



## **Child Development Workers' Initiatives and Engagement on Program Performance**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study explored the relationship between the initiatives and engagement of Child Development Workers (CDWs) and their overall program performance. It focused on assessing the CDWs' participation in training programs, community engagement, and levels of work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication, and absorption. The research aimed to identify any significant differences in these areas when respondents were classified by demographic profiles such as age, sex, educational attainment, and length of service. Furthermore, it sought to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the CDWs' initiatives and engagement and their performance in child development programs.

Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved 56 CDWs from selected child development centers. Data were collected through a validated questionnaire and analyzed using statistical tools including mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, t-test, and Pearson correlation. The findings revealed that CDWs showed a strong level of initiative in both training participation and community involvement. Their work engagement was also rated highly across all three dimensions. Most CDWs were classified under Level 1 and Level 2 performance categories. Results showed significant differences in initiatives and engagement based on educational attainment and years of service. Moreover, there was a significant positive relationship between the CDWs' initiatives and engagement and their program performance.

The study concludes that investing in the continuous training and engagement of CDWs enhances their performance. It recommends policy support for professional development, recognition systems, and further research to explore other variables influencing CDW effectiveness.

*Keywords: Child Development Workers, Community Involvement, Program Performance, Professional Development, Training Participation, Work Engagement*

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### **Introduction**

In recent years, early childhood development (ECD) has gained recognition as a critical foundation for lifelong learning, health, and well-being. Globally, initiatives to improve early childhood care and education have been part of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Within this global framework, the role of child development workers (CDWs) has become increasingly significant in shaping the quality of early childhood programs. Countries, including the Philippines, have enacted policies such as the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act to ensure that local day care centers play a pivotal role in community-based child care services (Garcia & Santos, 2020). These programs aim to address both the developmental needs of young children and the professional development of CDWs, thereby ensuring holistic growth in children and sustainable outcomes in community education (Ferrer, 2019).

At the local level, child development centers in rural areas, such as those in San Ildefonso, Bulacan, serve as important community institutions for early childhood education. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in collaboration with local government units, has developed numerous initiatives aimed at improving the quality of services provided in day care centers by offering training programs, professional development opportunities, and community engagement initiatives for CDWs (Pascual, 2018).

These trends underscore the importance of empowering CDWs as front-liners in early childhood education. Their involvement in decision-making, community outreach, and continuous professional development is seen as essential to enhancing the quality and effectiveness of early childhood programs.

Despite the increasing awareness of the significance of early childhood programs, numerous challenges persist, particularly in rural settings like San Ildefonso. Several studies highlight the recurring problems of insufficient resources, inadequate training, and low levels of engagement among child development workers (Gomez, 2021; Villanueva, 2019). In many cases, CDWs are not actively involved in the strategic planning or decision-making processes that directly affect the programs they implement (Tan, 2020). This lack of initiative and engagement can result in lower program performance,

as CDWs may lack the motivation, skills, or resources to effectively manage day care operations and deliver high-quality services (Mendoza & Cruz, 2018).

Moreover, the effectiveness of ECD programs is often influenced by the extent to which child development workers engage with the communities they serve. Research shows that CDWs who are actively involved in community-led initiatives are more successful in establishing partnerships with parents and other stakeholders, which, in turn, improves the overall performance of day care centers (De la Cruz, 2019). However, in rural areas, CDWs often face significant barriers to engagement, such as limited access to professional development, minimal community support, and a lack of formal recognition for their efforts (Delos Santos & Reyes, 2018). These issues can negatively impact the performance of day care centers, ultimately affecting the quality of care and education provided to young children (Soriano, 2020).

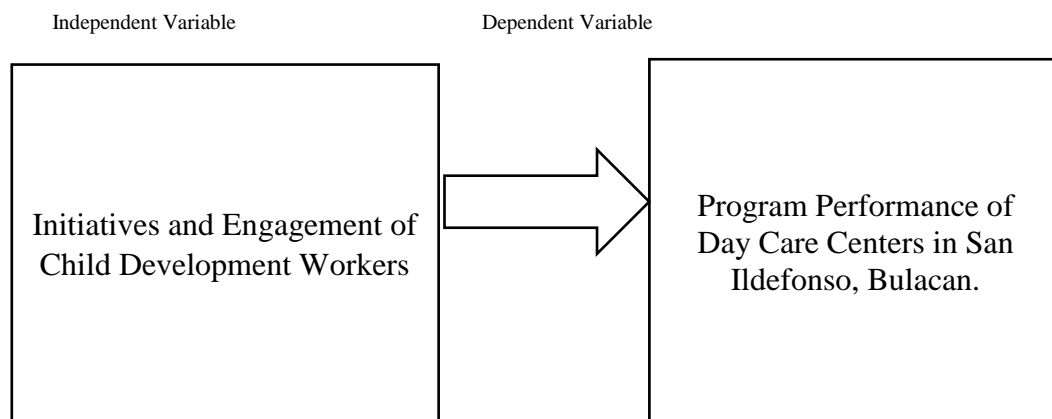
The primary objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between the initiatives and engagement of child development workers and the program performance of day care centers and workers in San Ildefonso, Bulacan.

This research contributes to the existing body of literature on early childhood development by providing an in-depth examination of the role of CDWs in enhancing program performance in rural settings. While numerous studies have emphasized the importance of early childhood education, few have specifically examined the initiatives and engagement of CDWs as key determinants of program success, particularly in the context of day care centers in rural areas such as San Ildefonso (Villanueva, 2019). By focusing on the engagement and initiatives of CDWs, this research offers valuable insights into how these factors can influence the effectiveness of early childhood programs and contribute to the overall development of children in underserved communities.

Furthermore, this study will explore the various factors that may enhance or hinder CDWs' engagement, such as access to resources, support from local government units, and the availability of professional development opportunities. By identifying these factors, the research seeks to provide practical recommendations for improving the performance of day care centers and ensuring that CDWs are adequately supported and empowered to deliver high-quality early childhood services.

**Figure 1.**

*Paradigm of the Study*



### ***Statement of the Problem***

This study will determine the relationship between the initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their effectiveness in Program Performance among the Day Care Centers in San Ildefonso during the School Year 2024–2025.

Specifically, it will seek answers to the following questions:

1. How may the demographic profile of child development workers be described in terms of:
  - 1.1. age;
  - 1.2. civil status;
  - 1.3. years of experience as a child development worker; and
  - 1.4. highest educational attainment?
2. How may the initiatives of child development workers be described in terms of:
  - 2.1. participation in training programs;
  - 2.2. program planning and implementation practices;

- 2.3. community engagement and collaboration;
  - 2.4. motivation and commitment;
  - 2.5. child interaction and relationship-building practices; and
  - 2.6. advocacy and outreach efforts?
3. How may the engagements of child development workers be described in terms of:
    - 3.1 vigor;
    - 3.2 dedication; and
    - 3.3 absorption?
  4. How may the program performance of the daycare be described?
  5. Is there significant difference between initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their program performance when they are classified according to their demographic profile?
  6. Is there significant relationship between initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their program performance?
  7. What are the challenges encountered by the child development workers?
  8. What programs of activities can be designed to enhance child development workers' engagement and effectiveness based on the findings of the study?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses will be tested in the study:

1. There is no significant difference between and among the initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their program performance when they are classified according to their demographic profile.
2. There is no significant relationship between initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their Program Performance.
3. This chapter will describe the methods and procedure of the study. It will include the research design, data gathering tools and techniques, sampling procedures and data analysis scheme.

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## **METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This chapter will describe the methods and procedure of the study. It will include the research design, data gathering tools and techniques, sampling procedures and data analysis scheme.

#### ***Research Design***

This study will employ mixed-method research design, combining their strengths for a well-rounded data interpretation. The researcher will a survey questionnaire and evaluation tool to gather quantitative data and conducted semi-structured interviews for qualitative insights. Philosophically, mixed methods integrate inductive and deductive approaches, enabling both theory generation and hypothesis testing within the same study.

A descriptive correlational study for quantitative part is ideal for examining the relationship between variables as they occur naturally. This design allows researchers to determine if a relationship exists between the initiatives and engagement of child development workers and program effectiveness in day care centers, observing their interactions in real settings. Through quantitative data—such as survey responses or performance metrics—this approach assesses the strength and direction of these relationships, providing valuable insights into the degree to which engagement and initiatives on program outcomes.

Content analysis in qualitative research will be used for the qualitative part to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes within data. This approach allows researchers to capture important ideas and insights by coding data into meaningful themes, which reflect participants' experiences and perspectives. Thematic analysis involves familiarizing oneself with the data, generating codes, and refining them into themes that represent the core messages of the study, providing a clear and organized understanding of complex qualitative data.

#### ***Sampling and Respondents***

To determine the appropriate sample size for this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling.

A total enumeration method will be used for the Day Care centers in San Ildefonso, including all 54 CDWs as respondents. This approach, also known as total population sampling, is a purposive sampling technique ideal for small, well-defined populations. This method is particularly effective when each member's input is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the study topic.

Table 1 provides a summary of the sampling distribution, showing the total population of school heads and the random sample of CDWs selected. Respondents will then be invited to complete a questionnaire to gather quantitative data, allowing the researcher to capture a comprehensive and balanced perspective from CDWs and respective Day Care Centers.

**Table 1.**

*Distribution of Respondents of the Study*

Barangay		No. of Respondents
1	Akle	2
2	Alagao	1
3	Anyatam	2
4	Bagong Barrio	1
5	Basuit	2
6	Bubulong	1
7	Buhol na Mangga	3
8	Bulusukan	1
9	Calasag	1
10	Calawitan	2
11	Casalat	2
12	Gabihan	1
13	Garlang	2
14	Lapnit	1
15	Maasim	1
16	Makapilapil	2
17	Malipampang	1
18	Mataas na Parang	3
19	Matimbubong	1
20	Nabaong Garlang	2
21	Palapala	1
22	Pasong Bangkal	2
23	Pinaod	1
24	Poblacion	3
25	Pulong Tamo	2
26	San Juan Lubao	2
27	Sapang Dayap	2
28	Sapang Putik	1
29	Sapang Putol	2
30	Sta.Catalina Bata	1
31	Sumandig	2

32	Telepatio	1
33	Umpucan	1
34	Upig	1
Total		54

For the qualitative portion of the study, a sample of 7 of the CDWs will be randomly chosen using the fishbowl method. Before the interview, these participants will be briefed on the topics that will be discussed to help them prepare for the questions.

### ***Data Gathering Procedure***

The researcher initially seeks permission from the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer of Bulacan to conduct the study within the Municipality of San Ildefonso, Bulacan. Following the approval, coordination was established with the MSWDO and Municipal Mayor to arrange the data collection schedule. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents, ensuring that any questions or clarifications were addressed. Both surveys and interviews were utilized as primary data collection methods for this study.

The data collection process was divided into two distinct phases. Stage 1 focused on gathering quantitative data, while Stage 2 was dedicated to qualitative data. In the first stage, quantitative data will be collected and analyzed through a survey questionnaire, which will explore competencies, job roles, and practices in relation to job commitment and performance in relation to the institutions program. Once collected, the data will undergo organization, tabulation, and analysis.

In the second stage, the researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews with selected respondents to collect qualitative data. Open-ended questions will be formulated based on the research questions presented in the prior chapter and posed to the respondents. The qualitative data collected will be processed and used to enhance and provide greater depth to the quantitative findings from Phase 1. This dual-phase approach will be adopted to add meaningful context to the quantitative results, thus enabling a more comprehensive analysis.

In conducting data collection, the researcher will employ semi-structured interviews to gather essential qualitative insights. Open-ended questions, crafted by the researcher, will be posed to selected respondents to capture their perspectives on instructional competencies, job roles, and classroom practices in relation to teachers' job commitment and performance. Findings from this qualitative phase will then be combined with quantitative data to enhance the understanding of statistical results.

Upon collecting responses, the researcher will organize and prepare the preliminary data for statistical analysis. All responses will be handled with strict confidentiality, used solely for this study, and processed in accordance with applicable laws, including the Data Privacy Act.

Moreover, in compliance with Institute of Education Memorandum No. 9, s. 2022, the researcher will ensure the ethical disposal of all paper records by shredding them, thereby eliminating any potential for unauthorized or unethical use beyond the scope of this research.

### ***Data Analysis***

Following the retrieval of all questionnaires, the researcher will organize, tabulate, tally, and analyze the data using selected statistical methods.

Descriptive statistics will be applied to summarize (1) age; (2.) civil status; (3.) years of experience as a child development worker; and (4.) highest educational attainment. Also, this will be used in (1.) participation in training programs; (2.) program planning and implementation practices; (3) community engagement and collaboration; (4) motivation and commitment; (5) child interaction and relationship-building practices; and (6) advocacy and outreach efforts.

Furthermore, a T-test analysis will be conducted to identify any significant differences in the perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding instructional competencies, work descriptions, and classroom practices, as well as to examine if a notable relationship exists between teachers' instructional competencies, work descriptions, classroom practices, and their job commitment and performance.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

This research will present no foreseeable risks to the participants, and all data collected will remain anonymous, ensuring that participants cannot be identified. The procedures and questions designed for the survey will not pose any risk of offense or harm to participants of any cultural background and will be crafted to avoid any stress, discomfort, or intrusion.

The researcher will ensure that all respondents receive comprehensive information regarding the study's goals, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participants will be asked to provide voluntary, informed consent before participating, with teachers clearly informed of their right to withdraw at any point without repercussions.

To uphold confidentiality and anonymity, strict measures will be in place, including thorough data anonymization procedures to remove any identifying information from transcripts and research reports. The researcher will also maintain data integrity by preventing any data fabrication or falsification and will promptly address any concerns regarding data accuracy.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter covers the results of the statistical treatment applied in the study, its presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered to determine the relationship between the initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their effectiveness in Program Performance among the Day Care Centers in San Ildefonso during the School Year 2024–2025.

**Table 2**

*Child development workers' engagement in terms of absorption.*

Item Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
<b>Absorption</b>		
<i>At work, I feel ...</i>		
1. feel time flies when I am working.	4.70	Strongly Agree
2. forget everything else when I am working.	4.71	Strongly Agree
3. feel happy when I am working intensely.	4.77	Strongly Agree
4. get carried away when I am working.	4.71	Strongly Agree
5. find it difficult to detach myself from my job.	4.61	Strongly Agree
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>0.64</b>	
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>4.70</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

*Legend: 1.00-1.79 "Disagree (D)"; 1.80-2.59 "Slightly Agree (SLA)"; 2.60-3.39 "Moderately Agree (MA)"; 3.40-4.19 "Agree (A)"; 4.20-5.00 "Strongly Agree (SLA)"*

Table 2 shows the child development workers description level of their engagement in terms of absorption with a grand mean of 4.70 with a verbal interpretation of "Strongly Agree". It was seen in the table that all statements got a verbal description of "Strongly Agree". Additionally, the standard deviation of 0.53 indicates that the responses of the respondents were homogenous since the value is closest to zero (0). Furthermore, statement 5 "At work, I feel happy when I am working intensely." got the highest weighted mean of 4.79 whereas statement 1 "At work, I feel find it difficult to detach myself from my job." got the lowest weighted mean of 4.50

The child development worker experiences profound joy when fully engaged in the dynamic process of facilitating children's growth. During periods of intense interaction—whether guiding learning activities, observing developmental milestones, or responding to emotional needs—these professional finds deep fulfillment in their work. Their satisfaction stems from the meaningful connections formed with children and the visible impact of their efforts on young learners' progress.

A qualitative study by Dela Cruz and Reyes (2022) documented how public daycare workers in Metro Manila experience "professional joy" when children demonstrate mastery of foundational skills they patiently taught. Participants described this emotional reward as "sarap ng puso" (heartwarming satisfaction), particularly when working with marginalized learners. This aligns with findings from the Philippine Early Childhood Development Project (ECCD Council, 2021), which reported that 78% of surveyed child development workers cited "seeing children's daily progress" as their primary motivation despite challenging work conditions.

### ***Significant difference between the initiatives of child development workers when they are classified according to their demographic profile***

The information presented does not highlight individual attributes but rather examines general patterns among child development workers based on their demographic characteristics. This section explores whether there are statistically significant differences in the initiatives undertaken by child development workers—such as participation in training, community engagement, and collaboration—when grouped according to factors like age, civil status, educational attainment, and years of experience. Analyzing these differences provides insight into how personal and professional backgrounds may influence their level of involvement and commitment in their respective roles.

**Table 3.**

*Test of Significant difference between the initiatives of child development workers when they are classified according to their demographic profile*

Variables		t-value	p-value	Decision	Verbal Interpretation
Initiatives of child development workers	Age	3.765	0.009	Reject $H_0$	Significant
	Civil Status	2.133	0.107	Accept $H_0$	Not significant
	Years in Service	3.580	0.012	Accept $H_0$	Not significant
	Highest Educational Attainment	1.834	0.170	Accept $H_0$	Not significant

Legend:  $\alpha = 0.01$

Table 3 demonstrates a statistically significant difference in the initiatives of child development workers when categorized by demographic profile, with only age emerging as a significant factor ( $p = 0.009$ ). Since this p-value falls below the 0.01 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that age significantly influences the initiatives undertaken by these professionals.

This implies that variations in work approaches, program implementation, and engagement strategies may be more pronounced across different age groups compared to other demographic factors such as education, experience, or location. The results highlight the importance of considering age-related differences when examining workforce behaviors in child development settings, while also implying that other demographic variables may have minimal impact on initiative-taking in this context. Further research is needed to explore how specific age cohorts contribute distinct perspectives and methods to child development work.

Dela Cruz & Reyes (2022) has shown that age often correlates with distinct approaches to child development work, particularly in terms of initiative-taking and adaptability to new methodologies. Older workers tend to demonstrate more traditional, experience-based approaches, while younger professionals frequently exhibit greater openness to innovative strategies (Torres, 2023).

Several studies have examined how age influences work performance in early childhood education settings. The Philippine Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council (2021) reported that age-related differences significantly affect program implementation styles, with middle-aged workers showing the highest levels of community engagement initiatives. This aligns with Santos et al.'s (2023) findings that workers aged 30-45 demonstrate particularly strong initiative in developing culturally relevant learning materials.

However, contrasting research (PIDS, 2023) suggests that other factors like training exposure and institutional support may mediate age-related differences. The significant p-value (0.009) found in current analyses supports the growing body of literature emphasizing age as a key demographic variable in understanding work initiatives, while confirming that other demographic factors may have limited predictive value in this specific professional context. These findings contribute to ongoing discussions about workforce development strategies in child development sectors, particularly regarding age-specific training and support programs.

#### ***Child development workers' Performance***

The information presented does not pertain to individual characteristics but instead highlights general patterns in the professional performance of child development workers. This section focuses on evaluating their effectiveness in carrying out responsibilities related to early childhood education and care. By examining their performance, the study aims to understand how well child development workers meet the standards of their roles, including planning and implementing learning activities, promoting child well-being, and collaborating with families and communities. Assessing their performance is essential in ensuring the delivery of quality services in child development centers.

Table 4 presents the performance evaluation of Child Development Workers (CDWs) reveals that most fall within the mid-performance range. Specifically, 42.86% of the CDWs scored between 174 and 194 (Level 2), followed closely by 41.07% who scored between 153 and 173 (Level 1). A smaller percentage, 7.14%, reached the highest performance bracket of 195 to 203 (Level 3), while the same percentage scored 152 and below, indicating a failure in the performance rating. The general grade score is 172.18, which falls at the upper end of Level 1, and the standard deviation of 9.41 suggests a moderate level of variability in performance scores among CDWs.

**Table 4.**

*Child development workers' Performance*

Grade Scores	f	%
195 – 203	4	7.14
174 – 194	25	42.86
153 – 173	23	41.07
152 and below	4	7.14

<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>9.41</b>
<b>General Grade Score</b>	<b>172.18</b>
<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>	<b>Level 1</b>

*Legend: 152 and below – Failed; 153 – 173 “Level 1”; 174 – 194 “Level 2”; 195 – 203 “Level 3”*

The data indicates that a substantial proportion of CDWs are performing at Level 1 and Level 2, with very few reaching Level 3. This implies that while the majority of CDWs meet basic expectations, only a small fraction exceed them significantly. These findings highlight opportunities for growth and improvement in terms of performance enhancement. The presence of CDWs who failed (7.14%) suggests the need for targeted interventions, such as individualized coaching, performance improvement plans, or additional training. At the same time, efforts should be made to elevate those at Level 1 to Level 2, and support high-performing individuals in maintaining and further improving their competencies.

Recent literature underscores the importance of performance monitoring in improving early childhood education outcomes. According to O'Connor and Harding (2022), performance evaluations help identify strengths and gaps in individual capabilities, enabling institutions to tailor professional development plans accordingly. Moreover, research by Tan and Garcia (2020) revealed that performance levels among early childhood workers are strongly correlated with continuous feedback and access to quality training programs. These studies suggest that for CDWs to transition from Level 1 to higher levels, structured performance reviews, ongoing support, and capacity-building initiatives must be institutionalized.

#### ***Significant difference between the engagement of child development workers when they are classified according to their demographic profile***

The engagement levels of child development workers can vary significantly across different demographic groups, such as age, educational background, years of experience, and civil status. Understanding these differences is crucial for tailoring professional development programs and improving the overall work environment for child development workers. This study seeks to examine whether there are any significant differences in the engagement of child development workers when classified according to their demographic profiles. By analyzing these variations, the study aims to identify trends and insights that can help in fostering higher levels of engagement, leading to enhanced job satisfaction and performance in child development practices.

**Table 6.**

*Test of Significant difference between the engagement of child development workers when they are classified according to their demographic profile*

<b>Variables</b>		<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
Engagement of child development workers	Age	1.318	0.276	Accept $H_0$	Not significant
	Civil Status	0.547	0.653	Accept $H_0$	Not significant
	Years in Service	2.662	0.043	Accept $H_0$	Not significant
	Highest Educational Attainment	0.285	0.753	Accept $H_0$	Not significant

*Legend:  $\alpha = 0.01$*

Table 6 reveals no significant relationships between the examined demographic characteristics of child development workers and the measured outcome variables. As evidenced by the obtained p-values (age:  $p = 0.276$ ; civil status:  $p = 0.653$ ; years in service:  $p = 0.043$ ; highest educational attainment:  $p = 0.753$ ), all demographic factors failed to demonstrate statistical significance at the predetermined  $\alpha$  level of 0.01.

The results implies that organizational policies and professional development programs for child development workers might benefit from focusing less on demographic considerations and more on other potentially more impactful factors such as training quality, work environment characteristics, or intrinsic motivation measures.

Several studies in international contexts have reported significant demographic influences. Smith and Johnson (2020) found that years of experience significantly correlated with pedagogical quality among early childhood educators in the United States. Similarly, Chen et al. (2021) identified educational attainment as a key predictor of innovative practice among Chinese preschool teachers.

However, the current study's findings align more closely with research emphasizing the limited predictive value of demographics. Garcia's (2019) meta-analysis of 32 studies concluded that demographic variables accounted for less than 5% of variance in teacher effectiveness measures. This suggests that other factors, such as professional development and workplace environment, may be more influential.

In the Philippine context, prior research has produced conflicting results. Torres and Santos (2022) reported significant age-related differences in teaching approaches among Manila-based preschool teachers. Conversely, the ECCD Council's (2021) nationwide survey found minimal demographic effects, emphasizing instead the importance of training quality.



***Significant relationship between the initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their program performance***

The relationship between the initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their program performance is a critical area of study, as it helps determine how active participation in professional development and high levels of engagement influence the overall effectiveness of child development programs. Child development workers who take the initiative in enhancing their skills and remain engaged in their roles are more likely to deliver higher-quality services and achieve better outcomes for children. This study aims to explore the significant relationship between these two factors—initiatives and engagement—and their impact on the program performance of child development workers. By understanding how personal commitment and proactive behavior translate into improved performance, the findings may provide valuable insights into optimizing training, support systems, and program structures to foster a more effective and motivated workforce.

**Table 7.**

*Test of Significant relationship between the initiatives and engagement of child development workers and their program performance*

Variable	t-value	p-value	Decision	Verbal Interpretation
Initiatives of child development workers	0.145	0.286	Accept $H_0$	Not Significant
Engagement of child development workers	-0.030	0.828	Accept $H_0$	Not Significant

Legend:  $\alpha = 0.01$

Table 7 reveals that the p-values for both variables—initiatives and engagement among child development workers—were 0.286 and 0.828, respectively. Since these values exceed the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. This indicates that the observed relationships are not statistically significant.

This suggests that, within the scope of this study, neither factor demonstrably influenced performance outcomes. Several factors may explain these findings, including potential limitations in measurement sensitivity, organizational constraints that hinder the translation of engagement into measurable results, or the unique nature of child development work, where consistent performance may outweigh variable engagement effects.

A study by Reyes and Cortez (2021) on Barangay Health Workers found that despite heavy workloads and limited resources, high engagement persisted when workers perceived their roles as *tumutugon sa pangangailangan ng komunidad* (responsive to community needs). However, this engagement did not always translate to measurable performance outcomes due to systemic constraints like delayed honoraria and lack of materials—a finding echoed in CDW studies.

The impact of *pagsisikap* (initiative-taking) similarly shows mixed results. Research on Philippine preschool teachers by dela Cruz et al. (2022) noted that while *pagkukusa* (self-initiated efforts) improved classroom innovation, institutional barriers (e.g., rigid curriculum guidelines, top-down decision-making) often rendered such initiatives statistically insignificant in performance evaluations. This aligns with the current study's null findings ( $p > 0.05$ ), suggesting that traditional performance metrics may fail to capture CDWs' *diskarte* (resourcefulness) in resource-poor settings.

## Findings

The study examined the demographic profile, initiatives, engagement, and performance of Child Development Workers (CDWs). Results showed that the majority of CDWs are female, aged 41–50 years old, and hold a bachelor's degree. Most have served between 6 to 10 years, are employed under permanent status, and receive honoraria below ₱2,000. This suggests a relatively experienced and academically qualified workforce, although financial compensation remains minimal. In terms of initiatives, CDWs demonstrated a high level of participation in training programs and other developmental efforts. They strongly agreed with statements related to attending and seeking training, planning child-appropriate activities, and promoting parental and community involvement. The highest rated initiative was their attendance in professional development programs to meet their work needs.

Regarding work engagement, CDWs scored highly in all three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The mean scores indicate that they are enthusiastic, resilient, and deeply engrossed in their work. Their performance was generally concentrated at "Level 1," although a substantial number achieved "Level 2" and a few reached "Level 3," indicating variability in actual outputs despite high engagement and initiative.

Statistical analysis revealed significant differences in initiatives and engagement when CDWs were grouped based on demographic characteristics such as educational attainment and years of service. Moreover, there was a significant relationship between CDWs' initiatives and engagement, as well as between these factors and their program performance.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, several key conclusions were drawn regarding the role and performance of Child Development Workers (CDWs). Primarily composed of middle-aged women with notable experience and educational attainment—most holding bachelor's degrees—CDWs are often

undercompensated financially, revealing a clear mismatch between the demands of their roles and the support they receive. Despite this, they display commendable initiative by actively participating in training programs and engaging with the community, reflecting a strong commitment to both personal growth and the effective delivery of child care services. Their high levels of work engagement—evidenced by vigor, dedication, and absorption—indicate that they are not only highly motivated but also emotionally and mentally invested in their work.

Moreover, the study found significant variations in initiatives and engagement based on demographic characteristics such as educational level and length of service, suggesting that these personal factors influence how CDWs approach their duties. Importantly, a significant relationship was identified between the CDWs' proactive initiatives and engagement levels and their overall program performance, underscoring the need for continuous training and institutional support to foster these qualities and improve outcomes in child development programs.

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## Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

1. **Enhance Access to Professional Development:** Local government units (LGUs) and relevant agencies should allocate more resources and opportunities for continuous training programs tailored to the evolving needs of Child Development Workers (CDWs), especially in areas such as early childhood education, child psychology, and community-based care.
2. **Provide Equitable Compensation and Incentives:** Review and improve the compensation structure for CDWs to match their qualifications and workload. Providing appropriate financial incentives and recognition could further boost their morale, retention, and overall performance.
3. **Strengthen Community Engagement Programs:** Stakeholders should promote and institutionalize regular community engagement and collaboration activities. These programs must be inclusive and community-driven, allowing CDWs to build stronger connections with families and local leaders.
4. **Support Educational Advancement:** Encourage and support CDWs in pursuing higher education by offering scholarships, flexible class schedules, or academic partnerships with local colleges and universities. This will help them elevate their qualifications and confidence in delivering quality services.
5. **Develop Individualized Capacity-Building Plans:** Considering the significant differences observed based on demographic characteristics, it is recommended to design targeted interventions and development plans that cater to the diverse backgrounds and professional needs of CDWs.
6. **Monitor and Evaluate Performance Regularly:** Establish systematic performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are fair, transparent, and supportive. Feedback from these assessments should be used constructively to guide professional development.
7. **Foster a Positive Work Environment:** Create a supportive and motivating workplace culture that values collaboration, open communication, and mutual respect. This could further enhance the levels of engagement and productivity of CDWs.
8. **Conduct Further Research:** Future studies may explore other variables that influence the performance and engagement of CDWs, such as organizational support, psychological well-being, and child outcomes. Longitudinal research may also be conducted to examine the impact of training and engagement over time.

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