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Management Dynamics in Early Childhood Centres: An Exploration of Organising Practices of Directors of Early Childhood Centres in Ghana

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Abstract: This study investigates the organising practices of directors in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres, focusing on Ghana and offering insights applicable to global contexts. The research examines how directors manage resources, define tasks, delegate authority, and align organisational functions to achieve operational and educational goals. From the findings, four key themes emerged: resource allocation and management, task definition and role assignment, delegation and authority, and functional integration and task alignment. Public centres demonstrated greater efficiency due to clearer role definitions and effective delegation, while private centres faced challenges such as limited resources, role ambiguity, and reluctance to delegate authority. Task alignment with organisational goals and resource optimisation were found to be critical for maintaining operational coherence and meeting educational objectives. As a major contribution, the study develops an Integrated Organising Framework to guide ECCD directors in addressing these challenges. The framework offers practical strategies for improving resource allocation, clarifying roles, and fostering organisational alignment, particularly in resource-constrained settings. By addressing identified gaps, this framework provides a systematic approach to enhancing service delivery, staff performance, and operational efficiency while remaining adaptable to policy changes and diverse community needs.

Keywords: ECCD, integrated organising framework, organising practices, resource management.

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Introduction

Strong leadership and effective organizational practices are essential for the successful operation of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres. In Ghana, these centres are critical to children's early learning and overall development, yet many struggle with limited resources, weak governance structures, and inadequate management training, challenges that are particularly acute in rural and underserved communities (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2018). Directors of ECCD centres in Ghana are responsible for organising human, material, and financial resources to ensure efficient service delivery. However, they often operate with little institutional support and unclear operational frameworks. Although recent studies, such as Ackah-Jnr (2022), have drawn attention to these issues, there remains a lack of focused research on the specific organising practices used by directors in Ghana to navigate such constraints. Internationally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2019) have highlighted the vital role of leadership and governance in improving ECCD outcomes. Yet, much of the existing literature is drawn from higher-income contexts, limiting its applicability to countries like Ghana. While comparable challenges have been documented in parts of Latin America, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Raikes et al., 2023), there is a lack of empirical evidence on how ECCD leaders in Ghana respond to these operational demands.

This study addresses this gap by examining the organising practices of ECCD centre directors in Ghana. It explores how they structure tasks, manage personnel, and adapt to systemic limitations. Rooted in the Ghanaian context, the findings aim to inform both local policy and broader efforts to enhance ECCD leadership in similarly constrained settings.

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Defining Organising in Management

Organising is a core management function that serves as a bridge between planning and execution. In management literature, the concept has evolved from classical definitions rooted in hierarchical efficiency to more contemporary, adaptive frameworks. Initially, Fayol conceptualised organising as the process of arranging resources, human, material, and financial, to support effective functioning (Robbins & Coulter, 2016). This classical model emphasises the division of labour, task assignment, and resource allocation as structured and rule-based activities.

However, such traditional perspectives have been critiqued for their rigidity. Robbins and Coulter (2016) later expanded Fayol's view by defining organising as a dynamic process involving resource mobilisation, task planning, and delegation of authority to qualified individuals. Kabiru et al. (2018) support this view, positing that effective organising requires harmonising functions and roles to ensure operational efficiency. Similarly, Liberman (2014) stresses that in today's complex and fluid organisational environments, organising must accommodate flexibility, allowing institutions to adapt to internal and external changes.

This evolution indicates a shift from fixed structures towards adaptive organising, a critical element in educational management, particularly in resource-constrained settings. Thus, for the purposes of this study, organising is defined as a continuous management process linking planning and execution through systematic resource allocation, task definition, authority delegation, and role harmonisation. This approach acknowledges both structure and adaptability, which are essential in environments with fluctuating demands such as early childhood centres.

Core Elements and Approaches to Organising

The literature identifies several foundational elements integral to the organising process. Kabiru et al. (2018) highlight job design, departmentalisation, reporting relationships, authority distribution, and role differentiation as crucial components of organisational structuring. These elements provide a blueprint for functional coherence and role clarity within institutions. Complementing this structural lens, Agra (2023) emphasises synchronisation and communication as central to effective organising. Their perspective aligns with contemporary frameworks, which argue for the necessity of integrating structural organisation (roles, tasks, reporting lines) with functional organisation (coordination, communication, resource integration). Together, these dimensions facilitate not only operational clarity but also adaptability.

Nonetheless, overreliance on structural frameworks may not suit all organisational contexts, especially those characterised by unpredictability and limited resources. Studies such as those by Harrison et al. (2024) argue for blending structural rigour with flexibility to enhance organisational resilience. This dual approach is particularly relevant in educational settings like early childhood centres, where demands are continually shifting due to changing policies, parental expectations, and learner needs.

Organising Functions in ECCD Centres

Within Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres, organising is a pivotal management function that underpins effective service delivery. Classical organising functions such as role assignment, departmentalisation, and authority delegation remain critical. Ali and Abdalla (2017) and Mustafa and Pranoto (2019) identify these elements as fundamental to creating coherent management frameworks that facilitate daily operations in ECCD settings. Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022) provide empirical insight into the Ghanaian context, noting that many ECCD centre directors operate without clearly defined organisational structures. This absence of standardisation forces directors to create ad hoc frameworks, resulting in inconsistencies across centres. The study further reveals that poor implementation guidance within national policies exacerbates these organisational gaps. Directors often depend on personal judgment to allocate tasks, leading to variable management effectiveness. Acton (2021) and Asim et al. (2024) highlight systemic inefficiencies at the district level in Ghana, noting the limited administrative support provided to ECCD centres. District education offices, though tasked with oversight, often lack tools and strategies to support directors in structuring operations effectively. This disconnection between macro-level governance and micro-level execution significantly affects the organisational capacity of ECCD directors.

Community involvement adds a unique dimension to organising practices. Ahasu et al. (2024) demonstrate that in Ghana, community members frequently support ECCD centres by providing volunteer labour or materials. While this enhances resource availability, it also necessitates adaptive organising skills by directors, such as informal role allocation and resource mobilisation. These adaptive practices vary significantly depending on community engagement levels, further contributing to uneven service delivery across regions.

Egwanatum and Atakpo (2025) further underscore the significance of structured organising practices in enhancing early childhood education outcomes in Delta State, Nigeria. Their study identifies key components such as role definition, performance coordination, and resource optimisation as vital to organisational success. These findings are pertinent to the Ghanaian context, where many ECCD centres operate under resource constraints, requiring directors to adopt deliberate role distribution and task management strategies to maintain operational efficiency.

Firdaus and Ansori (2025) advocate a community-based approach to organising that empowers local stakeholders. Their findings reveal that involving community actors in the management of ECCD centres fosters accountability and enhances organisational responsiveness. In Ghana, where community involvement is often underutilised, adopting such inclusive organising practices could alleviate staffing limitations and promote sustainable governance through collective ownership. Carr-Fanning and Rihtman (2025) explore inclusive organising through participatory research, emphasising that when directors engage staff and families in co-creating structures and responsibilities, it leads to greater empowerment and improved communication. This inclusive approach is particularly beneficial in Ghanaian ECCD centres, where challenges such as staff burnout and role ambiguity persist. Incorporating collaborative practices may enhance both staff morale and functional alignment.

Kölemen and Yıldırım (2025) offer a forward-looking perspective by examining the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in early childhood education. While their study focuses on AI integration, it indirectly emphasises the need for digitised organising tools that can support scheduling, task delegation, and communication. Although Ghanaian centres may face technological limitations, low-cost digital innovations, such as mobile apps or basic data management tools, could help directors improve task coordination and streamline processes. Governance and institutional policy are also central to effective organising. Muhamad Ridza et al. (2025) argue that clear governance structures, including defined job roles and accountability mechanisms, are essential to consistent organising practices. For Ghana, where ECCD governance remains fragmented, these findings highlight the need for national policy reforms that empower directors with organisational frameworks and operational autonomy. Together, these studies affirm that organising is not a static administrative task but a dynamic leadership function requiring contextual awareness, strategic delegation, and collaborative coordination. For directors in Ghana, effective organising practices are essential to bridging institutional gaps and ensuring quality service delivery, particularly in under-resourced or privately managed centres.

Community Engagement as an Organising Strategy

Community engagement has emerged as a central organising strategy within ECCD management. Kivunja (2015) and Nicholson et al. (2020) contend that strong community partnerships enhance programme relevance, improve trust, and facilitate resource mobilisation. Involving parents and local actors ensures that ECCD operations align with community needs and values. Hagos and Van Wyk (2021) further emphasise the participatory aspect of community engagement, noting that integrating community feedback into decision-making processes fosters shared ownership. This inclusive model improves responsiveness and strengthens the organisational culture within ECCD centres. Harrison et al. (2024) support this view, suggesting that such practices enhance operational alignment and sustainability. In Ghana, community engagement is both a necessity and a challenge. Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022) reveal that while community support is often present, directors struggle with inconsistent involvement and resource constraints. The success of community engagement strategies varies depending on socioeconomic contexts, requiring directors to tailor their approaches accordingly. Despite these challenges, community involvement remains an indispensable element of effective organising. Nonetheless, there is limited research into how directors build and sustain these partnerships. Most studies focus on the benefits of community engagement but overlook the organisational strategies required to maintain long-term collaboration. Further investigation is needed to explore models that can guide ECCD directors in managing these relationships, particularly in underfunded and diverse contexts.

Research Gaps and Implications

The reviewed literature underscores the importance of organising in ECCD management, but also reveals significant gaps. While studies such as those by Ali and Abdalla (2017), Mustafa and Pranoto (2019), and Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022) highlight essential organising activities, they often stop short of critically examining how these practices are adapted across contexts. In Ghana, where ECCD centres operate within complex socio-economic environments, the flexibility and adaptability of organising practices warrant closer scrutiny. Furthermore, the predominant reliance on classical organising models fails to capture the nuances of managing in dynamic educational environments. As Harrison et al. (2024) and Hagos and Van Wyk (2021) argue, rigid structures must be complemented by responsive systems that allow for adaptation. These hybrid models are especially pertinent for ECCD centres facing policy shifts, limited resources, and diverse community needs. There is also a need for empirical research that explores how directors in Ghana practically carry out the organising function. While policy-level challenges are well-documented, few studies examine the day-to-day strategies directors employ to allocate tasks, manage teams, or respond to crises. Understanding these micro-level organising dynamics can inform targeted professional development and policy interventions. In addition, the literature on community engagement lacks depth in terms of practical organising strategies. While the importance of partnerships is well-established, there is insufficient analysis of how directors navigate community relationships, especially in contexts marked by economic disparities and limited infrastructure. Future research should investigate effective models for sustaining community engagement as an integral part of the organising process. The literature, therefore, provides a robust foundation for understanding organising as a management function in ECCD centres. However, there is a critical need for research that moves beyond structural summaries to engage with the practical realities faced by directors. This study aims to contribute to this gap by exploring the organising practices of ECCD directors in Ghana, with a focus on

both classical and adaptive strategies. In doing so, it seeks to inform policy and training programmes that can enhance organisational capacity and educational outcomes in early childhood settings.

Aims

This article aimed to explore the organisational practices of ECCD centre directors in Ghana, focusing on how these practices support effective management and resource utilisation within ECCD centres. Furthermore, it sought to develop an integrated framework for organising, based on insights from emerging themes, to guide ECCD centre directors.

Research Questions

- i. How do directors of ECCD centres in Ghana organise and manage their centres' resources?
- ii. What specific organising practices do directors employ in developing and implementing effective management structures?

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To explore how directors of ECCD centres in Ghana organise and manage their centres' resources effectively.
- ii. To identify the specific organising practices employed by directors in developing and implementing effective management structures for ECCD centres.

Methodology

Research Approach

This article adopted a qualitative research methodology to gain a deep understanding of the participants' perspectives on the management and organising practices of ECCD centres. This approach enabled the researchers to explore the participants' lived experiences through direct engagement, as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2015). By employing interviews and document analysis as primary data collection methods, the researchers facilitated a platform for ECCD directors to share their insights on organising practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The decision to use a qualitative approach was influenced by its interactive nature, which facilitates the collection of detailed, nuanced data. This method enabled in-depth discussions, allowing participants to share their experiences directly (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The qualitative approach was instrumental in interpreting the directors' organising strategies and experiences within ECCD centres.

Research Design

A case study design was employed in this research because of its flexibility in exploring complex phenomena within natural settings. Yin (2018) asserts that a case study is particularly suited to qualitative research, as it allows for an in-depth study of a specific issue within its real-life context. This approach enabled the researchers to interact with participants through open-ended questioning, helping to uncover the varied meanings and insights that participants associate with their organising experiences in ECCD centres.

Sampling Techniques and Data Collection Procedures

A purposive sampling technique was employed to recruit participants with relevant expertise and experience in the management of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres. A total of 16 ECCD centres, comprising a mix of public and private institutions, were selected from an official list obtained from the National Inspectorate Directorate of the Ghana Education Service. The selection criteria focused on ensuring institutional diversity (public versus private) and variation in participant roles (directors and board members), enabling the study to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives and organisational practices within the ECCD landscape. The decision to involve 16 centres was guided by both theoretical and practical considerations. The aim was to gather data from a wide enough range of contexts to identify recurring themes while also keeping the volume of qualitative data manageable for in-depth analysis. Additionally, this number allowed for balanced representation across centre types and participant roles, enhancing the robustness and credibility of the findings. In total, 20 participants were interviewed, including directors and board members from the selected centres. The demographic information of these participants is presented in Table 1. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, that is, the point at which no new codes, categories, or significant insights emerged from subsequent interviews. By the time interviews were conducted in the 16th centre, and data had been gathered from the 20th participant, it became evident that themes were being consistently repeated, and no novel patterns were emerging. This indicated that further data collection would likely lead to redundancy rather than the generation of new knowledge. As such, saturation served as a methodological benchmark for concluding the data

collection phase. Table 1 outlines the demographic characteristics of the participants, reflecting a diverse mix in terms of gender, professional role, years of experience, and institutional affiliation.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Interview Participants

Participant Code	Centre Type	Gender	Years of Experience
A1	Public Centre Director	Female	18
A2	Private Centre Director	Male	5
A3	Public Centre Director	Female	25
A4	Public Centre Director	Male	30
A5	Private Centre Director	Female	10
A6	Public Centre Director	Female	20
A7	Private Centre Director	Male	8
A8	Private Centre Director	Female	7
A9	Public Centre Director	Female	28
A10	Private Centre Director	Female	12
A11	Public Centre Board Member	Male	3
A12	Private Centre Board Member	Female	2
A13	Public Centre Board Member	Male	5
A14	Private Centre Director	Female	6
A15	Public Centre Director	Female	22
A16	Private Centre Director	Male	4
A17	Public Centre Board Member	Female	1
A18	Private Centre Board Member	Female	2
A19	Public Centre Board Member	Male	6
A20	Private Centre Board Member	Female	3

Data Collection Methods

The study employed both document analysis and semi-structured interviews to gather comprehensive data. Document analysis included reviewing school performance plans, meeting records, and official reports, which provided context and background information. The researchers used these documents to cross-check and validate data collected during interviews (Wood et al., 2020). Semi-structured interviews were conducted via phone due to COVID-19 restrictions, involving direct, interactive conversations with ECCD directors and board members. Prior to the interviews, consent was secured from all participants, with the interviews lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. The interview protocol included an introduction, the main discussion, and final remarks. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed word-for-word for subsequent analysis.

Data Analysis

The researchers applied thematic analysis to the interview data and content analysis to the document review. Following the qualitative data analysis procedures outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), the process involved transcribing the interviews, identifying key themes, and coding the data using QSR Nvivo 20.2 software. The development of a codebook and data analysis matrix helped in tracking code frequencies and refining themes. The transcripts and documents were thoroughly reviewed, and key concepts were condensed into codes, forming categories and overarching themes. The content analysis of documents involved a systematic review and coding of relevant information to complement and support interview findings.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, the authors followed the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (2013): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility: To validate the data, member checking was conducted by providing participants with their interview transcripts for verification. The researchers acknowledged their positionality to mitigate any potential biases and incorporated direct quotes from participants to maintain transparency.

Transferability: In-depth contextual details about the study setting were shared, helping readers to relate the findings to comparable situations.

Dependability: A clear, detailed record of the research process was maintained, ensuring the study could be replicated in a similar context. The inclusion of rich, descriptive excerpts from the data also strengthened the reliability of the findings.

Confirmability: Triangulation of data from interviews and documents was conducted to enhance the confirmability of the findings. The researchers also maintained a reflexive journal as an audit trail, documenting fieldwork observations and analysis processes.

This rigorous approach to methodology ensured that the findings were well-founded and contributed meaningfully to the understanding of ECCD centre management and organising practices.

Findings

The organising function in ECCD centres is an ongoing management process that ensures effective coordination between planning and execution. This article identified four key themes that reflect the importance of systematically gathering and allocating resources, defining tasks, categorising functions, delegating authority, and harmonising roles to meet organisational objectives. These themes include: Resource Allocation and Management, Task Definition and Role Assignment, Delegation and Authority, and Functional Integration and Task Alignment.

Resource Allocation and Management

Participants emphasised that effective organising begins with the careful allocation and management of resources. Many directors in public centres reported challenges in securing adequate funding to support infrastructure, learning materials, and staff remuneration. As one participant stated: *"Funding is always a struggle... we allocate the little we have to what we consider priorities, but still, it's never enough to cover all our needs"* (A5). Similarly, some directors highlighted difficulties in recruiting qualified staff, particularly in remote areas. One director explained: *"Finding qualified teachers is a real challenge... we end up hiring untrained staff and providing on-the-job training"* (A9). The allocation of human resources was often cited as a key issue, particularly where staff shortages forced directors to make operational compromises.

Task Definition and Role Assignment

Participants from both public and private ECCD centres discussed the importance of clearly defined roles and tasks in maintaining effective operations. In public centres, directors reported assigning specific responsibilities based on staff expertise. One participant noted: *"We define roles clearly so that everyone knows their responsibilities, which allows for smooth operations"* (A6). Conversely, private centre directors often indicated that limited staffing required them to assume multiple roles. As expressed by one director: *"I handle most of the planning and coordination myself because we don't have enough staff to delegate tasks"* (A8). This theme highlights varying approaches to task assignment, influenced by staffing capacity and institutional structure.

Delegation and Authority

The distribution of authority and the ability to delegate tasks emerged as a central component of organising practices. Directors in larger public centres described structured delegation processes, involving curriculum coordinators and unit heads. One participant shared: *"I delegate tasks to my curriculum coordinators, ensuring that each section of the curriculum is being implemented correctly"* (A6). However, some directors in private centres expressed hesitation about delegating responsibilities, citing concerns about the capability of their staff. As one director explained: *"I prefer to oversee everything myself, as I am not confident that the staff will execute things as well as I would"* (A8). These accounts reflect differing levels of confidence in staff capacity and delegation strategies across centre types.

Functional Integration and Task Alignment

The final theme is related to how activities and responsibilities are integrated and aligned to ensure collective progress towards institutional goals. Directors from several centres described using regular meetings to track progress and foster alignment among staff. One participant remarked: *"We ensure that every team is working towards the same goal by having regular meetings to review progress and adjust plans as needed"* (A4). Some directors in private centres, however, noted that limited staffing and resources made it difficult to achieve consistent coordination. One such participant noted: *"Coordinating activities across different areas is tough, especially when we don't have enough staff to carry out all the tasks effectively"* (A11). These accounts reveal the varying degrees of integration and alignment that exist within ECCD centres, shaped largely by resource availability and internal coordination mechanisms.

Discussion

This study explored how Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) directors in Ghana operationalise organising as a core management function. The findings revealed four interrelated organising practices: resource allocation and management, task definition and role assignment, delegation and authority, and functional integration and task alignment. While broadly consistent with established management literature, the findings also present contextual variations that warrant further reflection.

Resource Allocation and Management

Consistent with prior studies (Ackah-Jnr et al., 2022; Robbins & Coulter, 2016), the data affirmed that resource allocation is central to achieving organisational effectiveness. However, a notable divergence emerged between public and private centres. Public directors often cited limited funding from government sources, yet maintained structured budgeting processes. In contrast, private centre directors faced acute financial constraints without external support, leading to ad hoc allocation practices. This imbalance may contribute to inconsistencies in programme quality and resource equity, an area not widely problematised in the literature.

Surprisingly, some directors compensated for the lack of financial resources by improvising training mechanisms for unqualified staff. While this shows adaptive leadership, it also raises concerns about systemic gaps in professional development. Future research could examine how grassroots-level adaptation intersects with national policy objectives on quality standards.

Task Definition and Role Assignment

The clarity of task definitions strongly influenced operational coherence. Public centres, benefiting from larger teams and institutional frameworks, exhibited greater role clarity. This aligns with findings by Harrison et al. (2024) and Ali and Abdalla (2017), who argue that defined responsibilities minimise conflict and foster productivity. However, private centres frequently relied on directors performing multiple roles, often without administrative support. What is particularly striking is the directors' acceptance of this multitasking as normative, despite its evident strain. This self-reliant model, while resourceful, may inadvertently suppress opportunities for staff empowerment and continuity planning. The discussion here moves beyond validation of findings to interrogate a deeper contradiction: the valorisation of individual resilience at the expense of institutional sustainability.

Delegation and Authority

Differences in delegation practices between public and private centres revealed a trust gap rather than a structural limitation. While public centre directors delegated to curriculum heads and coordinators, private directors were often hesitant, citing doubts about staff competence. This contrasts with Robbins and Coulter's (2016) emphasis on the importance of trust-building and leadership development to promote effective delegation. This hesitancy may reflect broader issues around professionalisation and staff training in the ECCD sector. Directors' reluctance to delegate can create operational bottlenecks, impede staff development, and limit the institution's scalability. Addressing this issue requires targeted interventions that build both managerial trust and staff capacity, highlighting a need for leadership coaching tailored to the ECCD context.

Functional Integration and Task Alignment

Directors who established systems for regular meetings and collaborative planning achieved stronger alignment between tasks and organisational objectives. This corroborates Nicholson et al. (2020), who contend that integrated functions are essential for organisational coherence. However, many private centres struggled to sustain such alignment due to staffing limitations. This divergence illustrates how systemic constraints shape the practical application of management theory. Integration, in this context, is not merely a function of leadership intent but of organisational capacity. It raises important questions about equity in ECCD provision: how can small centres be supported to achieve similar levels of integration as larger, better-resourced counterparts?

Integrated Organising Framework for ECCD Directors

In response to these findings, an Integrated Organising Framework was developed to guide ECCD directors in applying structured, context-sensitive organising practices. The framework draws on systems theory and is comprised of four interconnected components, each linked to key management activities, with a continuous feedback loop for adaptability (see Figure 1).

Practical Application of the Integrated Organising Framework

Resource Allocation and Management: A director could use quarterly budget reviews to prioritise teacher development and learning materials, reallocating funds based on termly performance indicators.

Task Definition and Role Assignment: A private centre might develop simple job descriptions to ensure that even multitasking roles are explicitly defined, reducing overlap and confusion.

Delegation and Authority: A director hesitant to delegate might start by assigning non-critical tasks to experienced staff with structured follow-up, gradually increasing responsibility as trust builds.

Functional Integration and Task Alignment: Centres could hold weekly team meetings to review activity plans against the centre's learning objectives, ensuring alignment and joint accountability.

The feedback loop ensures that directors can adjust these components in response to emerging needs, such as staff turnover or curriculum changes, promoting continuous improvement.

Figure 1: Integrated Organising Framework for ECCD Directors

This framework presents four interconnected organising components: Resource Allocation and Management, Task Definition and Role Assignment, Delegation and Authority, and Functional Integration and Task Alignment, operating within a systems-based model of input, process, output, and feedback.

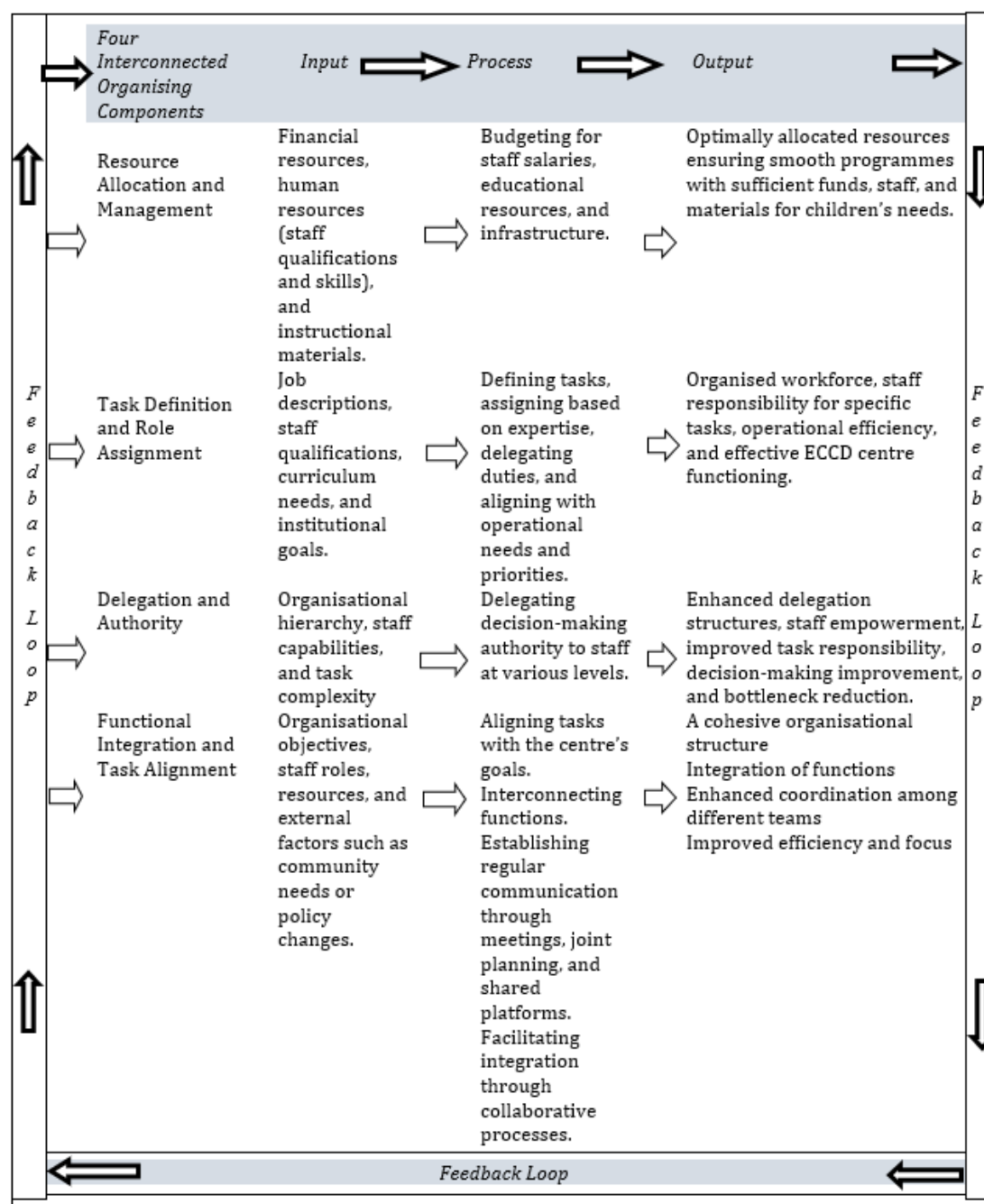


Figure 1. Integrated Organising Framework for ECCD Directors

Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into the organising practices of ECCD centre directors, identifying four core functions critical to effective management: resource allocation and management, task definition and role assignment, delegation and authority, and functional integration and task alignment. It highlights the operational challenges directors face, especially in under-resourced and privately managed centres, and emphasises the need for structured organising processes to improve efficiency and educational outcomes. A major contribution is the Integrated Organising Framework for ECCD Directors, which provides a practical, context-sensitive guide to managing centres. By helping directors optimise resources, define roles, and align tasks, the framework promotes sustainable service delivery and staff performance. While affirming core management principles, the study shows how institutional type and staffing capacity shape implementation. Future research should examine the framework's applicability across diverse socio-cultural settings and its long-term impact on staff and child outcomes, informing policy and leadership development in early childhood education.

Recommendations

The findings of this research carry significant implications for the management of ECCD centres, particularly in resource-constrained environments. The identification of four key themes, resource allocation and management, task definition and role assignment, delegation and authority, and functional integration and task alignment, provides actionable insights for improving operational efficiency and achieving organisational objectives.

First, policymakers and educational authorities need to prioritise resource allocation to ECCD centres, particularly in private and rural settings. Ensuring adequate funding, instructional materials, and trained staff is critical to addressing the challenges of resource scarcity highlighted in the findings.

Second, training programmes for ECCD directors and staff should focus on enhancing skills in task definition, role assignment, and delegation. These programmes can equip directors with tools to foster clarity, reduce role ambiguity, and empower staff through effective delegation practices, improving both staff satisfaction and organisational outcomes.

Third, the Integrated Organising Framework developed in this research offers a systematic guide for directors to address key organisational challenges. Its implementation can improve decision-making processes, enhance resource management, and align organisational activities with strategic goals.

Forth, the findings underscore the importance of developing flexible organising strategies that adapt to the unique socio-economic and cultural contexts of ECCD centres. Tailored approaches can help address the specific challenges faced by public and private centres in varying settings.

By addressing these implications, ECCD centres can enhance service delivery, improve operational efficiency, and achieve better ECCD outcomes, contributing to the broader goals of early childhood education.

Limitations

The study on the organising practices of ECCD directors in Ghana faces several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research was conducted with a sample size of 16 ECCD centres in the Greater Accra Region, which, while diverse in including both public and private institutions, may not fully capture the breadth of experiences across different regions in the country. Consequently, the findings may have limited generalisability beyond the specific contexts of the sampled participants, potentially overlooking variations in management practices in other settings.

Ethics Statement

Prior to commencing the study, the researchers secured ethical approval from the [BLINDED]. Additionally, formal authorisation was obtained from the Ghana Education Service's Headquarters, specifically from the Division of Early Childhood Education, to conduct the research in ECCD centres located within selected Metropolitan and Municipal districts in the Greater Accra Region. Official letters were also sent to the ECCD centres to seek their consent for participation in the research.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no financial or personal interests that could have impacted the findings or content of this article.

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Generative AI Statement

The author has not used generative AI or AI-supported technologies.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Anyidoho: Concept and design, data acquisition, data analysis/interpretation, drafting manuscript. Ogina: Critical revision of manuscript, supervision, and final approval.

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