

Strengthening Critical Thinking, Emotional Intelligence, Ethical Behavior, and Professional Commitment to Enhance Teacher Performance in Implementing the Independent Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

The teacher's task in the independent learning curriculum was to prepare a learning implementation plan, compile material, prepare assessments, ensure changes in student behavior, and carry out evaluations. However, 52% of students visited by researchers received grades below standard. The article was to determine the obstacles and difficulties teachers that have in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum. The researchers used mixed methods approach. The respondents in this research were 66 teachers. Data collection techniques used surveys with instruments that have been developed. This instrument was assessed on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 points. Data collection used observation, interviews with 10 teachers, and documents related to research indicators. Analysis data technique used SPSS Version 25.0. Then data from observations, interviews and documentation were collected, reduced, coded, diversified and conclusions drawn. As a result, it was found that the learning implementation plan was incomplete, the teacher did not prepare the material himself, and the assessment method was not yet structured. It was also found that teachers lacked mastery of the material. From the survey it was found that 62.87% of teachers' learning implementation plans did not comply with implementation, 68.53% of teachers lacked mastery of the material, there were 72.10%, there were 56.92% changes in behavior and 54.20% did not evaluate learning.

Keywords: *Teacher Performance, Critical Thinking, Emotional Intelligence, Ethical Behaviour, Professional Commitment*

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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires an in-depth understanding of the Pancasila student profile. Thus, the principles of student-centered learning can be implemented effectively (Hidayati et al., 2024). This curriculum is expected to be able to overcome problems such as improving literacy and numeracy skills for Indonesian children (S. Hamdi et al., 2022). It can be seen that currently there is still a need for teachers' understanding in implementing the Independent curriculum. Teacher performance is not just planning, implementation and evaluation but more than that, thus it is necessary to work in various sectors of teachers' personal sectors to continue to be able to provide good learning to students.

The elements of thought constitute one of the core components of critical thinking, alongside abilities, affective dimensions, and intellectual standards (Shamboul, 2022). Our findings suggest that to effectively enhance students' critical thinking abilities, a holistic approach is necessary. This includes evaluating students' motivation levels, as our study demonstrates a positive correlation between high motivation and improved critical thinking performance (Bensley et al., 2016). A study examining the correlation between critical thinking skills, learning achievement in biology, and the moderating effects of educational level and gender (Nasution et al., 2023). Critical thinking programs in ibero-americans teacher's formation (Ossa Cornejo et al., 2018). There is also research on emotional intelligence that can have an impact on fun learning to increase student engagement and achievement (Y. Sun et al., 2024). Research on the importance of emotional intelligence as a component of teachers' procedural competence (Murzalinova et al., 2023). Emotional distress is seen from the perspective of gender (Kitsios et al., 2022). In addition, emotional intelligence in the air transportation field (Waramontri et al., 2022). Research related to ethical behavior includes, among others, the identification of individual factors in ethical behavior with peers (Keiper et al., 2020). Ethical behavior in the world of education will have an impact on students and school organizations (Debeş, 2021). Research related to the importance of professional commitment as a support for nation building (Shoaib & Khalid, 2017). Research relates the commitment to the quality of teaching to provide professional education. (Salinas-Aguirre, 2023).

One of the profiles of Pancasila students is critical reasoning, so it is hoped that students can have critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is reflective and rational thinking that focuses on deciding what to believe or do. Note that there are creative activities that fall under this definition, including formulating hypotheses, questions, alternatives, and plans for experiments. Note also that, according to this definition, critical thinking is a practical activity since deciding what to believe or do is a practical activity (Ennis, 1985; Syafe'i et al., 2024). The importance of critical thinking because it is currently considered a form of social empowerment, improvement of communication, work skills, and networking (Tuzlukova et al., 2017; Aini et al., 2024). Based on this, the ability to think critically is an important part of today in supporting a person's career and life, especially teachers and students. Currently, there have been many studies that have influenced Shiva's critical thinking, but there are still relatively few that reveal research on teachers' critical thinking.

This research is essential to conduct as it aims to investigate how teachers' intellectual, emotional, ethical, and commitment levels can influence their performance, particularly in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This study relates teachers' critical thinking skills, emotional intelligence, ethical behaviour and teacher professional commitment and looks at the role of these three variables in supporting teacher performance in optimizing the current implementation of the Independent curriculum. Teachers are an important part as an agent of changing the educational paradigm to be more advanced and continue to develop in accordance with the current and future development of science and technology, the same age as the nation's ideals, it is hoped that the development of human resources through education will realize a golden Indonesia in 2045.

Teacher performance refers to a teacher's work or performance in planning, implementing, evaluating, assessing, and following up on differentiated learning processes, with indicators for planning, implementation, evaluation, assessment, and follow-up, especially in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Gultom et al.,

2023; Konan & Yilmaz, 2018; Luo & Zhan, 2021; Mawarto et al., 2020; Pramesti & Muhyadi, 2018; Sodik et al., 2021; Sya'roni et al., 2023; Wardana et al., 2023).

Critical thinking is a mental process that involves analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information to make a decision, with indicators such as analysis, evaluation, synthesis, logical reasoning, and reflection (Anita & Hakim, 2022; Anugraheni, 2020; Arce-Saavedra & Blumen, 2022; Assante et al., 2022; Barnet & Bedau, 2011; Chen et al., 2024). This process is essential in making informed decisions, as it allows individuals to navigate complex situations and discern the validity of various arguments. In this exploration, we will delve deeper into the components of critical thinking, illustrating its importance through detailed examples and analyses. At its core, critical thinking begins with analysis. This involves breaking down information into its constituent parts to understand its structure and meaning. For instance, consider a news article reporting on a significant political event. A critical thinker would not merely accept the information at face value; instead, they would dissect the article, examining the sources of information, the language used, and the potential biases of the author. (Chrissanti & Widjajanti, 2015; Daryanes & Putra, 2021; Faiz, 2012; Irawan & Febriyanti, 2016; Lithoxoidou & Papadopoulou, 2024; Lucas-Palacios et al., 2023; Oner & Aggul, 2022; Onoda, 2022; Özelçi & Çalışkan, 2019; Saffanah & Hamdu, 2023; Samson, 2021).

Emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and use their emotions effectively, with indicators such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and empathy (Bastian et al., 2023; Džafić & Ilić, 2024; Goleman, 2006; Naqvi et al., 2016; Qudah, 2024; Y. Sun et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2019b, 2019a; Yang & Duan, 2023).

Ethical behavior is demonstrated through actions that reflect integrity, honesty, openness, compliance, responsibility, and politeness, conforming to moral and ethical standards (Alkhazaleh & Al-Srehan, 2019; Harding et al., 2012; Neuliep, n.d.; Saeed & Shakeel, 2013; Wokoma et al., 2020). Professional commitment is defined as a psychological state in which an individual identifies with and feels a sense of obligation to their profession. It is comprised of affective, normative, continuance, and quasi-voluntary dimensions, as indicated by measures such as professional identification, involvement, emotional attachment, and perception of limited alternative career options (Bagraim, 2003; Chang & Choi, 2007; Dorenkamp & Ruhle, 2019; Eren & Rakicioğlu-Söylemez, 2021; Fors, 2017; Mei & Wei, 2022; Niazazari et al., 2014; Rusliyani et al., 2023; Shoaib & Khalid, 2017; Yu et al., 2021; Yuliansyah & Herman, 2023; Yulianti et al., 2023).

METHOD

The method used in this study is quantitative (Creswell, 2012, 2019; Hadjar, 1997; A. S. Hamdi & Bahrudin, 2014; Sugiyono, 2019; Yusuf, 2014). The goal is to test empirical data with theories related to teacher performance influenced by critical thinking, emotional intelligence, ethical behavior and commitment to performance. The sampling technique uses multistage random sampling where the first stage of 11 sub-districts in Depok City is taken from 6 sub-districts, then in each sub-district 2 to 3 public elementary schools are taken. Of the 206 public elementary schools in Depok City, 14 public elementary schools were taken. Furthermore, with the Cochran calculation technique, a sample of 143 teachers with the status of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) was obtained. Data sources were taken using the test and non-test shown in the table 1.

Table 1. Data Collection Instruments

Variable	Indicators	Instruments	Number of Questions	Respondents
Critical Thinking	Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis, Logical reasoning, Reflection	Test	37 valid items	Teacher
Emotional Intelligence	Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship Management, Empathy	Questionnaire	38 valid items	Teacher
Ethical Behaviour	Integrity, Honesty, Openness, Compliance, Responsibility, Manners	Questionnaire	39 valid items	Teacher
Professional Commitment	Profession identification, involvement in the profession, Emotional attachment to emotions, A sense of obligation to stay in the profession, Career investment, Emotional cost, Perception of the lack of options available for a new career	Questionnaire	37 valid items	Teacher
Teacher Performance	Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, Evaluation, Not continued	Questionnaire	37 valid items	Principal

The data analysis technique uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), PLS SEM is a multivariate analysis that estimates the influence between stimulant variables with the purpose of prediction, exploration or development of structural models (Hair et al., 2022). The evaluation of the model in PLS SEM consists of the evaluation of the structural measurement model and the evaluation of the goodness and fit of the model. Nonparametric statistics with data analysis tools using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) software, in PLS SEM do not require normally distributed data, sample size is more flexible (Ghozali, 2021; Hair et al., 2022). After that, an analysis of Scientific Identification Theory to Conduct Operation Research in Education Management (SITOREM) was carried out, namely to see which indicators were improved and which indicators were maintained (Lubis et al., 2023; Rahayuningsih et al., 2023; Setyaningsih, 2020, 2021; W. Sunaryo et al., 2020; W. Sunaryo & Setyaningsih, 2018)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The demographics of the research respondents were seen below the number of female teachers at 78.32% while male teachers were 21.68%, this shows that so far what dominates the teaching profession, especially at the elementary school level based on gender, is still in demand by women. Furthermore, it is related to teacher professionalism which is supported by the certification of certified teachers who have certified as many as 92 teachers and 51 teachers who have not yet been certified, where among these numbers are 74 people from civil servants and 69 are united PPPK.

Furthermore, to see the existing conditions of working as a teacher for a long time, it can be seen in the table 2.

Table 2. Working period of research respondents

Working period in a year	Sum
1-5	30
6-10	14
10-15	38
16-20	29
21-25	15
26-30	9
31-35	3
>36	5
Total	143

Seen in the table 2 that what dominates the respondents' working period is 10-15 years, which is a relatively long working period considering the service of ASN up to the retirement limit of 60 years. So the journey and career development of teachers to see their good performance because so far it has been seen that senior teachers based on the results of interviews with school principals have seen their performance decline due to age and comfort factors that are different from teachers who are fresh graduates who have maximum performance as seen from the learning innovations used in the learning process activities for students.

Based on the processing of research data with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) version 3 with the Embedded two-stage approach measurement model, it is a hierarchical component model (HCM) approach. This technique divides the measurement model into levels of indicators that measure the latent variables. The lowest level (Low Order Component = LOC) as stage 1 (First Order) is a measurement between the measurement item and the indicator of the latent variable and creates the latent variable score. Furthermore, at the high level (High Order Component = HOC) as stage 2 (Second Order) is a measurement between the indicator and its latent variable using the latent variable score obtained in the initial stage to represent the measurement of dimensions/indicators in stage 2 (Hair et al., 2022).

The results of the measurement of question items with indicators as stage 1 (first order) where tested with a loading factor value of > 0.7 for the validity value of discrimination The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is >0.5 to meet the validity requirements. Meanwhile, the Composite Reliability (CR) value of the indicator is >0.7 so that it meets the reliability requirements (Ghozali, 2021).

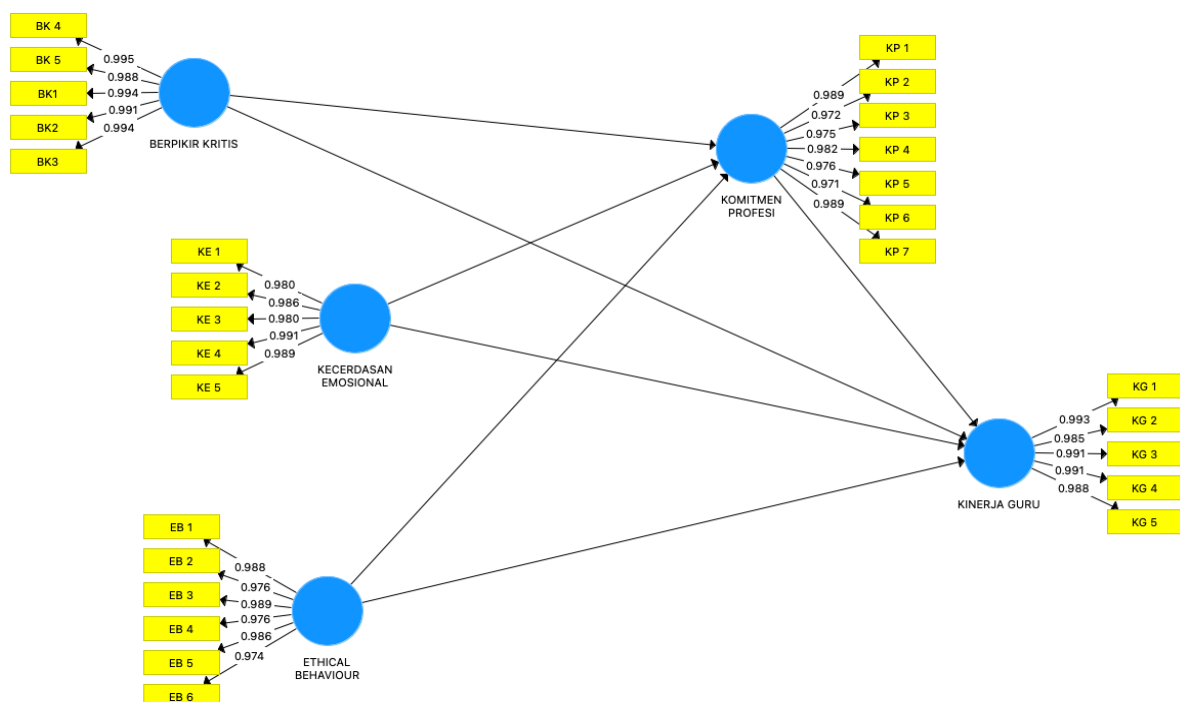
Table 3. Outer Model Recapitulation Phase 1 (First Order)

Variable	Validity of the Loading Factor value >0.7	Reliability: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) >0.5 and Composite Reliability (CR) >0.7
Critical Thinking	All items are valid on all indicators	1 time Reliable test
Emotional Intelligence	All items are valid on all indicators	1 time Reliable test
Ethical	All items are valid on all	1 time Reliable test

Variable	Validity of the Loading Factor value >0.7	Reliability: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) >0.5 and Composite Reliability (CR) >0.7
Behaviour	indicators	
Professional Commitment	1 item was discarded, namely the 30th item on the perception indicator of lack of options who are ready to pursue a new career	2 times of testing by discarding 1 invalid item then Reliable
Teacher Performance	1 item was discarded, namely the 13th item on the learning implementation indicator	2 times of testing by discarding 1 invalid item then Reliable

The next step is to conduct an evaluation of the indicators on each variable whether it meets the requirements of validity and reliability. As for the results of data processing with SEM PLS, the results are obtained in the figure 1.

Figure 1. Results of Outer Loading Factor PLS Algorithm



Based on the figure 1 It can be seen that the outer loading value of >0.7 all the other values of Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability >0.7 and the Average Variance Extradtet (AVE) >0.5 have met all the requirements that can be seen in the table 4.

Table 4. PLS output SEM Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Critical Thinking	0,996	0,997	0,985
Ethical Behaviour	0,992	0,994	0,964
Emotional Intelligence	0,992	0,994	0,970
Teacher Performance	0,995	0,996	0,979
Professional Commitment	0,993	0,994	0,959

Furthermore, the Discriminant Validity test with Cross Loading Discriminant Validity is known that each indicator has a greater correlation with the measured variable compared to other variables so that it can be said that each indicator has a discriminant validity value which can be used to measure related variables. After the two requirements of the outer model are met, the next is to test the structural model (inner model) or (High Order Component = HOC) as stage 2 (Second Order) is a measurement between the indicator and its latent variables.

The first step in the evaluation of the Inner Model is to examine each exogenous variable in the structural model to detect possible collinearity problems. Collinearity can be identified by looking at the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of each exogenous variable. Ideally, the VIF value of each exogenous variable should be less than 5, and preferably less than 3, to avoid the possibility of critical Multicollinearity problems. (Hair et al., 2022) The following is a table 5 of Inner VIF Values of Exogenous variables in the Teacher Performance model.

Table 5. Inner VIF Value on Teacher Performance Model

	Teacher Performance	Professional Commitment
Critical Thinking	1,038	1,058
Ethical Behaviour	1,044	1,058
Emotional Intelligence	1,029	1,029
Professional Commitment	1,057	

All VIF values are below 3, which indicates that there are no significant multicollinearity issues. This gives confidence that each of the exogenous variables is not affected by the other variables in the model. Thus, structural analysis can be continued without worrying about multicollinearity problems.

The R Square value for the joint influence or stimulant of the variables Professional Commitment (X_4), Critical Thinking (X_1), Emotional Intelligence (X_2) and Ethical Behaviour (X_3) on the Teacher Performance variable (Y) is 0,681 with an Adjusted R square value of 0.672. Thus, it can be explained that all Exogenous variables (X_4 , X_1 , X_2 , X_3) simultaneously affect the Y variable by 0,672 or 67,2%. Because R square Adjusted is less than 75%, the influence of all exogenous constructs (X_4 , X_1 , X_2 , X_3) on Y is moderate. The R Square value for the joint influence or stimulant of the variables Critical Thinking (X_1), Emotional Intelligence (X_2) and Ethical Behaviour (X_3) on Professional Commitment (X_4) is 0,896 with an Adjusted R square value of 0,894. Thus, it can be explained that all exogen constructs (X_1 , X_2 , X_3)

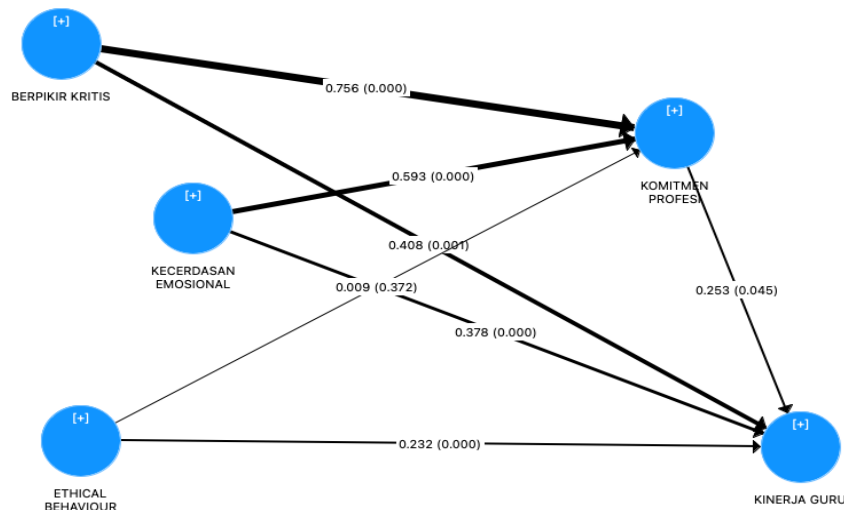
simultaneously affect X_4 by 0.894 or 89,4%. Since R square Adjusted is more than 75%, the influence of all exogenous constructs X_1 , X_2 and X_3 on X_4 is strong.

The value of f^2 or size effect can be seen that the largest size effect on the ethical behavior variable is 0,168 (medium category). The second order is given by the emotional intelligence variable of 0,102 (low category). The critical critical variable had a small effect of 0,080 and the professional commitment variable had no effect because the size effect value was below 0,02.

A Q^2 value greater than zero for an endogenous latent variable indicates the predictive relevance of the path model to a particular dependent construct. The value of Q^2 is obtained by using the blindfolding procedure (Hair et al., 2022). The overall Q^2 value greater than 0,00 indicates that the model built has a predictive relevance of 0,020 for the teacher performance variable and 0,014 for the professional commitment variable. Goodness of Fit or Model Fit analysis shows the fit or fit of the built model with the construct variables that support it. The model fit shown by the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is $0,017 < 0,10$ which means it meets the model fit criteria.

PLS Predict is a model validation stage that aims to evaluate the extent to which the proposed PLS model has optimal prediction power. The evaluation of the strength of the model was carried out by comparing the PLS algorithm with the regression value of the linear model (LM) through the criteria of Root Mean Square Error RMSE, Mean Absolute Error MAE and $Q^2_{predict}$. From the results of the analysis, it can be seen that the PLS model is not only valid as a structural representation, but also able to provide better predictive power, strengthening the reliability of the model in an applicative context. The analysis of the significance of the path can be seen in the figure 2.

Figure 2. Path Coefficient Value (β) P Value Significance of Teacher Performance Structural Model



The results of testing the hypothesis of a positive direct influence between critical thinking and teacher performance showed that the p value was $0,001 < 0,05$ with a path coefficient value of 0,756. With this, it can be concluded that there is a direct positive influence of critical thinking on teacher performance. Testing the hypothesis of the direct influence between emotional intelligence and teacher performance showed a

p value of $0,000 < 0,05$ with a path coefficient value of 0,378. With this, it can be concluded that there is a direct positive influence of emotional intelligence on teacher performance. Testing the hypothesis of a direct influence between ethical behavior and teacher performance shows that the p value is $0,000 < 0,05$ with a coefficient path value of 0,232. With this, it can be concluded that there is a direct positive influence of ethical behavior on teacher performance. Testing the hypothesis of the direct influence between professional commitment and teacher performance showed that the p value was $0,045 < 0,05$ with a coefficient path value of 0,253. With this, it can be concluded that there is a direct positive influence of professional commitment on teacher performance.

Testing the hypothesis of the direct influence between critical thinking and professional commitment shows that the p value is $0,000 < 0,05$ with a coefficient path value of 0,756. With this, it can be concluded that there is a direct positive influence of critical thinking on professional commitment. Testing the hypothesis of the direct influence between emotional intelligence and professional commitment shows a p-value of $0,000 < 0,05$ with a path coefficient value of 0,593. With this, it can be concluded that there is a direct positive influence of emotional intelligence on professional commitment. Testing the hypothesis of the direct influence between ethical behavior and professional commitment shows that the p value is $0,377 > 0,05$ with a coefficient path value of 0,009. With this, it can be concluded that there is no indirect positive influence of ethical behavior on professional commitment.

Testing the positive indirect influence between critical thinking on performance through professional commitment can be seen to have a p value of $0,046 < 0,05$ with a path coefficient value of 0,192. With this, it can be concluded that there is an indirect positive influence of critical thinking on teacher performance through professional commitment. Testing the positive indirect influence of emotional intelligence on performance through professional commitment can be seen to have a p value of $0,045 < 0,05$ with a coefficient path value of 0,150. With this, it can be concluded that there is an indirect positive influence of emotional intelligence on teacher performance through professional commitment. Testing the positive indirect influence of ethical behavior on performance through professional commitment shows that the p value is $0,392 > 0,05$ with a path coefficient value of 0,002. With this, it can be concluded that there is no indirect positive influence of ethical behavior on teacher performance through professional commitment.

Analysis of Scientific Identification Theory to Conduct Operation Research in Education Management (SITOREM). SITOREM analysis is carried out through the following stages, namely: 1) Contribution analysis; 2) Analysis of indicators - indicators of research variables; and 3) Analysis of the weight of research variable indicators; and 4) Determination of the classification of indicators that are looked at based on cost, benetive, urgency and importance (Hakim et al., 2020; Setyaniingsih & Suchyadi, 2021; Setyaningsih, 2020; A. Sunaryo et al., 2020). Based on the results of the analysis, it was determined which indicators are prioritized to be improved and which indicators are maintained or developed are involved in the table 6.

Table 6. Priority Order of Indicator Improvement

Priority Order of Indicators to be Improved	The Order of Indicators to be Maintained/Developed
1. Synthesis	1. Analysis
2. Logical Reasoning	2. Evaluation

Priority Order of Indicators to be Improved	The Order of Indicators to be Maintained/Developed
3. Reflection	3. Self-Control
4. Relationship Management	4. Self-Awareness
5. Social Awareness	5. Career investment
6. Empathy	6. Involvement in the profession
7. Emotional cost	7. Identify by profession
8. Perception of lack of new career options	8. A sense of obligation to remain in the profession
9. Emotional attachment to the profession	9. Integrity
10. Honesty	10. Compliance
11. Responsibility	11. Openness
12. Manners	12. Learning Implementation
13. Learning Evaluation	13. Learning Planning
14. Assessing Learning	
15. Follow-up	

DISCUSSION

Reflective thinking is revealed to have a dominant role in the performance of school activities (Solodikhina et al., 2022). Critical thinking has a positive impact on the performance of students and teachers in managing critical activities (Lithoxoidou & Georgiadou, 2023; Lithoxoidou & Papadopoulou, 2024). There is a relationship between the effectiveness of the teacher and his teaching experience (Laabidi, 2021). Critical thinking improves teacher performance by fostering skills such as creativity, organization, and collaboration, leading to more engaging and effective teaching practices in the classroom. Critical thinking improves teachers' performance by improving their creative teaching abilities, especially in managing teaching materials to stimulate students' creativity (Latifah et al., 2019; Shamboul, 2022). Cognitive abilities in this case critical thinking play an important role in teacher performance (Umer et al., 2024). This can be seen from the implementation of the Independent curriculum which implements differentiated learning where teachers are expected to be able to map students' initial abilities, therefore teachers are expected to be able to use their critical thinking skills to conduct initial analysis and make appropriate learning plans for students according to their initial abilities.

Emotional intelligence has a positive impact and affects teacher performance and improves teacher-student relationships (Bastian et al., 2022; Džafić & Ilić, 2024; Nurhasanah & Wijaya, 2024; Pardede et al., 2023; Pattiasina et al., 2024; X. Sun & Peng, 2024). Self-awareness, empathy and social harmony improve teaching ability and student engagement (Lonto et al., 2024). Teachers who have good emotional intelligence are not easily angry with students so that teachers control and manage their emotions when they find things that are not in accordance with their wishes. Teachers are able to reduce anger towards students so that violence will not occur against children. Teachers become more fun in carrying out learning activities. Students will be happier and motivated by teachers who are patient so that parents' trust in the performance of teachers at school will be even better.

Teachers with a strong work ethic show improved performance and work ethic (Batubara, 2017; Osias & Ladica, 2024). Teachers' ethical behavior significantly influences the development of students by forming moral values (Icka & Kochoska,

2024). Ethical behavior, such as punctuality, professional identity, and accountability, has a positive impact on teacher performance (Argon & Taskin, 2023; Baraily & Sherpa, 2023; Saeed & Shakeel, 2013; Tweve, 2019). Ethical behavior towards teacher performance. Teachers who have good ethics will be liked not only by students but by fellow teachers and principals as well as parents. In accordance with the Semobokatan Ki Hajar Dewantara, namely Ing ngarsa sung tulada: That is, in front (as a leader) must be an example or example. A teacher must be a role model for his students in every way. In madya mangun karsa: That is, in the middle (as a friend) you must build enthusiasm and creativity. Teachers must be able to motivate and encourage their students to be active and initiative. Tut wuri handayani: That is, behind the scenes (as a supporter) must provide encouragement and encouragement. Teachers must always be ready to provide support and assistance to their students. In accordance with the message, the teacher must be an example for his students where the teacher must be able to behave well that can be emulated by his students.

Work commitment significantly affects teacher performance as a work experience that has a good learning impact on students (Aini et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2023; Istiqomah et al., 2024; Muttaqin et al., 2023; Norawati et al., 2024; Patraini et al., 2023; Rusliyani et al., 2023; Salinas-Aguirre, 2023; Siregar & Effendi, 2023). Based on the results of previous research, it is seen that there is a parallel in previous research that there is an influence of professional commitment on teacher performance. This is because there are still many teachers who have just been appointed as PPPK so that their commitment still has not seen the impact on teacher performance. In addition, if you look further, the average research results that show the influence of commitment on performance do not stand alone, but there are other variables that provide intervention on teacher performance and professional commitment. It is important to be part of the fact that commitment is an intervening variable that can provide intervention in improving teacher performance if combined with other variables.

Developing critical thinking skills in teacher education has a positive impact on teachers' commitment to addressing global challenges (J. Straková & Simonová, 2024; Z. Straková & Cimermanová, 2018). Critical thinking increases teacher commitment by helping to overcome uncertainty (Bubnys et al., 2023). Critical thinking increases teacher commitment by serving as an antidote to Artificial Intelligence (AI) threats (Blessing Funmi & Xusheng, 2020). Critical Thinking in teacher education, cultivated through teaching practicum, enhances critical reflection. Critical thinking plays an important role in shaping and positively impacting teacher commitment (Lithoxoidou & Georgiadou, 2023; Lithoxoidou & Papadopoulou, 2024). The importance of critical thinking in an effort to increase professional commitment (Oner & Aggul, 2022; J. Straková & Simonová, 2024). A teacher who thinks critically will consider many things in his decisions when becoming a teacher. The considerations taken are not only from the economic side but can be more than that. The teacher's critical thinking ability provides the direction of the profession that will be taken by the teacher, the advantages and disadvantages of being a teacher, if you have chosen to become a teacher, it is expected that you will have a high commitment because the profession taken is not just an ordinary work profession but takes part in educating the nation's children, the nation's next generation.

Teachers with high emotional intelligence show greater commitment, as they feel valued and understood in their roles (Vanitha et al., 2023; Taliak et al., 2024). Emotional intelligence positively influences college faculty commitment by fostering supportive relationships, job satisfaction, and alignment with institutional goals,

increasing overall engagement and long-term career investment (Srinivas G, 2023). Emotional intelligence positively influences teachers' professional commitment by improving emotional competencies such as self-regulation, motivation, and empathy, leading to improved teaching quality and job satisfaction (Džafić & Ilić, 2024). Emotional intelligence positively affects teachers' organizational commitment but does not significantly affect their performance, as shown in research at the Pelalawan high school level (Nyoto et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence positively influences teachers' professional commitment by improving self-regulation strategies for pedagogical thinking and personal qualities (Murzalinova et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence correlates positively with teachers' professional commitment, impacting instructional effectiveness, classroom management, and job satisfaction (Zheng, 2023). Emotional intelligence directly affects teachers' affective commitment, fostering loyalty and dedication to their organization, as shown in a study conducted at State Elementary School 1 in Kemayoran District (Bayu et al., 2023). Based on the results of research that has been conducted previously, it can be seen that teachers' emotional intelligence can affect professional commitment. This can be seen from the many people who want to become not only because of money but more to dedication and a sense of responsibility to be able to contribute to the advancement of students. With education, it is hoped that it can provide changes for the better. In addition, with education being a cutter of poverty and ignorance, this is a commitment for teachers to remain in their profession as a form of moral responsibility to form a better generation. The commitment to become a teacher is based on careful consideration by paying attention to social, economic and emotional factors. Teachers are an important part of the sustainability of education and students are the subjects of education that will continue all forms of state development, so a high contribution and commitment is needed for teachers to continue in their current profession.

Teachers with a strong work ethic exhibit positive behaviors and attitudes, which are directly correlated with their professional commitment (Osias & Ladica, 2024). The ethical climate positively influences teachers' organizational commitments, suggesting that ethical standards are an integral part of professional dedication (Zhou, 2024). Integrity and fairness in the workplace significantly increase teachers' affective commitments, leading to increased productivity (Oriji, 2023). Ethical behavior is linked to teachers' commitment to their profession, as ethical leadership fosters a supportive environment that encourages dedication (Almandeel & Dawood, 2019)(Sabir, 2021). Teachers' professional commitment is influenced by their ethical attitudes, showing a significant relationship between ethical behavior and professional commitment (Eren & Rakıcıoğlu-Söylemez, 2021). Professional ethics significantly influence teachers' job commitment, with domains such as care ethics, competence, and professional commitment playing an important role (Niazazari et al., 2014). Ethical behavior significantly affects teachers' professional commitment (Zhunusbekova et al., 2022). Based on the results of research that has been conducted previously, there is a contradiction with the results of this study where ethical behavior has no effect on professional commitment. This happens because the indicators used in this study may be different from previous studies. In addition, it can be seen that research related to professional commitment influenced by ethical behavior does not stand alone, but there are other variables that contribute to the research so that this has an impact that there is indeed no influence of ethical behavior on professional commitment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that: Critical thinking and emotional intelligence have a direct and significant influence on teacher performance. This indicates that teachers who have strong critical thinking skills and are able to manage emotions well tend to be more effective in carrying out their duties. Ethical behavior also has a positive effect on teacher performance, but its effect on professional commitment is not significant. This indicates that having good ethical behaviour is important, but not enough to ensure a high commitment to the profession. Professional commitment has proven to be a significant mediator between critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and teacher performance. This means that when teachers have a high commitment to their profession, their critical thinking skills and emotional intelligence will be more effective in improving performance. Strengthening professional commitment can directly improve teacher performance. This shows that efforts to increase teachers' commitment to their profession need to be a major concern in teachers' professional development.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

AI was responsible for conducting the fieldwork and analyzing the collected data. SS provided mentorship in selecting and citing appropriate journal articles to support the research findings. ES offered guidance on utilizing SEM-PLS for data processing and analysis

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