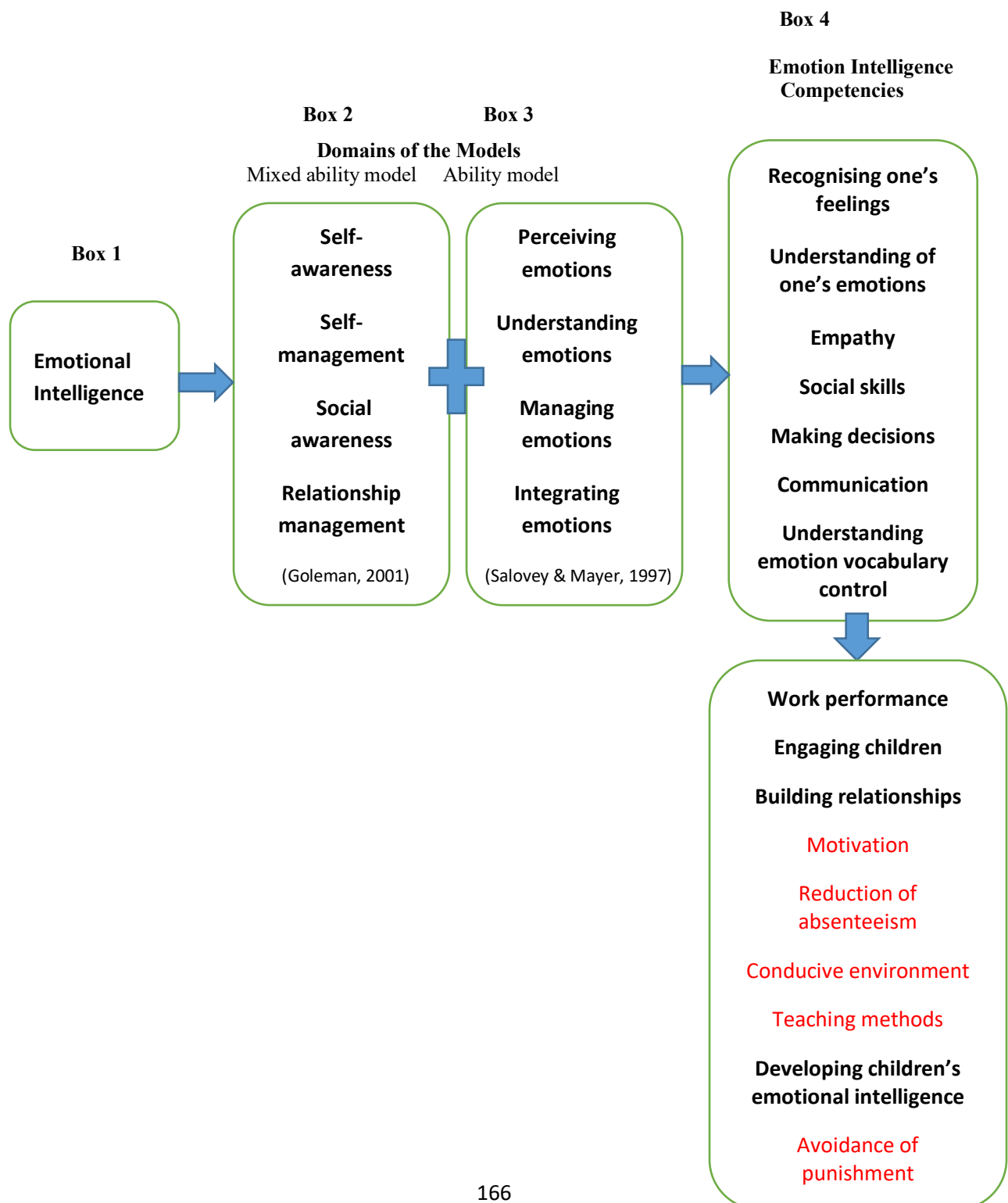
(Source: constructed by the researcher, 2020)

Figure 5.2: The revised conceptual framework for the study based on the findings

5.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

The study results have revealed the importance of emotional intelligence competencies in improving teachers' performance. It appears to be more effective to fully integrate emotional intelligence in teacher development programmes so that both pre-service and in-service teachers are equipped with skills to utilise emotional intelligence competencies. Recruitment policy of teachers therefore need to include emotional competencies as a requirement among others expected. The recommendations given below are for policy, practice and further research.

5.5.1   Recommendations for Policy

Recommendation 1

The study recommends that emotional intelligence competencies be given due consideration during recruitment and selection of ECD teachers in schools and centres. The policy on recruitment ought to articulate competencies expected including emotional intelligence competencies.

Recommendation 2

The study recommends that the policy on the teacher pupil ratio in ECD classes should remain at a ratio of 1:20 and be enforced to allow caregivers the opportunity to utilise emotion competencies effectively for the benefit of children under their care.

Recommendation 3

The study recommends that the policy on staffing of the teacher-in-charge position consider issues such as ECD qualifications, age, over and above the issue of experience. Most of the teachers-in-charge had degrees but in different fields altogether, and the majority were nearing retiring age.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Practice

Recommendation 1

It is necessary that the government of Zimbabwe pay particular attention to pre-service training and teacher development. The study recommends that pre-service education incorporate emotional intelligence topics to equip teachers with the necessary competencies which would enhance their expertise and ability to utilise the emotion competencies for the success of the teaching profession. The educators ought to be sound in their capability to understand and utilise EI in their own lives before they can be expected to model it in the classroom (McCuin, 2012).

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that government institutes run in-service training courses for teachers. It emerged from the study that teachers require understanding of emotions which includes comprehension of language and meaning of emotions, and understanding of emotion vocabulary since it can impact on classroom culture and learning.

Recommendation 3

The study recommends that centres or school administration consider potential teachers' emotional intelligence competencies when recruiting ECD caregivers for staffing. This aligns with Salmon (2011) who advocated recruiting potential candidates as online tutors displaying emotional intelligence.

5.5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Since the current study was the first to be done in Zimbabwe on the investigation of the use of emotional intelligence framework to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance, some recommendations for further research can be offered. The current study suggests a few implications for future research and therefore, there is need for a replication of the study considering the following issues:

Recommendation 1

A further study should be conducted on the use of the emotional intelligence framework focusing on a sample showing gender balance, that is, equal number of both men and women ECD caregivers. The results of the present study mainly centred on female teachers

Recommendation 2

Another area for qualitative exploration is on pre-service ECD teachers on practicum. The study recommends a replica of the study focusing on practicing teachers in order to explore their ability to utilise emotion competencies to become effective professionals upon completion of their training. This is because the current training model allows pre-service teachers five terms in the classroom. Due to the long practicum period, the pre-service teachers are likely to experience negative emotions evoked during teaching and learning processes and it becomes imperative to explore their ability to utilise emotion competencies in the learning environment

Recommendation 3

The study recommends that future studies focus on a single case which can permit prolonged stay at one ECD centre to allow caregivers to display varied emotional competencies and cater for competencies that might require long time analysis.

5.6   CONCLUSIONS

"In labs peopled with engineers and scientists, what makes the difference between stars and others is not their academic intelligent quotient (IQ), but their emotional IQ." (Goleman 1995, 161). Goleman (1995) therefore asserts that emotional competencies are twice as important for proper performance than IQ and technical skills combined. Different professions demand different types and levels of emotional competence (Ambavale, 2018). The aim of the research was to establish ECD caregivers' use of emotional competencies in an emotional intelligence framework to improve their performance. The research study's findings strongly support the proposed EI framework as contributing to enhancement of the performances of ECD teachers. This section presents the conclusions of the empirical study based on the findings thereof.

The findings of the study show that several competencies listed in the emotional intelligence framework were utilised by ECD caregivers with the intention of engaging children, attracting their attention, making them participate and for behaviour modification. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that teachers use the emotional intelligence framework competencies such as emotion regulation, emotion recognition, emotional expression (both negative and positive emotional expression), influence and conflict management.

ECD caregivers utilised most emotional competences listed on the EI framework, which assisted the caregivers on several specific job dimensions. It can be concluded that

competencies could improve job behaviour such as motivation, learner participation, engagement, reduction of absenteeism, creation of conducive environments.

From the findings, it can be concluded that self-assessment, emotion regulation, conflict management and empathy could be utilised to create conducive environments to learning. Whilst managing conflicts and regulating emotions would create non-threatening environments, empathy would create an environment conducive to learning by making children feel loved and at home. In addition, empathy and conflict management, by creating environments conducive to learning, would reduce absenteeism as children would want to come to school

It can also be concluded that emotional intelligence competencies enhance teachers' job performance, as they facilitate the flow of lessons through enabling learners' concentration (conflict management) and assist in ensuring that teachers deliver well through making learners more attentive (empathy).

From the study's findings, it can be noted that the love and care felt by children from the caregivers' use of empathy and lack of fear of the teacher as a result of the management of conflicts creates a bond between the teacher and learners. It can therefore be said that empathy and conflict management emotion competencies lead to learners' attachment.

Caregivers' utilisation of varied emotional competencies indicated that it offers an opportunity for children to learn and develop some of the competences. For example, it was noted that children develop the capability of handling conflict among themselves.

The results of the study show that the views of teachers-in-charge tallied with the ECD caregivers' opinions on the use of competencies in the emotional intelligence framework. The teachers-in-charge believed that the competences were quite valuable in enhancing both the caregivers and learners' performance. Utilisation of several of the competencies resulted in the development of positive relationship between caregivers and learners, improvement of caregivers' performance and reducing absenteeism. Emotion regulation competence was believed to motivate teachers to work efficiently as its use would enable the caregivers to deliver well and interact well with learners.

The study also concludes that calming learners by caregivers was seen to be quite significant as it facilitated concentration, listening, participation and understanding of what was taught. It

is concluded that teachers therefore had the responsibility of modelling competencies so that learners imitate and in turn, develop the emotional competencies.

From the findings, the study concludes that concealing of emotions was an attribute found necessary for teachers to distract children from seeing a teachers' inability to control emotions. Presence of negative emotions were found to be unwanted as they would hinder the teacher's performance.

5.8   A FINAL WORD

Early childhood caregivers' profession is quite stressful emanating from teachers own problems, work load and children's behaviour problems. A range of specific EI competencies in a framework prepares a teacher for these forms of challenges. The emotional competences in an emotional intelligence framework, when utilised, have the capacity to influence everything a teacher does at work resulting in effective teaching and learning. The current study has unlocked the door for additional research to ensure that teacher education programmes prepare graduates who are able to respond to children's emotional cues appropriately, establish good working relationships not only with children themselves but the teaching professional team, overcoming multiple stressors envisioned in the ECD environment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: University registration

Appendix B: Ethical clearance

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/02/13

Dear Mrs Mawere

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2019/02/13 to 2024/02/13

Ref: **2019/02/13/57667586/55/MC**
Name: Mrs P Mawere
Student: 57667586

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs P Mawere
E-mail address: mawerephylis@gmail.com
Telephone: +263775149948

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof V Scherman
E-mail address: scherv@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: + 27 76 832 9027

Title of research:

Using an emotional intelligence framework to enhance early childhood development caregivers job performance: A case study

Qualification: PhD in Psychology of Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/02/13 to 2024/02/13.

The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/02/13 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
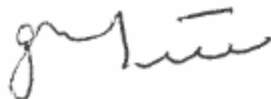
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/02/13**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2019/02/13/57667586/55/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

pp: **Prof V McKay**
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

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Appendix C: Request for permission to conduct research

REFORMED CHURCH
UNIVERSITY BOX 80
GWERU

MASVINGO 14-2-17

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

P.O BOX 392 UNISA

SOUTH AFRICA

THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

HARARE

Dear Madam

REF: Request for permission to conduct research in selected Gweru urban Primary schools

Reference is made to the above subject matter.

I Phylis Mawere am doing research towards a D Ed at the University of South Africa. I am requesting to carry out a research on the use of emotional intelligence frame work. in ECD classes. The topic reads **"Using an emotional intelligence framework to enhance early childhood development caregivers' job performance: A case study"**

I am doing research under the supervision of Vanessa Scherman, a Professor in the Department of Psychology towards a D.Ed. at the University of South Africa (phone number +270124294623, cell + 27768329027 email, scherv@unisa.ac.za).

I intend to carry out the research in the following schools: Takwirira Primary School, Mpumelelo Primary School, Takunda Primary School, Chikumbiro, Primary School, St Michaels Primary School, Mkoba 4 Primary School, Sandara Primary School, Stanley Primary School Happy Day Care centre and a Roman Catholic pre-school.

It is my hope that the results of the study will add to the body of knowledge on the use of emotional intelligence in a learning environment. The study will also inform the body of knowledge on strategies that teachers can utilise to make children engage actively in learning in the classroom environment. Challenges that educators and learners in ECD settings encounter in teaching and learning situations will be put forward to find strategies to minimize them. Recommendations will be suggested in order to enhance work based learning competences.

The study is going to employ qualitative research methodology to carry out the study. Data will be collected from ECD teachers and Teachers-in-charge through the use of interviews (face to face and

focus groups) and observation. Interview data will be recorded on a voice recorder. Face to face interviews should last approximately 30 minutes per interview. Each focus group discussion will last approximately 45 minutes.
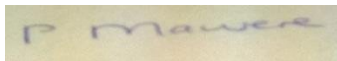
There are no foreseeable risks given that participation in the research is voluntary and participants should do so out of their own free will. The participants are free to withhold any information that they may decide not to share with the researcher or withdraw from an interview at any point if they feel like doing so for whatever reasons. Each participant's right to privacy will be maintained. Names of institutions and participants will not be disclosed instead pseudo names will be used which may not in any way link the participant and institution to the data collected. Therefore there will not be any risk involved in participating in the research.

For feedback, a copy of the transcription will be send to the participants to confirm the accuracy of the conversation and observations to add or clarify any points.

Awaiting your favourable response.
Thank you
Yours Sincerely

P Mawere

Mrs. P Mawere UNISA D Ed student

_____

Professor Scherman Vanessa Supervisor

Appendix D: Permission to conduct research

Mawere Phylis
Reformed Church University
Masvingo

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN MIDLANDS PROVINCE: TAKWIRIRA,MPUMELELO, TAKUNDA,CHIKUMBIRO,ST MICHAELS, MKOBA 4, SANDARA, STANLEY PRIMARY SCHOOLS, HAPPY DAY CARE CENTRE AND ROMAN CATHOLIC PRE- SCHOOL.
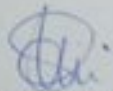
Permission to carry out a Research on:-

"USING AN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CAREGIVERS' JOB PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY"

in the Midlands Province has been granted on the conditions that:

1. in carrying out this you do not disturb the learning and teaching programmes in schools

2. you avail the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education with a copy of your research findings

3. this permission can be withdrawn at anytime by the Provincial Education Director or by any higher officer.

The Provincial Education Director wishes you success in your research work and in your studies

SHIRICHENA C.
ACTING PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR: MIDLANDS

MIN. OF PRV. & SE.   .DUCATION
HUMAN RESOURCES (DISCIPLIN F)
MIDLANDS
0 7 MAY 2019
P.O BOX 73/ GWERU
ZIMBABWE

Appendix E: Consent to conduct research

ZIMBABWE

Reference: C/426/MID
Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

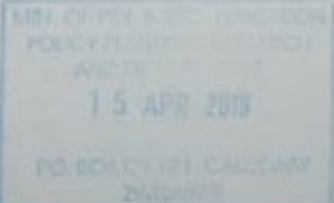8 April 2019

Mawere Phylis
Reformed Church University
Masvingo

Re: **PERMISSION TO VISIT SCHOOLS IN MIDLANDS PROVINCE:
GWERU DISTRICT; TAKWIRIRA, MPUMELELO, TAKUNDA,
CHIKUMBIRO, ST MICHAELS, MKOBA 4, SANDARA, STANLEY PRIMARY
SCHOOLS, HAPPY DAY CARE CENTRE AND ROMAN CATHOLIC PRE-
SCHOOL.**

Reference is made to your application to collect data for research purpose from the
above stated schools in Midlands Province on the research titled:

> **"USING AN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE
> EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CAREGIVERS' JOB
> PERFORMANCE : A CASE STUDY."**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial
Education Director Midlands Province, who is responsible for the schools which you
want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does
not disrupt the normal operations of the schools. Where students are involved,
parental consent is required.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for
Primary and Secondary Education.

MIN. OF PRY. & SEC. EDUCATION
POLICY PLANNING RESEARCH
AND STATISTICS

1 5 APR 2019

P.O. BOX CY 121 CAUSEWAY
ZIMBABWE

T. Thabela (Mrs)
SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Cc: PED – Midlands Province

Appendix F: Request to conduct research in schools (sample letter)

THE HEAD

Dear Madam

REF: Request for permission to carry out research at your school

Reference is made to the above subject matter. Title: "Using An Emotional Intelligence Framework To Enhance Early Childhood Development Caregivers' Job Performance: A Case Study."

I Phylis Mawere am doing research towards a D Ed at the University of South Africa. I am requesting to carry out a research on the use of emotional intelligence competences to enhance caregivers job performances in ECD classes. The topic reads "Using an emotional intelligence framework to enhance early childhood development caregivers' job performance: A case study."

I am doing research under the supervision of Vanessa Scherman, a Professor in the Department of Psychology towards a D.Ed. at the University of South Africa (phone number +270124294623, cell + 27768329027 email, scherv@unisa.ac.za).

I intend to carry out the research with two early childhood development teachers at your school.

It is my hope that the results of the study will add to the body of knowledge on the use of emotional intelligence competences in a learning environment. The study will also inform the body of knowledge on strategies that teachers can utilise to make children engage actively in learning in the classroom environment. Challenges that educators and learners in ECD settings encounter in teaching and learning situations will be put forward to find strategies to minimize them. Recommendations will be suggested in order to enhance work based learning competences.
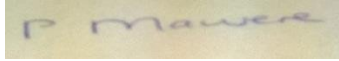
The study is going to employ qualitative research methodology to carry out the study. Data will be collected from ECD teachers and Teachers-in-charge through the use of interviews (face to face and focus groups) and observation. Interview data will be recorded on a voice recorder. Face to face nterviews should last approximately 30 minutes per interview. Each focus group discussion will last approximately 45 minutes.

There are no foreseeable risks given that participation in the research is voluntary and participants should do so out of their own free will. The participants are free to withhold any information that they may decide not to share with the researcher or withdraw from an interview at any point if they feel like doing so for whatever reasons. Each participant's right to privacy will be maintained. Names of institutions and participants will not be disclosed instead pseudo names will be used which may not in any way link the participant and institution to the data collected. Therefore there will not be any risk involved in participating in the research.

For feedback, a copy of the transcription will be send to the participants to confirm the accuracy of the conversation and observations to add or clarify any points.

Awaiting your favourable response. Thank you

Yours Sincerely

P Mawere

Mrs. P Mawere UNISA D Ed student
_____

Professor Scherman Vanessa Supervisor

Appendix G: Requesting participation of ECD caregivers/teachers/teachers-in-charge

Title: "Using an emotional intelligence framework to enhance early childhood development caregivers' job performance: A case study"

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Phylis Mawere(cell +263775149948 email mawerephylis@gmail.com). I am doing research under the supervision of Vanessa Scherman, a Professor in the Department of Psychology of Education towards a D.Ed at the University of South Africa (+270124294623, cell + 27768329027 email, scherv@unisa.ac.za).

We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled *"Using an emotional intelligence framework to enhance early childhood development caregivers' job performance: A case study"*

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could benefit early childhood caregivers on the need to exercise emotional intelligence so as allow engagement of children in a learning environment and to inform the body of knowledge on strategies caregivers can employ to assist children develop their emotional intelligence

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my topic and in working with early childhood development children.

I obtained your contact details from your school's administrative team after I had got the permission to carry out the study from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. You would like to know that twenty early childhood development caregivers are going to be involved in the research study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study is going to be conducted using qualitative research methodology. You shall be involved in a face to face interview with the researcher and observation and data will be recorded on a voice recorder and video camera. Face to face interviews and are expected to last 30 minutes and 20 minutes observation respectively.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Your right to privacy will be maintained. Names of individuals will not be disclosed as pseudo names will be used in the report. Therefore there will not be any risk involved in participating in the research.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The study shall be of benefit as it adds value to the existing knowledge body on how caregivers can exercise emotional knowledge so that children can be actively engaged in learning situations.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

This study does not have potential risks given that participation in the research is voluntary. After data transcription the taped data shall destroyed and the participant's rights to privacy shall be maintained. As a result there will not be any risk involved in participating in the research

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. Your responses will be treated in strict confidentiality .Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings

With your kind permission your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. Names of participants will not be indicated in the report, journal articles or conference

A focus group is a special type of group composed of six to eight members who are brought together to discuss research topics together sharing ideas whilst the interviewer takes the role of a facilitator. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard in my house for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research. Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and electronic copies will be Permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

The research study will not have any payments as rewards for participation in the study hence you might not get direct benefit from participating in the study. However by participating in the study, you will be contributing to the research on the use of emotional intelligence frame work to enhance job performance of ECD caregivers.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

Permission to undertake this study has been granted by the Ministry of Primary and Higher Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of education, UNISA. If you have any research related queries, they can be addressed to me or to my supervisor. My contact details are +263775149948, e-mail: mawerephylis@gmail.com:

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Phylis Mawere on

+263775149948, email mawerephylis@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for period of five years. Feedback procedure will entail sending a copy of the transcription to give the interviewees an option to confirm the accuracy of the conversation and to add or clarify any points.
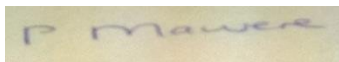
Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Phylis Mawere, email mawerephylis@mail.com, phone number, +263775149948.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Vanessa Scherman, phone number +270124294623, cell + 27768329027 email, scherv@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

I look forward to speaking to you very much. If you accept my invitation to participate in the study, I will request you to sign the consent form on the next page.

Thank you.

Phylis Mawere

Professor Scherman Vanessa

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

Supervisor

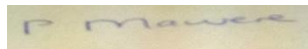**CONSENT FORM FOR CAREGIVERS/TEACHERS/TEACHERS-IN-CHARGE**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print):_____

Participant Signature: __

Researcher Name: (Please print) PHYLIS MAWERE

Researcher Signature: P Mawere

Date: __

Appendix H: A letter requesting focus group consent and confidentiality agreement

I _____

grant consent/assent that the information I share during the focus group may be used by _Mrs Mawere for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: (Please print): MRS MAWERE

Researcher's Signature: P Mawere

Date: _____

Appendix I: A letter requesting parental consent for minors to participate in a research project

Dear Parent

Your son/ daughter / child is invited to participate in a study entitled *Pertinence of emotional intelligence to enhance early childhood development caregivers' job performance: A case study*

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. I am doing research under the supervision of Vanessa Scherman, a Professor in the Department of Psychology of Education towards a D Ed at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to establish the extent to which ECD caregivers exercise emotional intelligence in a learning environment and the possible benefits of the study are the improvement of utilization of emotional intelligence so that your child can be engaged in the learning process. We are asking for permission to include your child in this study because I need to establish how caregivers use their emotional intelligence to enhance their performance which encompasses engaging your child in the learning process. I expect to have many other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to be observed whilst learning. I shall video record interactions that go on in his/ her class. I ask for permission to video record your child together with others. However, I will avoid recording the child' face in order to protect his/her identity.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

Your child's identity and right can be at risk as he/she might not feel alright during the observations. I will therefore avoid video -taping your child's face to protect his/her identity. I will also work with people from psychological services so that they can help him/her if he/she is distressed. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are that, study will inform the body of knowledge on strategies that teachers can use to make your child to be actively engaged when learning.

Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, she/ he don't have to.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child

will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

The benefits of this study are that early childhood development teachers are likely to understand the importance of using emotional intelligence when doing their duties. The teachers might also appreciate strategies that can be used and the need to develop children's emotional intelligence.

Potential risks are your child's identity and right since the child might not feel alright during the observations. However, this will be catered for as Psychological services will be there to help if the child gets distressed.

,,,

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

If you have questions about this study, please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof Scherman Vanessa, Department of Psychology of Education, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is +263775149948 and my e-mail is mawerephylis@gmail.com. The e-mail of my supervisor is scherv@unisa.ac.za and her phone number is +270124294623, cell +2776829027. Permission for the study has already been given by head of the school and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR A CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____(Parent/guardian's name), confirm that the person asking my consent for my child to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my child's participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to have my child participate in the study.

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that he/she is free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that his/her participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the observation. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Name of child:

Sincerely

_____	_____	
Parent/guardian's name (print)	Parent/guardian's signature:	Date:
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's name (print)	Researcher's signature	Date:

Appendix J: A letter requesting assent from learners in a <u>primary school</u> to participate in a research project

Dear learner,

My name is Mrs Mawere. I am doing research under the supervision of Vanessa Scherman, a Professor in the Department of Psychology of Education towards a D Ed at the University of South Africa. We would like to ask you if we can come and watch you do some activities with your teacher. I am trying to learn more about how well children do activities with their teachers. If you say YES to do this, I will come and watch you when you are with your teacher doing the activities. I will not ask to you to do anything. If you do not want to take part, it will be fine with me. Remember, you can say yes or you can say no and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to mommy or daddy about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Regards

Mrs P. Mawere

Name of Child: _____

Child's Voluntary Response to Participation:

  Yes I will take part   No I will not take part

Name of the researcher   Mrs
P. Mawere

Signature of Researcher:

Date: _

Witness:

Appendix K: Research Instruments

Below is a table showing research questions and the instruments used to collect data to answer the relevant research questions.

Research questions and data collection techniques

Research Question	Data Collection Technique
How do caregivers perceive the use of emotional intelligence framework to enhance their job performance?	In-depth interviews and Focus Group Interview
	Establishing how the use of emotional intelligence framework enhances caregivers' job performance.
	For example asking their views on how emotion regulation improves their performance, asking why it is necessary to recognise their and children's emotions , to empathise with children
	Focus group discussions
	Discussing the importance of influence, conflict management, self- assessment in enhancing caregivers' job performance.
	Unstructured observations
	Observing how caregivers manage their own emotions
	Observing how they use emotion competencies e.g. emotion recognition, conflict management, influence competence
Which emotional intelligence competencies do ECD caregivers use to enhance their job performance?	Focus group interviews
	Caregivers are interviewed to assess emotional intelligence competencies they use being guided by Goleman's Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI).
	For example, they were asked to identify competencies they use when they face problems from children, they interact with

Research Question	Data Collection Technique
	children, social skills they use to increase job performance

Unstructured observations

Unstructured observations on emotional situations during teaching and learning situations

observing to establish competencies caregivers use in face of problems, to encourage interaction, which emotions they use when interacting with children, observing to ascertain their emotional intelligence they utilise in the classroom environment when working with children.

How do caregivers utilise emotional intelligence framework competencies to?	In-depth interviews, observations and Focus Group Interview

In-depth Interviews

Interview question on how caregivers use emotional competencies when confronted with varied emotional situations

For example, they were asked how they reacted to provocative situations, how they recognised emotions in children, how they cooled down in a learning environment, how they helped children to cool down

Observations

Observations on caregivers and children in learning situations to establish how caregivers use emotional competencies and handle negative emotions. – e.g. how they use emotion recognition, conflict management, empathy, etc.

Research Question	Data Collection Technique
	Observing how caregivers manage their and children's emotions
	Focus Group
	Caregivers discussed on how they reacted to provocative situations, difficulties that trigger negative emotions
What are the perceptions of Teachers-in-charge on the importance of using emotional Intelligence framework to enhance ECD caregivers' job performance?	In-depth interviews
	Establishing teachers-in-charges' views on the importance of using emotional intelligence competencies by ECD caregivers.
	For example, asking why empathising with children assist in enhancing their job performance, how does regulating help ECD teachers increase their job performance?
	Asking teachers-in-charge their views on which competencies caregivers should use to enhance their job performance

(Source: Constructed by the researcher)

You are being invited to participate in a study examining the importance of emotional intelligence for ECD caregivers. Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as the capacity to recognise your own feelings and those of others or motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions effectively in ourselves and others. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate then your responses will be completely confidential. If you wish to have a copy of results of this study you can indicate your email.

Section A

Biographical Data

Gender, Age and Qualification

Section B
The questions on:
i) Competences Caregivers use

ii) Utilising of emotion competencies

1. In your own opinion why is recognising children's emotions important in carrying out your job? (Response) how do you recognise them?

2. Which emotion competence do you use to keep yourself in face of problems from children to enhance your job performance (Response) why? How does it help?

3. Which emotion competence do you display most when interacting with children to enhance your performance? (response) Why? How do they help?

4. In your own opinion why is it necessary to recognise your own emotions in your job performance (response)

5. How does regulating emotion competence help you to enhance your job performance? (response) when do you regulate them? which emotions would you be feeling?

6. Which social skills do you think are important in relating with children to increase your job performance (response) What do they do to children?

7. In your own opinion why is empathising with ECD children important in enhancing your performance? (response) How will the children feel? What will the children do?

8. How do you manage to cool down in a learning environment? What exactly do you do? How does that help?

9. How does assisting children to calm down increase work performance in a classroom. (response) how do you assist ?

Questions on how emotional competencies are utilised by ECD caregivers to enhance job performance

1. How does self- assessment emotional competence contribute to job performance?
2. Why is influence competence important in enhancing job performance in an ECD class?
3. How do you react to provocative situations or conflict you encounter in a classroom situation?
4. How does knowledge of situations that trigger emotions assist to enhance teachers'
5. performance?
6. Why is conflict management competence necessary in handling difficult ECD children to enhance performance?

Classroom Observation schedule

Unstructured observation on caregivers was conducted to ascertain emotional intelligence framework competencies utilised and how they utilise them in the learning environment

Caregiver behaviours when interacting with children, responding to emotional situations and handling their own and children's emotions were observed.

Observed Behaviours	Comments

Interview Schedule for Teachers-in-charge

Section A

Demography information

Gender	Age	Qualification & Experience	Responsibilities

Section B- Open ended questions, questions on how EC are utilised, questions on competencies utilised by ECD caregivers

1. In your own opinion why is recognising children's emotions important for ECD caregiver's job performance? (Response) *how do they recognise them?*

2. In your own opinion why is empathising with ECD children important in enhancing caregivers' job performance? (Response) *How will the children feel? What will the children do?*

3. How does regulating emotion competence help ECD teachers to enhance their job performance? (Response) *when do you regulate them? Which emotions would they be feeling?*

4. How does assisting children to calm down increase work performance in a classroom? (Response) *how do caregivers assist them?*

5. In your opinion which emotional competencies should caregivers' use when teaching ECD children? (Response) *why?*

Appendix L: Proof of editing

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

PHYLIS MAWERE

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTORIS

Psychology of Education

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USING AN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CAREGIVERS' JOB PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY

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Appendix M: Turnitin report

Turnitin Originality Report

- Processed on: 13-Jan-2023 01:15 SAST
- ID: 1992009453
- Word Count: 63676
- Submitted: 1

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File size:	356.53K
Page count:	182
Word count:	63,676
Character count:	367,524
Submission date:	13-Jan-2023 01:15AM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	1992009453