

**Exploring management practices of directors at early childhood  
education centres in Ghana**

**by**

**EMMANUEL DODZI ANYIDOHO**

**submitted in accordance with the requirements  
for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**in the subject**

**EDUCATION**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SUPERVISOR: DR TA OGINA**

**OCTOBER 2023**

## DECLARATION

Name: **EMMANUEL DODZI ANYIDOHO**

Student Number: **60902426**

Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy in Education Management**

### **EXPLORING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF DIRECTORS AT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN GHANA**

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

SIGNATURE



DATE: **OCTOBER 26, 2023**

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my late Uncle, Mr. Abraham Kwadzovi Anyidoho, and my Cousin Professor Kofi Anyidoho, respectively, for taking care of me after the death of my father at the age of five and preventing me from dropping out of school at Primary 4.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I thank God for the gift of life, grace, protection and guidance.

Words cannot express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. T.A. Ogina, who generously provided knowledge and expertise. I am grateful for her invaluable professional guidance, support, patience, and timely feedback; she has been the “Angel on my wings” throughout this journey.

Additionally, this endeavour would not have been possible without the generous support from Unisa's Student Funding Directorate, who financed my research.

I also could not have undertaken this journey without the permission granted by the Division of Early Childhood Education of Ghana Education Service, Headquarters, to carry out this study at the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres under their authority.

Thanks, should also go to the ECCD directors and board members who took time off their busy schedules to take part in this study; I am deeply indebted to you all for participating in the interviews and providing all the valuable documents required for this study at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Matilda Aberese-Ako of the Institute of Health Research, at the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS), where I work, for devoting her time to organise an NVivo tutorial for me, which made it easy for me to use the collaborative qualitative analysis software that allowed me to import, organise, explore, connect and collaborate on my data to reveal more significant insights from my qualitative data faster.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Mrs. Martine van der Walt Ehlers, Language Editor, MWE Language Services in South Africa for professionally editing my thesis.

Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning my family, especially my spouse and children. Their belief in me has kept my spirits and motivation high during this process.

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to explore the management practices of directors at ECCD centres in Ghana. The study aimed to explore the application of basic management principles by ECCD directors at their centres to understand their perceptions of their managerial roles and the contextual factors that influence their management effectiveness and efficiency. The study used a qualitative approach underpinned by a multi-site case study design. The purposively selected case sites were located in five metropolitan and municipal districts within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The population of the study included all ECCD directors in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Sixteen ECCD directors and four board members were selected to participate in the study. Interviews and document reviews were the primary data collection instruments used. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data, while content analysis was used in reviewing the documents. Administrative Management Theory principles of Henri Fayol (planning, organising, coordinating and controlling) were identified from the data. Although evidence from the study showed that ECCD directors put much effort into managing their centres, the study also found that ECCD directors experience various challenges with applying basic management principles at their centres. The identified challenges included but were not limited to ECCD directors' insufficient skills and knowledge in management principles; insufficient technical support from the district education office; lack of active engagement of key internal and external ECCD stakeholders in the management process; and a lack of effective utilisation of enablers of effective and efficient management functions at the input, process, and output phases of management. Other challenges included inadequate utilisation of external planning inputs; lack of use of varied data sources for planning; inadequate mobilisation of resources; and a lack of support from the ECCD community/environment. In addressing the identified challenges, the researcher developed a contextual framework using a system theory approach in applying Fayol's basic principles of management to guide ECCD directors in managing their centres.

### **Key Terms:**

ECCD centre directors: management principles: management input: management process: management output: management efficiency: effectiveness.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CEDU REC	:	College of Education Research Ethics Committee
ECCD	:	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	:	Early Childhood Care and Education
GES	:	Ghana Education Service
IBE	:	International Bureau of Education
IICBA	:	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
KG	:	Kindergarten
OECD	:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PA	:	Parents' Association
PTA	:	Parents Teachers Association
SISO	:	School Improvement Support Officer
SMC	:	School Management Committee
SPIP	:	School Performance Improvement Plan
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNISA	:	University of South Africa

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF ACRONYMS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	2
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM	3
1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	4
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	5
1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	5
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS	7
1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY	10
1.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER	11
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	12
2.2 CONCEPTUALISING ECCD	12
2.2.1 Theoretical perspectives of ECCD	13
2.2.1.1 John Comenius' model of ECCD	13
2.2.1.2 Fredrich Froebel's model of ECCD	13
2.2.1.3 Maria Montessori's philosophy of ECCD	14

2.2.1.4 Early childhood care and development model in Ghana	14
2.2.1.5 National organisational structure of ECCD programme in Ghana	16
2.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT (ECCD) IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT	16
2.3.1 Historical development of ECCD in the international context	16
2.3.2 Current trends and issues of ECCD in international context	18
2.3.2.1 ECCD policy and governance	19
2.3.2.2 ECCD provision and funding	20
2.3.2.3 Access to ECCD services	21
2.3.2.4 ECCD Quality	22
2.3.2.5 In loco-parentis role of early childhood care and development centres	23
2.4 ECCD IN THE GHANAIAAN CONTEXT	24
2.5 REVIEW OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY: CONCEPT, PRINCIPLES, AND FUNCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT	27
2.5.1 Concept of management	27
2.5.2 Principles of management	28
2.5.2.1 Division of work	28
2.5.2.2 Authority and responsibility	29
2.5.2.3 Discipline	29
2.5.2.4 Unity of command	29
2.5.2.5 Unity of direction	30
2.5.2.6 Subordination of individual interest	30
2.5.2.7 Remuneration	30
2.5.2.8 The degree of centralisation	31
2.5.2.9. Scalar chain	31
2.5.2.10 Order	31
2.5.2.11 Equity	31
2.5.2.12 Stability of tenure of personnel	32
2.5.2.13 Initiative	32
2.5.2.14 Esprit de corps	32
2.5.3 Functions of management	33
2.5.3.1 Planning	33



2.5.3.2 Planning processes	34
2.5.3.3 Organising	35
2.5.3.4 Organising processes	36
2.5.3.5 Coordination	37
2.5.3.6 Coordination types and mechanisms	38
2.5.3.7 Leading/Directing	40
2.5.3.8 Staffing	41
2.5.3.9 Controlling	41
2.6. MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS OF ECCD DIRECTORS	44
2.6.1 ECCD directors' planning functions	45
2.6.2 Domains of Quality Improvement Planning	50
2.6.2.1 Collective development of overall school improvement vision planning	50
2.6.2.2 Activities and progress measures planning	51
2.6.2.3 Context planning domain	53
2.6.2.4 Organisation planning domain	54
2.6.2.5 Resources planning domain	56
2.6.3 Organising functions of ECCD centre directors	57
2.6.4 Leading/directing functions of ECCD directors	59
2.6.5 Coordinating functions of ECCD directors	60
2.6.6 Controlling functions of ECCD directors	62
2.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER	64
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>RESEARCH PARADIGM, APPROACH, DESIGN, AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>66</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION	66
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM	66
3.2.1 Ontological and epistemological assumptions	66
3.2.2 Analysis of various research paradigms	67
3.2.2.1 Constructivist paradigm	67
3.2.2.2 Positivist paradigm	67
3.2.2.3 Interpretivist paradigm	67
3.2.3 Ontological and epistemological foundations of the study	68

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH	69
3.3.1 Qualitative research approach	69
3.3.1.1 Advantages of a qualitative research approach	71
3.3.1.2 Disadvantages of a qualitative research approach	71
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN	73
3.4.1 Rationale for using a case study design	73
3.4.2 Limitations of a case study design	75
3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING	76
3.5.1 Population	76
3.5.2 Sampling of sites	76
3.5.3 Purposeful sampling	78
3.5.3.1 Criteria for choosing purposeful sampling.	78
3.5.4 Sampling by case type	78
3.5.4.1 Sample size	79
3.5.4.2 Justification for selecting only directors and board members for the study	79
3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS	80
3.6.1 Interviews	81
3.6.1.1 Justification for using interviews	82
3.6.1.2 Limitations of interviews	83
3.6.2.1 Justification for using document analysis	84
3.6.2.2 Disadvantages of document analysis	84
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	86
3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY	86
3.8.1 Credibility	87
3.8.2 Transferability	88
3.8.3 Dependability	88
3.8.4 Confirmability	88
3.9 REFLEXIVITY	88
3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	90
3.10.1 Informed consent	90
3.10.2 Confidentiality and anonymity	90
3.10.3 Harm and fairness	91

3.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER	91
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS</b>	<b>92</b>
4.1 Introduction	92
4.2 Directors' biographical information	92
4.3. Management practices of ECCD centre directors	94
4.3.1. Planning practices of ECCD centre directors	96
4.3.1.1 Reviews of mission, vision, and guiding principles	96
4.3.1.2 Assessment of ECCD centre-community needs	99
4.3.1.3 Development of strategic goals, objectives and strategies	101
4.3.1.4 Formulating ECCD centre improvement plans	102
4.3.1.5 Planning for monitoring and evaluation of the improvement plan	105
4.3.2 Organising practices of ECCD centre directors	106
4.3.2.1 Providing instructional and administrative leadership	107
4.3.2.2 Establishing ECCD centre governance and management structures	109
4.3.2.3 Organising human, instructional material and financial resources	111
4.3.2.4 Developing ECCD centre policies	112
4.3.2.5 Assigning duties and responsibilities	114
4.3.2.6 Ensuring strong parent-community-ECCD centre ties	115
4.3.2.7 Organising professional development for staff	116
4.3.2.8 Providing appropriate ECCD learning environment	118
4.3.3 Coordination practices of ECCD centre directors	120
4.3.3.1 Coordinating through the use of ECCD centre routines	120
4.3.3.2 Coordinating by use of performance improvement plans and schedules	121
4.3.3.3 Coordinating through behavioural control and performance appraisal	123
4.3.3.4 Coordination through the use of reward systems	124
4.3.3.5 Coordination through communication networks	125
4.3.3.6 Coordination through a committee system of management	127
4.3.3.7 Coordination through leadership	128
4.3.3.8 Coordination through clearly defined aims and objectives	130
4.3.3.9 Coordination through simplified organisation and effective chain of command	131

4.3.3.10 Coordinating through meetings and in-service training workshops	132
4.3.3.11 Coordination through harmonised ECCD programmes and policies	133
4.3.4 Controlling practices of ECCD centre directors	134
4.3.4.1 ECCD outcome control through performance improvement planning	134
4.3.4.2 Control of ECCD stakeholders' behaviours and actions	136
4.3.4.3 Control by strategic ECCD staff recruitment, placement and continuing professional development	138
4.3.4.4 Control by belief systems of ECCD centres	139
4.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER	141
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS</b>	<b>142</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION	142
5.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS	142
5.3 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	142
5.3.1 Theme 1: Planning practices of ECCD centre directors	142
5.3.2 Theme 2: Organising practices of ECCD directors	154
5.3.2 Theme 3: Coordination practices of ECCD centre directors	160
5.3.4 Theme 4: Controlling practices of ECCD centre directors	163
5.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY	171
5.4.1 ECCD stakeholders	175
5.4.2 Management inputs	175
5.4.3 Management process	176
5.4.3.1 ECCD management planning activities	176
5.4.3.2 Planning activities enabling factors	178
5.4.3.3 Organising activities	178
5.4.3.4 Organising enablers	181
5.4.3.5 Coordination activities	181
5.4.3.6 Coordinating enabling factors	184
5.4.3.7 Management controlling activities	184
5.4.3.8 Controlling enabling factors	186
5.4.4 Management outputs	187
5.4.5 Closing the quality feedback loop	188

5.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER	188
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>189</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION	189
6.2 MY RESEARCH JOURNEY	189
6.3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	191
6.3.1 Theme 1: Planning practices of ECCD centre directors	192
6.3.1.1 Vision statement	193
6.3.1.2 Indication of process outcome for improvement priorities	193
6.3.1.3 Indication of performance indicators	193
6.3.1.4 Description of action steps	193
6.3.1.5 Involvement of stakeholders	194
6.3.1.6 Use of varied data sources for root cause analysis	194
6.3.1.7 Sequencing of priorities, process outcomes, and action steps	194
6.3.1.8 Indication of schedule/timeline of activities and events	194
6.3.1.9 Internal alignment of performance improvement targets	195
6.3.1.10 Indication of responsible persons	195
6.3.1.11 Identification of varied sources of support	195
6.3.2 Theme 2: Organising practices of ECCD centre directors	196
6.3.3 Theme 3: Coordination practices of directors	196
6.3.4 Theme 4: Controlling practices of ECCD centre directors	198
6.3.5 Appropriate framework for the management of ECCD centres	199
6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	200
6.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	201
6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	202
6.7 CONCLUSION	203
6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS	204
6.8.1 Recommendations for practitioners	204
6.8.2 Recommendations for policymakers	204
6.8.3 Recommendations for future research	205
6.8.4 Dissemination of the findings of the study	205

REFERENCES	206
ANNEXURES	232
ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	232
ANNEXURE B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN GREATER ACCRA REGION	234
ANNEXURE C: RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN ECCD CENTRES IN GREATER ACCRA REGION	235
ANNEXURE D: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR DIRECTORS	236
ANNEXURE E: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR BOARD MEMBERS	237
ANNEXURE F: CONSENT FORM	238
ANNEXURE G: REQUEST FOR A LIST OF REGISTERED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN GREATER ACCRA REGION	239
ANNEXURE H: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS	240
ANNEXURE I: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST	243
ANNEXURE J: EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH THE ECCD DIRECTOR	244
ANNEXURE K: EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH THE ECCD CENTRE BOARD MEMBER	257
ANNEXURE L: EXAMPLE OF ANALYSIS TABLE ANALYSIS TABLE FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN	262
ANNEXURE M: TABLE OF ORGANISING THEMES AND BASIC THEMES FOR THE DIRECTORS' MANAGEMENT PLANNING ACTIVITIES AT ECCD CENTRES	266
ANNEXURE N: PLAGIARISM REPORT	276
ANNEXURE O: DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING	277

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3.1: Samples and sample size	79
Table 4.1: Detailed profiling of participants in-depth interviews	93
Table 4.2: Research questions, major themes and sub-themes	95

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Management Functions ECCD Directors	45
Figure 3.1: Map of Greater Accra Region of Ghana and Districts	77
Figure 5.1: A Contextual framework for the management of early childhood centres in Ghana: Adaptation of Fayol's management process	174



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

This study explores the application of basic management principles of directors at Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres. ECCD generally covers the provision of care and schooling for children from birth to the age of eight (UNESCO, 2019). Several changes have occurred in the last century, and one of these complex changes in the industry and the educational systems was in the area of management. Industry and business researchers have given prominence to management research, and as a result, several business management models have been developed and implemented to ensure quality, effectiveness, and efficiency (Allais, 2017). Unfortunately, the early childhood education sector lagged in this regard (Araújo, Sampaio, Castro, Pinheiro, & Macedo, 2014; Ferdous, 2016; & Poudyal, 2013). There is widespread agreement among stakeholders and policy makers that ECCD centre directors are indispensable in bringing about sustainable quality ECCD centre management; as a result, they place great confidence in centre directors' responsibilities (OECD, 2012). ECCD is a key determinant of the future success of children; hence the emphasis and shift towards the search for efficient 21st century ECCD centre management practices that go with directors' immense responsibilities (Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2011; Theisohn & Lopes, 2013).

New ECCD policy reform in Ghana has widened ECCD stakeholders' involvement and increased service providers' responsibilities, accountability, and professionalism (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh & Addo, 2016; Agih, 2015). Multi-actor involvement in the ECCD services provision in Ghana requires that ECCD centre directors must be equipped with professional school management skills. This will enable them to plan, organise, direct, coordinate, and control the centre's activities in line with the national policy guidelines (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh, & Addo, 2016; Agih, 2015). This study argues that the application of management principles is required to effectively manage ECCD centres due to the complexity surrounding early childhood education services provision. A preliminary literature review revealed that research on management practices in early childhood education had received less attention than higher education and secondary education (Babatunde, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to explore the

application of basic management principles by directors at ECCD centres in Ghana to understand contextual factors that influence their management practices and the challenges they face. The data from the research will be utilised to develop a contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana.

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

This study sought to explore the management practices of directors of early childhood care and development centres (ECCD) in Ghana. It is important to conduct this research for the following reasons:

Effective management practices are essential for the success of ECCD centres (Apusigah, Osae & Boamah, 2018). Directors are in charge of the day to day running of the centres, including child care, curriculum development, staff and financial management, community involvement, to mention a few (Asante, 2017). Knowing what the current management practices are will help to identify strengths and weaknesses in the management of the ECCD centres, leading to improved services for the children. With the rapid growth of the ECCD sector in Ghana, it is important to assess how the directors manage the centres to meet the increasing demand for early childhood learning and development.

In recent years, the Ghanaian government has invested heavily in early childhood education, with a number of policies and programmes in place to improve access to quality early childhood education and care services (Frimpong, 2019 & Ministry of Education, Ghana 2017). However, there is a lack of research on the management practices of ECCD centres in Ghana. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by providing valuable insights into the practices and challenges faced by the directors of ECCD centres. The findings of this study can also be applied to developing countries that have similar circumstances to Ghana. Policy makers and educators in these developing countries can benefit from the knowledge gained from this study. Generally, this study will provide an evidence base on the management procedures of early childhood education centres in Ghana, which can be used by policy makers, government officials, and practitioners to improve the quality of early childhood education services in Ghana.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The management of early childhood care and development centres (ECCD) in Ghana is not well-developed, which can lead to a variety of issues. These include limited knowledge and skills, poor infrastructure and facilities, inadequate monitoring and evaluation, and poor outcomes (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2015). These issues can have a long-lasting negative impact on the development of young children and their future opportunities. ECCD centres in Ghana are facing a number of management challenges, including a lack of qualified staff, financial and material constraints, inadequate infrastructure, educational material and resources, and basic amenities like proper play areas, healthy food, and sanitation (Tandoh & Amankwa, 2018). Parents are a key part of early childhood education, but many centres in Ghana struggle to involve parents in their children's growth and development. The reasons for this include a lack of awareness or understanding of early childhood education; cultural and socio-economic barriers; inconsistent policies and regulations; inadequate monitoring and supervision; lack of controls, checks, and balances; and a lack of opportunities for professional development (Amponsah & Brankem, 2019). There is an uneven distribution of quality early childhood education centres across the country, with many centres located in urban areas and many rural communities not having access to them. This exacerbates the existing educational and development disparities among children (Global Partnership for Education, 2020).

Despite the complexities that came with ECCD reforms, research on the application of management skills in ECCD is very rare compared to industry, higher education institutions and secondary schools (Jackline & John, 2014). Most private ECCD centre directors in Ghana do not have pre-service management training before assuming directorship positions. Since 2007 when ECCD became part of compulsory basic education, limited studies have been conducted to ascertain ECCD centre directors' perceptions on the importance of applying management skills in their management process. There is a knowledge gap with regard to the application of management theories in ECCD. There is also a lack of studies on how management theories can be applied in ECCD settings.

There is no theoretically substantiated and practically used ECCD centre management model based on the Ghanaian context. Therefore, this research aims to develop an ECCD centre

management model aimed at long-term benefits based on the quality of ECCD services provision in line with contextual factors of Ghana. Also, the proposed framework can assist centre directors in effectively applying management skills in line with Ghanaian contextual issues. Against this background, this study investigated the application of basic principles of management by directors at ECCD centres in Ghana and used the findings to develop a framework for the management of ECCD centre based on the Ghanaian context.

#### **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed at exploring the application of basic management principles by directors at ECCD centres. The specific objectives that this study sought to achieve were to:

- i. Explore how ECCD centre directors apply management principles of planning in their centres;
- ii. Identify how ECCD centre directors apply organisational principles in their centres;
- iii. Explore how ECCD centre directors apply management principle of coordination with their internal and external stakeholders;
- iv. Find out how directors maintain control in the ECCD centres;
- v. Use data to develop a framework for the management of early childhood education centres in Ghana.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main question that the study sought to address was:

How do ECCD centre directors in Ghana apply basic management principles in their management practices?

The sub-research questions are as follows:

- i. How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?
- ii. How do the directors organise ECCD centre activities?
- iii. How do the directors coordinate management activities with the centre's internal and external stakeholders?
- iv. How do the directors maintain control in the ECCD centre?

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theory underpinning this research was Administrative Management Theory, one of the Classical Organisational Theories that deals with organisational efficiency and how to maximise management output. The study used this theory to examine the management processes, structure, and related issues of the selected ECCD centres.

Among the key proponents of Administrative Management Theory is Henri Fayol. Management executive functions of planning, organising, directing, coordinating, controlling, staffing and budgeting, as argued by Fayol (1949), constitute the main elements of Administrative Management Theory. The researcher adopted this theory to guide this current study because it focuses on the administration of the whole organisation. It also deals with the establishment of effective management structures and the main classical management functions expected of ECCD centre directors that ensure quality, effective and efficient ECCD services provision.

This theory was successfully used by Agih (2015), Jackline and John (2014), Maxwell, Shupikai, Kwaedza and Lilian (2014), Mohd (2014), Musingafi (2012), and Yazidu, Majiyd and Abdallah (2017) to carry out studies on the application of Classical Organisational Theory in school settings. Since ECCD is a school organisation, the researcher is confident in applying Administrative Management Theory under the Classical Organisational Theory to conduct the study successfully. Due to time and resource constraints, the researcher contextualised only the following four managerial functions at the ECCD settings: planning, organising, coordinating and controlling.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The current research was grounded in the social constructivist-interpretivist philosophy. A qualitative research approach was used with a case study design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). The population of the study was all the ECCD directors and board members in the metropolitan and municipal districts of the Greater Accra Region.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select Accra Metropolis, Tema Metropolis, Ga South, Ga Central, and Ga East Municipalities of the Greater Accra Region as the study sites.

Participants for the study were also purposively selected. The sample for the study was contingent on cases of information richness. For this study, sixteen ECCD directors and four board members were purposively selected from sixteen ECCD centres. Accordingly, the total sample size for the study was  $(16 + 4) = 20$  (See Table 3.1 in Chapter Three for details on sampling and sample size).

A qualitative method of data collection, analysis and interpretation was used. Telephone interviews and document analysis were the main data collection strategies. A Thematic analysis technique was used to analyse the interview data, and content analysis was used to analyse the documents collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). The data from the study were used to develop a contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana.

To ensure rigour and trustworthiness, the researcher used credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability criteria (Torrance, 2013). In addition, prior to the data collection phase of this study, the researcher applied for and received an ethical clearance certificate from the CEDU REC, UNISA, and ensured that every ethical principle was meticulously observed.

## **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The application of management principles in ECCD centres has not been given the needed attention compared to tertiary and secondary education in Ghana. This research afforded the opportunity to vividly explore how ECCD directors perceive the application of basic management principles at their centres in Ghana and its implications for pre-ECCD centre management skills education for effective and efficient delivery of quality ECCD services. Researching ECCD centre management practices in Ghana provided insights that can help develop a contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana. This study produced new knowledge by developing a framework for the management of ECCD centres thereby contributing to expanding the application of basic management principles from tertiary and secondary schools to ECCD level.

This study is timely since management inefficiency is a critical challenge affecting the quality implementation of the new ECCD curriculum in Ghana. Therefore, the contextual framework for managing ECCD centres would serve as a management guide to ECCD directors in Ghana. The study also offered strong empirically-grounded evidence-based knowledge on ECCD centre management practices. The findings may also be useful to ECCD centre directors in terms of the knowledge, management skills and attitudes required of 21st-century ECCD centre directors for effective and efficient quality ECCD service delivery.

This study was expected to help the ECCD services providers with knowledge and skills on enablers of effective and efficient application of basic management principles in ECCD centres. In addition, the research findings widened knowledge on how to improve the managerial skills of ECCD centre directors in their daily management of the centre activities. Further, the study has implications for practitioners, policy makers and researchers in achieving management effectiveness and efficiency and, ultimately, quality ECCD outcomes.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Early Childhood Care and Development Centre (ECCD centres):** Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Centre is a facility that provides comprehensive and holistic services for young children in their early years of development. These centres aim to promote the overall well-being and healthy growth of children by providing opportunities for their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. (Global Partnership for Education, n.d.). ECCD centres, as used in this research, refer to facilities used by public, private, non-governmental and/or religious organisations to provide early-grade education for children between 0 and 8 years.

**Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD):** Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) refers to a comprehensive approach that focuses on the holistic development of young children from birth to 8 years of age. It encompasses a range of programmes and services that support and promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of young children (UNESCO, n.d.). ECCD, as used in this research, refers to the services of care and education provided to children aged zero and eight years to achieve children's holistic development.

**Early Childhood Care and Development Director (ECCD Director):** An Early Childhood Care and Development Director (ECCD Director) is a professional who oversees and manages programmes and services related to the care, education, and development of young children (National Association for the Education of Young Children, n.d.). They typically work in early childhood education centres, preschools, or childcare facilities. The ECCD Director is responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive curriculum that addresses the developmental needs of young children. They also hire, train, and supervise teachers and staff, ensuring that they follow appropriate guidelines and standards. In this study, ECCD director refers to the head of the ECCD centre who is responsible for the daily management of the ECCD centre. In the Ghanaian context, they are interchangeably referred to as head teachers, proprietors, or directors, as the case may be at private or public ECCD centres. This study adopted “director” to mean the head of both private and public ECCD centres responsible for the daily management of the centres.

**Managerial skills:** Managerial skills are the skills, knowledge, or abilities that an individual has to perform managerial tasks effectively (Robbins, Coulter & DeCenzo, 2017). Managerial skills, as used in this study, refers to specialised technical knowledge in ECCD centre management, which centre directors should possess through education and training to prepare them to execute their management responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

**Management principles:** Management principles are the fundamental concepts and guidelines that guide the practice of effective management. These principles provide a framework for managers to make decisions, allocate resources, and guide their teams towards achieving organisational goals (Daft, 2018). In this study, management principles refer to the management strategies that enable efficient and effective performance of management functions of planning, organising, coordinating, and controlling.

**Planning:** Planning is the process of setting goals, defining objectives, determining strategies, and allocating resources to achieve organisational goals. It involves analysing the current situation, identifying opportunities and threats, and developing action plans to guide the organisation towards its desired future state (Robbins, Coulter & DeCenzo, 2017). Planning is used in this study to refer to ECCD centre management activity that involves comprehensive needs assessment of the ECCD centre to identify the root cause of poor performance; formulation



of ECCD centres' mission and vision; statement of centres' values; development of centres' policies and philosophy; identification of goals; statement of centres' strategic objectives; development of plan's implementation strategies/action steps; and design of control mechanisms.

**Organising:** Organising refers to the process of arranging and structuring work and resources to achieve organisational goals effectively. It involves defining roles and responsibilities, creating relationships and communication channels, and allocating resources appropriately (Johnson & Thompson, 2015). The term organising is used in this study to describe the management function of mobilising resources, defining activities, assigning tasks, and establishing structures and coordinating activities to accomplish ECCD targeted goals.

**Coordinating:** Coordinating refers to the process of harmonising and integrating the activities and efforts of individuals and departments within an organisation. Coordinating involves ensuring that all parts of the organisation are working together towards a common goal and that resources are allocated efficiently (Robbins, Coulter, DeCenzo & Woods, 2019). In this research, coordination means management functions that involve harmonisation of ECCD activities toward accomplishing set ECCD goals. Fundamentally, ECCD directors establish mechanisms such as communication systems and record keeping involving and connecting the activities of implementation action steps at their centres.

**Controlling:** Controlling involves monitoring and evaluating the performance of individuals, teams, and the overall organisation to ensure that goals and objectives are being accomplished effectively and efficiently (Gulshan, 2016). Management control refers to the management function of ensuring that plans are well implemented and guaranteeing that the organisation functions as planned. The term controlling is used in this study to refer to the management control function of ensuring that ECCD centres' performance improvement plans are appropriately implemented by taking corrective action to prevent deviations.

**Management theory:** Management theory is the body of knowledge, ideas, and practices that shape how managers think and act. It gives managers the tools they need to analyse and resolve issues, make informed decisions, and guide their organisations (Robbins, Coulter & DeCenzo, 2017). In this study, management theory is used to refer to ideas, concepts, and principles that guide and inform ECCD directors to navigate the complexities of managing their centres effectively and efficiently.

**Management functions:** Management functions are activities or tasks such as planning, organising, coordinating and controlling that managers perform to meet organisational objectives. (Daft, 2013). In this study management function is used to refer to the activities that ECCD directors perform in order to accomplish ECCD goals and objectives.

## **1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is presented as follows:

**Chapter One** presents the background to the study, rationale and general orientation to the study, the purpose and objectives, the research problem, research questions, brief of research methodology, the significance of the research, and the definition of key terminologies.

**Chapter Two** reviews conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature associated with the research topic. This is to gain a detailed understanding of the concept of ECCD and management. The literature review covers theoretical perspectives of ECCD, management concepts, management principles and functions, and ECCD centre structure and management practices.

**Chapter Three** deals with the detailed description of the study's philosophical underpinning, qualitative approach, case study design, population, sample and sample size, data collection, analysis and interpretation strategies. In addition, the chapter considered ethical matters and the criteria to enhance the rigour and soundness of the study.

The research findings are presented in **Chapter Four**.

**Chapter Five** elaborates on the interpretation and discussion of the research findings compared to the literature. New knowledge and insights are presented in this chapter. A contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana was developed from the finding of this study and showcased in this chapter.

In **Chapter Six**, the researcher summarises the key findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations from the study.

### **1.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter provided a general introduction to the research. Specifically, it discusses the background to the research, the research problem and the research gap. The chapter also covered the purpose of the research, the research questions the study sought to address and the significance of the study. The chapter also discussed, in brief, the research methodology and explanation of main terminology. The structure of the study is also included. The next chapter covers the review of relevant and related theoretical and empirical literature on management and ECCD practices. Chapter Two also focuses on a detailed literature review of the theoretical framework supporting the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented an orientation to the research. The chapter specifically discussed the background and rationale, research problem, purpose and specific objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, a summary of research methodology, significance of the research, explanation of terminologies, and how the thesis was organised.

Chapter Two expounds on concepts of management practices of directors of ECCD centres and examines existing literature on management practices, with particular emphasis on applying basic management principles by directors of ECCD centres. This study aims to explore directors' management practices at ECCD centres. The chapter reviews relevant ECCD and management literature relevant to this research. The literature review covers the following thematic areas: conceptualising ECCD, ECCD in an international context, the historical development of ECCD in an international context, current trends and issues of ECCD in an international context, ECCD in the Ghanaian context, and a review of the theoretical framework of the study focusing on the concept, principles, and functions of management. The chapter concludes with a review of previous studies on the management functions of ECCD directors and the identification of gaps in the literature.

#### **2.2 CONCEPTUALISING ECCD**

UNESCO (2019) defines ECCD as the provision of services of education and caring for children from birth to the age of eight, while Naudeau, Kataoka, Valerio, Neuman and Elder (2011) define ECCD as the rendering of mandatory services of education and caring for young people. Besides ensuring holistic child development, ECCD services allow parents to be employed (OECD, 2016). The European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2019) refers to ECCD as care and education services provided for about one hundred and twenty minutes a day and about one hundred days per year. ECCD also refers to the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development of young people from birth to eight years, with the idea that an effective

move from pre-primary level to primary level is contingent on how children are educated at pre-school level to be ready for primary education (World Bank, 2013).

### **2.2.1 Theoretical perspectives of ECCD**

The contribution of scholars in delineating the scope, purpose and nature of ECCD is presented in the following paragraphs.

#### *2.2.1.1 John Comenius' model of ECCD*

An advocate of ECCD, John Comenius, contended that children need to be holistically prepared as early care and education positively affect children in their later years of life (Norlin, 2020). Comenius further observed that using an age-appropriate curriculum is integral to early education as it facilitates holistic child development. For instance, Comenius popularised using an age-appropriate learning approach in ECCD settings (Lukaš & Munjiza, 2014). Literature revealed that ensuring age-appropriate ECCD is still relevant today and of interest to this study because it is the responsibility of ECCD directors to ensure that appropriate teaching methods are used at the centres.

#### *2.2.1.2 Fredrich Froebel's model of ECCD*

Fredirch Froebel views pre-school education as something mid-way between ECCD centres and home. Froebel argues that ECCD centres allow the development of children and shelter them from external impacts. Froebel describes this idea as a garden with plants (Murray, 2018). Elfer, Greenfield, Robson, Wilson and Zachariou (2018) argued the need to recruit ECCD experts as a critical ECCD input resource with the aim of quality ECCD services provision, which is referred to as quality ECCD output. Elfer et al. (2018) maintained that providing trained ECCD personnel and parents at home are critical resources that can ensure age-appropriate ECCD service provision at ECCD settings and at home due to their knowledge and skills acquired in ECCD. From the literature, the authors acknowledged the importance of trained ECCD personnel and the role of parents in training children at home to complement each other in holistic development of children. Froebel (2018) proposes using gifts and play in early education that mothers facilitate at home to stimulate the child's physical development. In this case, the role of ECCD director as

the key enabler of recruiting qualified staff and ensuring parental engagement in ECCD services provision are relevant areas of interest for this study.

#### *2.2.1.3 Maria Montessori's philosophy of ECCD*

There are two main ideas Giardiello (2013) identifies in Maria Montessori's philosophy of ECCD. First, learners interact freely with their environment through which they understand who they are. The Montessori Philosophy discourages using inappropriate chairs and tables that limit the movement of the children. The philosophy also encourages activities that enable children to frequently use their fine motor muscles, which is achievable through toys, play materials, and equipment (Walkington & Bernacki, 2020). Dehnad, Afsharian, Hosseini, Arabshahi, and Bigdeli (2014) further argue that the Montessori Philosophy offers strategies for ensuring children learn in a prepared environment that can facilitate movement and activity. Supporting the above researchers, Casquejo (2016) also recommends learning materials appropriate for ECCD centres' indoor and outdoor learning environments. The literature revealed the role of the ECCD director in ensuring the provision of an appropriate learning environment as one of the management functions to facilitate the child's holistic development. Accordingly, this study acknowledges the Montessori Philosophy's relevance in providing quality ECCD. It is, therefore, worthwhile for this study to explore further how ECCD directors ensure rich ECCD-prepared learning environments in Ghanaian ECCD centres.

#### *2.2.1.4 Early childhood care and development model in Ghana*

The ECCD model in Ghana is a comprehensive approach to providing care and development for young children aged between birth and 8 years. It encompasses several components, including early childhood education, health and nutrition, parental education, and community involvement (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2020). The primary objective of early childhood education is to ensure the provision of quality education to children between the ages of 3 and 5. This is achieved through the establishment of community-based centres, as well as the implementation of teacher and caretaker training to facilitate the implementation of early childhood activities. Furthermore, immunisation, periodic health checks, and the provision of nutritious meals are essential components of early childhood education. Furthermore, breastfeeding and the promotion of good hygiene are also part of the curriculum. Finally, parent education is provided to assist parents in

raising their children in a wholesome manner, while governance and supervision ensure the involvement of the local community.

The Ghanaian ECCD model is dedicated to safeguarding the rights and well-being of young children. It emphasises the prevention and response to cases of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, with caregivers and teachers being educated in child protection techniques. Additionally, community-based Child Protection Committees are supposed to be established to raise awareness of and address child protection issues. The model also emphasises the importance of play and learning, with toys, books, and educational resources being used to encourage exploration, creativity, and learning. Monitoring and evaluation are also included in the model, with data collection on children's development, evaluation of the quality of early childhood centres, and continual improvement and capacity building to ensure the best possible outcomes. Ultimately, the Ghanaian ECCD model seeks to bridge the gap between early childhood development and primary education in Ghana, providing all young children with a quality care and development experience that will lay the foundation for their future success (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2019).

ECCD in Ghana is a holistic approach to early childhood care, focusing on the five dimensions of children's development: physical, cognitive, emotional, and social. It supports holistic programmes, play-based learning, and inclusion to create a diverse and positive environment for all children, ensuring their right to survive, protect, develop, and participate. ECCD in Ghana prioritises cultural relevance and community involvement in children's development. It acknowledges the rich traditions and customs of Ghana's ethnic communities and adapts programmes to their specific needs. ECCD adheres to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) principles, ensuring child rights and protection. It aims to raise children into well-rounded individuals, confident, curious, and passionate about learning, preparing them for a lifetime of growth and development. (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2019).

It can be concluded from the foregoing discussion that Ghana's ECCD model is a synthesis of the principles developed by Maria Montessori, the principles developed by Frederick Froebel, and the principles developed by John Comenius.

#### *2.2.1.5 National organisational structure of ECCD programme in Ghana*

The national organisational structure for the ECCD programme is designed to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to early childhood development in Ghana. It involves collaboration between multiple government agencies, educational institutions, and community stakeholders to promote access, quality, and equity in ECCD services. In Ghana, ECCD programme is overseen by the Ministry of Education. The national organisational structure for the ECCD programme in Ghana includes the following key entities: Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, Early Childhood Education Unit, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Regional Education Directorates, District Education Directorates, and Early Childhood Care and Development Centres (Ministry of Education, n.d.). The Ministry of Education formulates policies, strategies, and guidelines for ECCD, while Ghana Education Service manages curriculum development, teacher training, and monitoring of centres. The Early Childhood Education Unit focuses on quality early childhood education services, while National Council for Curriculum and Assessment develops and reviews curricula for all levels of education (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

The following section presents a review of the literature on the development of ECCD in the international context.

### **2.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT (ECCD) IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT**

#### **2.3.1 Historical development of ECCD in the international context**

This section reviews literature on ECCD in the international context to paint the current image of ECCD globally. UNESCO (2015) stated that historically, the concept of ECCD assumed an international dimension in the mid-19th century, particularly in America and Europe. Initially, the ECCD programme was used to protect and provide care to neglected children of poor working mothers. Following World War II, the number of women working in formal employment rose significantly, leading to a high demand for improved and inexpensive care for their wards, and this phenomenon began to shape ECCD policies and programmes globally (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).



In Europe, North America, Asia and some Sub-Saharan Africa countries, kindergartens and nurseries were established using models of Froebel, Pestalozzi, and Montessori (Chandra, 2017; Puyana, 2013). Milotay (2016) indicated that before 1960, ECCD services were not a legal entitlement to children and their parents, while the aim of ECCD policies and programmes was blurred, and research on ECCD was very scanty. The European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2019) asserted that ECCD witnessed a significant global development in the 1960s when colonialism came to an end in Africa, leading to the creation of more self-governing countries and a remarkable increase in the number of women working in formal employment. This has led to the development of ECCD national policies, programmes, and guidelines worldwide, especially in developed countries (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010).

A global picture of ECCD emerged fully in 1961 when UNESCO conducted an international survey with responses from 65 countries from Europe, North America, Africa and Asia (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010). The survey found that public and private providers provided ECCD services in many countries and that the ECCD curriculum at that time covered both education and childcare services for young children of working mothers (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).

Though the survey results acknowledged the significance of ECCD services, the services were limited in supply coupled with poor quality and regional diversity. The main cross-national variations in ECCD programmes included confusion regarding the locus of policy-making authority at various levels of implementation. It also included whether administrative auspices of the ECCD programme should fall under education, health, social welfare, or a combination. There was variation regarding the appropriate age group to serve (preschoolers, infants and toddlers), as well as entitlement identification and selection procedures to identify needy and disadvantaged children. Furthermore, there was also variation regarding issues of admission and the proportion of the cohort of children to be included, while standardised assessment criteria to be adopted varied across the regions. Other aspects of regional variations included funding strategies (funding by faith-based organisations, private individuals, public funding, or a mixed funding approach). Another significant variation was the mode of service delivery, the nature of care services for specific age groups, types of ECCD facilities, and the programme's

philosophical underpinnings. The survey also revealed a lack of sufficient studies on ECCD centres and how they influence the development of the children (Nafsika & Ulrike, 2020).

1972 marked a significant turning point in the global development of ECCD when UNESCO took the important step of including early childhood education in their 1971/1972 budget for the first time. The objective of the 1972 UNESCO budget was to offer financial assistance to members to implement emerging ECCD policies and programmes. UNESCO's funding support for ECCD in member countries was targeted at data collection, and this marked the beginning of collaborative studies on ECCD by UNICEF and UNESCO (UNESCO, 2018; Council of the European Union, 2019). From 1974 to 1990, there was an increase from 67 to 88 countries in international participation by different stakeholders in ECCD surveys (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014; Hultman & Margrain, 2019). At the World Conference on Education for All, participants agreed that ECCD services are the right of every child, hence adopting the third Medium Term Plan (1990-1995) (Tikly, 2017).

Despite ECCD services' significant role in society, studies on the management practices of ECCD centre directors are rare. The following section reviews literature on current ECCD policies and programmes in the international context.

### **2.3.2 Current trends and issues of ECCD in international context**

A review of international studies on ECCD systems revealed vast differences among countries due to unique cultural, social, economic and political contexts (Education International, 2010). International studies on ECCD by Jensen (2017), OECD (2017), and UNESCO (2015) found that even though successes were recorded in some countries, access issues, high numbers of untrained caregivers and teachers, poor working conditions for personnel, poor governance structures, and a lack of quality ECCD services were the main challenges confronting the ECCD sub-sector globally. Some of these issues will be reviewed in detail in the following sections.

### *2.3.2.1 ECCD policy and governance*

This section reviews literature on ECCD policy and governance. Studies show that effective ECCD service provision requires well-coordinated structures to be led by the sector ministry to provide links amongst ECCD stakeholders providing related ECCD services in the areas of health, nutrition, and special education (OECD, 2015).

Findings from international studies by Education Studies (2010), OECD (2017), and UNESCO (2015) showed remarkable differences in ECCD policies and the governance systems among countries, which were attributed to different approaches to ECCD, such as the provision of a blend of care, education, and development as a single service versus as different or distinct services (Education International, 2010; OECD, 2015; UNESCO, 2017). For example, in Canada, a specific regulatory body coordinates ECCD policies for children under five years. Meanwhile, services for children five years and older are coordinated by another regulatory body. In Denmark and Norway, ECCD programmes are integrated with the social welfare system. Also, in Denmark, municipalities are responsible for ECCD provision, whereas in Norway and New Zealand, the Ministry of Education is responsible for ECCD provision, and ECCD is an integral part of national education. Thus, ECCD forms an integral part of the national education structure in these countries (Education International, 2010).

Findings from international studies also revealed that in some countries such as Ghana, Hungary, and Portugal ECCD provision for children under three years old is placed under different agency such as department of social welfare and ECCD services for children from four years old and upwards are integrated into the more developed basic education system under the control of those countries' Ministries of Education (Marope & Kaga, 2017; Nafsika & Ulrike, 2020; UNESCO, 2018).

Education International (2010), UNESCO (2017), and Zilma and Ramos (2018) and stated that ECCD forms part of compulsory primary education in countries such as Portugal, Brazil, Venezuela and Hungary, and ECCD policies, service provision and teacher education are under the purview of municipalities. On the other hand, Gananathan (2011) and OECD (2014) reported

that in western countries like the USA, and Mexico, various agencies are responsible for providing various components of the ECCD services.

In Ghana, ECCD services for newborn to three-year-old children are not part of the public basic education structure, whereas services for four- and five-year-olds are integrated into the basic education system. Consequently, multiple ministries are involved in ECCD governance, supervision, and monitoring (Asare-Danso, 2014; Ministry of Education, 2018).

The above findings suggest that though variations exist in ECCD policy governance in various countries, there have been gradual attempts to decentralise ECCD provision to local government authorities in the past years in some countries, including Ghana. ECCD policies and governance structures are relevant to this current study because they form part of the contextual factors influencing ECCD centre directors' management practices.

#### *2.3.2.2 ECCD provision and funding*

Findings from international studies conducted by Education International (2010) OECD (2017), UNESCO (2015), and Zilma and Ramos (2018) reported that in most countries where ECCD services for newborns to three-year-olds are not integrated into the national compulsory education system, private individuals, local communities, faith-based organisations, and non-governmental organisations tend to be the main service providers. On the other hand, governments seem to be the main providers of ECCD services for children over three years old, particularly in the case of developing countries like Ghana, Nepal and Nigeria (OECD, 2017; Yoshikawa & Kabay, 2015). Furthermore, UNICEF (2018) found that in some countries, local communities, NGOs, parents, and some international agencies such as UNICEF, the European Union, and UNESCO share ECCD funding responsibility because government funding for public ECCD centres is inadequate. For example, in Ghana and other developing countries, parents who opted for private ECCD provision bear the cost of ECCD services, including tuition and care (OECD, 2017).

In developed countries such as Denmark and Norway, where government agencies are largely involved in ECCD programmes, municipalities are responsible for ECCD policy implementation

through the funding of staff development and grants per child (Nafsika & Ulrike, 2020; Wolf et al., 2018; World Bank, 2016).

In Ghana, the government, through local government authorities such as district assemblies, provides financial support through a Capitation Grant awarded using a per-child formula for basic education, where ECCD forms an integral part. The precondition for the award of the Capitation Grant is the centres' ability to prepare performance improvement plans using specific targets the fund will support. The attempts by the Ghanaian government to fund public ECCD provision is a step in the right direction since adequate funding is a prerequisite for quality ECCD service provision. It is evident from the literature that there has been a substantial increase in government funding for ECCD over the years.

ECCD funding is pertinent to this research because quality ECCD centre management largely depends on adequate funding. However, from the review of previous literature, several questions regarding ECCD programme funding and ECCD centre directors' management practices remain to be addressed. For example, how often do ECCD centres receive government grants? How does funding affect ECCD centre director's management practices? How do ECCD centre directors mobilise financial resources from the ECCD community to supplement government funding?

#### *2.3.2.3 Access to ECCD services*

A study conducted by Yoshikawa and Kabay (2015) revealed limited access (around 8 per cent) to ECCD services in rural settings of most developing countries, whereas in urban settings, ECCD access is around 60 per cent. Similarly, UNESCO (2015) reported that access to ECCD services in urban areas is higher than in rural areas. UNESCO further reported that higher fees charged by private ECCD providers also accounted for limited access to ECCD services in developing countries. In addition, previous studies on ECCD access in developing countries revealed that children with disadvantaged backgrounds are mostly excluded due to parents' inability to afford the fees (OECD, 2017a; UNESCO, 2012; Yoshikawa & Kabay, 2015).

A closer look at literature on ECCD access reveals several gaps and shortcomings. First, although previous studies illuminated issues of access to ECCD services in developing countries, no study

has examined how ECCD centre directors' management practices in Ghana influence ECCD access in Ghana. In addition, studies to explore specific ECCD centre management structures that support access to ECCD services for children with special needs and those from low-income families are yet to be conducted in Ghanaian ECCD settings. There is, therefore, a need to explore the link between ECCD centre management structures and access to ECCD service in the Ghanaian context.

#### *2.3.2.4 ECCD Quality*

An international study by Education International (2010) revealed variations in ECCD service provision among various countries. For example, in some countries, the national planning of ECCD programmes reflects the quality thereof. However, the study reported that in most countries, inclusivity strategies are mostly lacking in national ECCD plans (Education International, 2010). Other studies revealed that inadequate ECCD resources, unqualified personnel, and low staff compensation schemes impede quality ECCD services provision in most developing countries (World Bank, 2016).

UNICEF (2018) outlined the following indicators of ECCD quality that are lacking in most of the ECCD settings: ECCD standards to safeguard children's rights; leave for parents with at least half salary; a national ECCD plan with the necessary attention to disadvantaged children; subsidised ECCD services for low-income families; adequately trained ECCD staff; acceptable staff to child ratio; and universal access to health services. UNESCO (2017) stated that child-caregiver ratios are essential indicators of the quality of ECCD programmes, as the ratios indicate whether children receive adequate care and education.

In Ghana, the issue of lack of resources for ECCD services, poor infrastructure, a lack of trained ECCD personnel, and the low level of salary for staff are still in existence in both public and private ECCD centres, and these have been affecting the quality of ECCD service provision (World Bank, 2016).

The literature review shows that quality ECCD services are needed to achieve holistic child development, which is far from achieved in most developing countries. Studies on how directors'

management practices influence the quality of ECCD outcome in the Ghanaian context is sparse. Therefore, exploring the quality of ECCD centre management practices in Ghanaian ECCD centres is necessary.

#### *2.3.2.5 In loco-parentis role of early childhood care and development centres*

This sub-section discusses in loco-parentis role of early childhood care and development centres.

The term “in loco-parentis” (Latin for “in place of a parent”) refers to the legal authority and powers vested in ECCD centres to act as parents’ or legal guardians’ caretakers in the absence of a child’s parents or legal guardian (U.S. Department of Education, n.d).

The in loco- parentis role of ECCD centre is critical to the health, well-being, and development of the children in the ECCD facility (UNESCO, 2006). The primary duties of the in loco-parents of children are to ensure the safety and well-being of the children by providing proper supervision, implementing safety procedures, and maintaining a hygienic and child-friendly atmosphere. It also involves providing the child with essential needs by providing nutritious meals and snacks, adequate hygiene, and a place to relax and sleep. Last but not least, the centre needs to ensure the child’s physical and emotional well-being by providing them with opportunities for physical exercise, healthy eating habits, and social and emotional development through play and support (Department of Justice Canada, 2017). The centre also needs to help the child learn and develop early through the use of developmentally suitable activities and the encouragement of a love of learning (Department of Justice Canada, 2017).

Effective communication channels must be established and the centre must work with parents or legal guardian to share information about the child's development and discuss any worries or problems. Protecting children’s rights and protecting them from abuse, neglect, and harm is the centre’s primary responsibility. They must provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating atmosphere that meets children’s needs, both physical and emotional, as well as their educational and social needs (Department of Justice Canada, 2017).

The above discussion implies that by assuming in loco-parentis responsibility, the ECCD centre assumes legal responsibilities of parents in ensuring health, safety, protection, holistic development of the children which ultimately lay the foundation for children’s future success

and wellbeing. The following section presents a review of the literature on ECCD in the Ghanaian context.

## **2.4 ECCD IN THE GHANAIAN CONTEXT**

Prior to 2004, local communities in Ghana engaged children in ECCD activities in collaboration with families to prepare children for formal education (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2012). Ghana adopted an ECCD policy in August 2004. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Protection are the two main sector ministries responsible for supervising ECCD programmes in Ghana (Asare-Danso, 2014; Ministry of Education, 2018).

The ECCD policy in Ghana aims to ensure holistic child development in cognitive, physical, social, and emotional domains, which are prerequisites for the children's formal school readiness at age six (Ministry of Education, 2012; Nyarko & Mate-Kole, 2016). Furthermore, ECCD policy aims to improve access, participation, quality, management efficiency, and pupil learning tools. Subsequently, levels 1 and 2 of kindergarten have been integrated into the Basic Education system nationwide to ensure access and funding. ECCD policy implemented at public ECCD centres focuses on levels 1 and 2 of kindergarten for four-to-five-year-olds and excludes lower levels such as nursery and crèche provided by private providers (Ministry of Education, 2012; UNICEF, 2011). Both split and unitary ECCD structures are practised in Ghana. Unitary structures are practised in public ECCD centres, integrated into the Basic Education system where care and education services are rendered to only four- and five-year-olds to primary school entry.

Four-year-olds are admitted into kindergarten 1 to receive initial foundation care and education for one year and continue to kindergarten 2 at five the following year. A child is expected to be ready for formal education at primary 1 after the two years of kindergarten. Funding for ECCD programmes in Ghana takes the form of a governmental capitation grant, which is allocated using a per-child formula. Private ECCD centres are responsible for providing care for newborns to three-year-olds-year-olds. These centres operate under a split structure under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2018). Literature revealed that the ECCD policy structure in Ghana is not entirely different from



those of the USA, European, and Asian countries (Ntumi, 2016; Wolf, Aber, Behrman & Tsinigo, 2018).

Despite the significant progress made in implementing ECCD policies in Ghana since 2007, some implementation challenges have been identified that affect the quality and implementation of ECCD programmes. Among the challenges, the lack of adequately trained ECCD personnel has been a significant setback in implementing ECCD policy in Ghana. Furthermore, staff qualifications and training are issues that must be addressed. For example, most private ECCD centres usually recruit untrained senior high school leavers and provide them with a short initial training programme for about six weeks (Ministry of Education, 2018). In addition, most private ECCD centre directors do not have any pre-service training in ECCD and management studies to equip them with relevant knowledge and skills to manage their centres effectively and efficiently (Ministry of Education, 2018). The curriculum framework for the pre-service ECCD teacher preparation and professional development of ECCD workforce is diverse in that they do not align with ECCD requirements. These challenges have implications for the quality management of ECCD programmes in Ghana (Ministry of Education, 2018; UNICEF, 2011).

In addition to the challenges mentioned above, parental participation in ECCD learning appeared to be limited, and most centres do not have a policy of parental and family involvement to promote ECCD both in the centre and home settings (Ntumi, 2016; Pesando, Wolf, Behrman, Tsinigo & Aber, 2018). Moreover, a lack of community support occasioned by a lack of active engagement by key ECCD stakeholders has been reported as a critical challenge affecting the management of ECCD centres in Ghana (Ntumi, 2016; UNESCO, 2010; UNICEF, 2011). Other challenges affecting ECCD services provision in Ghana include a lack of capacity among head teachers to effectively coordinate planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of ECCD programmes due to insufficient knowledge and skills application of management principles which appears to be affecting the quality of implementation of ECCD policy in Ghana (Mensah, 2014; Opoku-Amankwa, Edu-Buandoh & Brew-Hammond, 2014).

Generally, poor quality ECCD service delivery has been reported due to a lack of appropriate play equipment and poor learning environments in most rural ECCD centres (Kabay et al., 2017).

Furthermore, there appears to be a relaxed accountability system where a system to monitor and assess the quality of ECCD outcomes has not been established yet (Abreh, 2017; Edwards & Aboagye, 2015). In addition, inadequate funding and lack of inclusive policy have been affecting the provision of quality ECCD to deserving parents and children (Ministry of Education, 2018).

In Ghana, ECCD programmes are provided in inappropriate facilities coupled with overcrowded classrooms and inappropriate chairs and tables for children, while dusty and uncemented floors have been reported in most rural ECCD settings resulting in inequality in the quality of ECCD services. Parents' lack of involvement in the management process has resulted in a lack of parental support and different expectations from ECCD centres (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2012). Studies also revealed a lack of alignment of ECCD service provision in Ghana with best practices in the international context in the areas of stakeholder involvement, use of play-based teaching methods, provision of playgrounds, toys, and play materials, and provision of safe learning environments to facilitate holistic child development (Innovations for Poverty Action, 2016; Ntumi, 2016; Pesando et al., 2018; UNICEF, 2011).

Several authors have agreed that efforts are being made to increase access to ECCD services in Ghana; however, the ECCD sub-sector faces challenges of efficient and effective management practices, lack of appropriate ECCD infrastructure, lack of adequately qualified personnel, and inadequate funding. While the literature acknowledged management ineffectiveness and inefficiency of ECCD programmes, there are no studies on applying basic management principles by directors at ECCD centres in Ghana. Therefore, a knowledge gap on ECCD directors' management practices in the Ghanaian context is evident. Consequently, the research at hand is timely and appropriate to bridge this knowledge gap. This current study is relevant in addressing some of the management issues identified in the literature affecting quality ECCD service delivery in the Ghanaian ECCD sub-sector. The researcher aims to use the findings from the study to develop a contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana to address the issue of inefficient planning and management of ECCD programmes. The concepts, principles and functions of management will be discussed in the next section.

## **2.5 REVIEW OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY: CONCEPT, PRINCIPLES, AND FUNCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT**

This research explores the application of basic management principles by directors at ECCD centres in Ghana. Management concepts, principles, and functions are discussed in this section.

### **2.5.1 Concept of management**

Prominent management thinkers define management based on different contexts. For example, while Cole and Kelly (2015) defined management as the process of harmonising organisational activities via planning, organising, coordinating, directing, leading and controlling, Taylor (1911) defined it as the “art of knowing what to do, when to do, and see that it is done in the best and cheapest way”. Fayol (1949) explained that management is to “forecast and to plan, to organise, to command, to coordinate and to control”. On the other hand, Stone and Freeman (1989) defined management as the “process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the efforts of organisation members and of using all other organisational resources to achieve stated organisational goals”. Gulati, Mayo and Nohrian (2017), Jones and George (2018), Kinicki and Williams (2018), and Williams (2018) all indicate that management is a crucial indicator of organisational performance and behaviour, while managers, on the other hand, are the ones to provide vitality to organisations through effective and efficient management practices.

In light of the above definitions, management can be seen as a process where human, financial and material resources are unified and intended to achieve organisational goals through various management functions, such as planning, organising, leading, and controlling. This implies that management activities are directed at the efficient and effective use of resources to pursue organisational goals. The above definitions further suggest that the effectiveness of an organisation depends mainly on effective and efficient management, which is expected to be achieved through management functions performed by a well-trained manager. The above definitions further suggest that well-trained managers direct the organisation to achieve its goals by assembling the needed resources, harmonising activities, and motivating personnel.

Relating the above definitions to the management of educational organisations such as ECCD centres, one can say that management in educational organisations involves accomplishing educational goals through efficient and effective use of human, financial and material resources. Effective and efficient organisational management can be achieved through four fundamental functions: planning, organising, coordinating, and controlling. Planning involves what needs to be done in the future and making implementation plans, while organising, on the other hand, involves ensuring the availability of sufficient organisational resources. Coordinating involves establishing structures that facilitate the achievement of organisational goals, whereas coordination is related to determining what needs to be done and assigning roles, responsibilities, and timelines for task execution. Finally, controlling involves inspecting work in progress against plans to prevent deviation and ensuring corrective action when necessary. The following section reviews literature on principles of management.

## **2.5.2 Principles of management**

Generally, management principles such as planning, organising, coordinating, and controlling are the processes through which managers get things done through other people's efforts (Gupta, 2014; Mbalamula, Suru & Seni, 2017). Management principles guide managers in decision-making and its implementation. Fayol (1949) was the first author to identify fourteen general management principles. These principles are discussed in the following sections, particularly as they relate to managing educational organisations like ECCD centres.

### *2.5.2.1 Division of work*

Division of work requires the specialisation of employees in different areas with different skills and expertise. This principle supports staff's personal and professional development to promote staff efficiency to increase accuracy, speed, and improved productivity (Mehta & Yadav, 2014; Poudyal, 2013; Shakir, 2014). The authors mentioned above argue that applying the principle of division of labour in an organisation enables the performance of management functions. This management principle is, therefore, crucial to the current study to explore how ECCD directors perceive its application at their centres.

#### *2.5.2.2 Authority and responsibility*

Fayol indicated that managers have the right to exercise authority and responsibility by giving orders to subordinates, thereby reaching goals through the effort of others (Esmaeili, Mohamadrezai, Mohamadrezai, 2015; Kongnyuy, 2020; Nazari, 2014). This management principle is of interest to this current study as literature revealed that when authority is exercised well, this principle promotes management efficiency and effectiveness. It is therefore important to explore how ECCD directors apply this principle at their centres since it is part of their management responsibility to establish ECCD centre governance structures.

#### *2.5.2.3 Discipline*

The third management principle deals with compliance with the organisation's core values, mission, and vision statements. It encourages good conduct and respectful interactions among staff as necessary for the smooth running of the organisation (Amoah, 2015; Belle, 2018; Tumilaar, 2015). The authors revealed that when adequately enforced by managers, discipline enables employees to comply with rules and regulations, consequently leading to attaining organisational goals. Discipline, as a management principle, is vital as the current study explores the management practices of ECCD centre directors. Discipline is an important component of educational institutions such as ECCD centres, and directors should ensure that discipline prevails at all times to enable the smooth implementation of the ECCD curriculum.

#### *2.5.2.4 Unity of command*

According to Fayol, unity of command relates to the ability of staff to answer to one superior to avoid confusion due to conflicting orders from more than one superior. Application of this principle helps to trace the sources of mistakes easily (Cruz, Villena, Navarro, Belecina, & Garvida, 2016; Garba, 2017; Mbalamula, Suru, & Seni, 2017; Mohammed, Edu & Etoh, 2020). The literature revealed the importance of unity of command as its enactment prevents role conflict and promotes orderliness in organisations. The management principle of unity of command is relevant to the current study as it relates to ECCD directors' authority to give instructions and commands. Centre directors' job description gives them the authority to assign duties and responsibilities to staff and ensures such orders emanate from one source to avoid conflicting orders.

#### *2.5.2.5 Unity of direction*

This management principle emphasises attention and unison. This means that all staff are to direct their efforts towards the same organisational activities as a team, which must be associated with the same organisational goal. Unity of direction stipulates that those organisational activities be well prescribed in an actionable plan. Managers must be responsible for planning and monitoring the progress of implementing the plan and coordinating employees' activities (Poudyal, 2013; Tanzeh, 2019). The management principle of unity of direction is fundamental in every organisation, including educational institutions like ECCD centres, to ensure various categories of staff are classified according to areas of specialisation and expertise for effective and efficient performance.

#### *2.5.2.6 Subordination of individual interest*

Fayol acknowledged two types of interest: personal and organisational interests, and recommended that for an organisation to function effectively, the organisation's interest must supersede that of an employee's personal interest (Poudyal, 2013). The literature revealed the need for managers to ensure that the organisation's interest surpasses that of individual staff members, without which organisational goals may not be attained.

The management principle of subordination of individual interest is relevant to this study to explore how ECCD directors apply it to demonstrate that the centre's overall interests come first and that centre personnel must be aware of this.

#### *2.5.2.7 Remuneration*

Fayol noted that for an organisation to run smoothly, staff must be motivated through sufficient remuneration, and this will ensure improved productivity. This management principle recommends rewarding employees' efforts using both non-monetary remuneration, such as compliments, credits, and praises, and monetary remuneration, such as fair financial compensation and bonuses (Řehoř & Vrchota, 2018; Virgana, 2018; Yemina, 2016). The literature indicated that when well implemented, remuneration is an important management principle as it is a major source of motivation that can ensure the attainment of organisational goals. This principle is worth exploring to understand how ECCD directors perceive the relevance of the principle of remuneration in their management practice.

#### *2.5.2.8 The degree of centralisation*

Fayol recommends the distribution of authority through decentralisation of decision-making processes at the middle and lower levels of management to strive for a good balance in the organisation (Cornito, 2021; Rini, Sukamto, Ridwan & Hariri, 2019). This management principle is worth exploring at ECCD centres because the nature of complexities surrounding the management of ECCD centres requires the delegation of roles to enable the performance of management control function at various units through leaders at various departments and sections at the centre.

#### *2.5.2.9. Scalar chain*

This management principle stipulates establishing a clear chain of command to facilitate an obvious line of authority and effective organisational communication. This can be achieved through the clear management structure of the organisation (Achinivu, Handsome, Ayomide, Enobong & Johnson, 2017; Mbalamula, Suru & Seni, 2017; Tadle-Zaragosa, & Sonsona, 2021). Literature revealed that the management principle of a scalar chain is an enabler of effective and efficient management performance but requires the establishment of proper structures, a chain of command, and communication systems to facilitate effective reporting systems. Therefore, this study must further explore how ECCD directors enact this principle at the centres.

#### *2.5.2.10 Order*

Fayol argued that one of the manager's responsibilities is the provision of a safe working environment, which ensures that staff can perform at their best (Al-Zu'bi, 2013; Mezieobi, Nzokurum & Mezieobi, 2014; Shohan, Azizifar, & Kamalvand, 2014). Based on the literature, order can be achieved when managers provide an orderly work environment, which is relevant in ECCD settings. Therefore, this study will explore directors' perceptions of and experiences in ensuring safe and orderly ECCD centre environments and how this affects their management efficiency.

#### *2.5.2.11 Equity*

According to Fayol (1949), the principle of equity should form part of the organisation's values, and this will ensure that all staff members are treated equally and kindly. This management principle recommends correctly placing staff within the organisation and providing supervision

to ensure staff performance. The principle of equity recommends fair and impartial treatment of staff (Nadelson, Albritton, Valerie, Couture, Green, Loyless, & Shaw 2020). Literature revealed that ensuring fairness and equity in management practice enables management efficiency. Since this study aims to explore applying basic principles of management by ECCD directors, it is worth exploring how directors perceive their experiences in applying equity in the management of their centres.

#### *2.5.2.12 Stability of tenure of personnel*

This management principle focuses on staff deployment and management to minimise staff turnover. It also emphasises sufficient staff deployment and management to ensure efficient service delivery (Bacud, 2020; Tadle-Zaragosa & Sonsona, 2021). Literature shows that when managers provide appropriate motivation and establish a system to reduce a high staff attrition rate, it may ensure the stability of tenure, hence a stable labour force, which is needed to implement organisational goals. This principle is relevant to this study because employers are required to practice human resources management in accordance with the labour laws of Ghana, which protect employees. This contributes to ensuring the security of the tenure of personnel. This study is interested in finding out how ECCD directors ensure the stability of staff tenure.

#### *2.5.2.13 Initiative*

Fayol expressed the need for managers to encourage employees' initiatives by welcoming new ideas to encourage their relevance and participative management. This principle acknowledges the importance of staff initiatives as a source of organisational strength (Ali, 2019; Ololube, Ingiabuna, & Agbor, 2014). Based on previous research, initiative is an important enabler of management performance when managers create opportunities for staff to innovate and welcome stakeholder initiatives. This is worth exploring in ECCD settings to understand directors' experiences of applying this principle.

#### *2.5.2.14 Esprit de corps*

Fayol maintained that managers ensure teamwork and unity among staff and their involvement in all organisational activities. This management principle recommends promoting self-esteem among staff in the workplace through communication. The principle of esprit de corps promotes organisational culture, empathy, understanding, and mutual trust among the employees (Okoro,



2019). Fayol's final management principle of esprit de corps is also relevant in ECCD management practices by directors because of the complexity of ECCD programme provision. Teams and committee systems promote team spirit among personnel and, when properly utilised could promote management effectiveness and efficiency. It is necessary to apply the above management principles as they enable the performance of management functions effectively and efficiently.

Throughout the literature review, there was no evidence suggesting prior studies on the application of basic principles of management by directors at ECCD centres in Ghana. It is therefore necessary to explore the application of basic management principles by directors at ECCD centres in Ghana to understand their experiences and contextual factors that influence their management practices. The following sub-section presents a review of management functions.

### **2.5.3 Functions of management**

This sub-section reviews literature on the main management functions based on the key elements of the Administrative Management Theory. Fayol views management functions as the processes by which organisational goals are pursued. He was the first to recognise that the effectiveness and efficiency of managerial activities could be improved by using key management functions, as discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### *2.5.3.1 Planning*

The concept of management planning can be defined in various ways. For example, Kools and George (2020) define planning as a management function that entails goal setting and establishing a particular course of action for achieving those goals, while Daft (2016) defines it as the process of setting the objectives of an organisation, as well as determining the ways of attaining those objectives. Management planning is an activity that encompasses determining the organisation's objectives, identifying mechanisms to accomplish the stated objectives, and coming out with feasible action steps to incorporate and harmonise employees' activities (Robbins & Coulter, 2020). Kabeyi (2019) also states that management planning is a process of determining strategic and operational goals according to policies and activities that the

organisation intends to achieve its vision. Desta (2019) and Williams (2015) indicate that management planning is a process of organisational decision-making to determine goals, strategy, and resource allocation to achieve the organisation's aim.

Based on the above definitions, management planning can be considered a management function that focuses on what and how of management. Planning is an important function of management as it intentionally engages in setting achievable goals in line with the organisation's vision. This implies that plans provide direction for actions to be taken to achieve stated organisational goals. The literature further suggests that plans provide objectives to be achieved and expected outcomes, and this guides employees' activities and serves as benchmarks to gauge work performance. These usually involve resource allocation, timeframes, and all other essential activities to achieve stated goals. Fundamentally, when managers engage in planning, they also set targets or goals.

Furthermore, from the above definitions, management scholars consider management planning essential to the success of any organisation's management, including educational institutions such as early childhood centres. Scholars suggest planning directs managers and employees to achieve effectiveness and efficiency. It is evident from the definitions that management planning permits the execution of all the other managerial functions. The management function of planning is relevant to this study because ECCD centre directors must engage in formal management planning to achieve effective and efficient management. Hence there is a need to understand how directors perform their planning function. Planning processes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### *2.5.3.2 Planning processes*

Management scholars identify various processes through which quality planning is achieved. For example, some suggest that management planning processes should involve the following steps: goal and objective setting, comprehensive root cause analysis, target setting, priority identification, development of actionable plans, identifying responsible persons and sources for support for the implementation of action plans and execution of the planning document (Robbins, Coulter, & DeCenzo, 2020).

Desta (2019) also provided the following seven steps involved in the planning process: (1) establishment of objectives; (2) developing strategies to achieve objectives; (3) allocating necessary resources to implement planned activities; (4) indicating an implementation timeframe; (5) establishing tracking and assessment mechanisms; (6) developing a final plan; and (7) communicating the final plan to key stakeholders.

Williams (2015), meanwhile, identifies six planning steps, namely: (1) identification of the organisation's strategic position; (2) resource mobilisation; (3) analysis of the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; (4) developing an actionable implementation plan; (5) implementing a plan; and (6) monitoring and evaluation.

Based on the abovementioned authors' observations, planning involves various steps, including internal and external environmental scanning to identify the organisation's needs, data analysis to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) that lead to the formulation of improvement goals and implementation strategies, and performance monitoring mechanisms. Planning processes are relevant to this current study because the ECCD centre directors are responsible for planning the centre's programmes and ensuring quality planning.

#### *2.5.3.3 Organising*

Fayol explained the management function of organising as providing everything required for an organisation's effective functioning. Fayol indicated that to organise business involves providing human, material, and financial resources to the organisational structure for its effective functioning (Robbins & Coulter, 2016). Organising comprises planning for activities to be undertaken and resources required to accomplish organisational objectives, allocating these activities to qualified employees, and assigning the required authority to appropriate people to execute these activities harmoniously (Bateman & Snell, 2013). Kabiru, Theuri and Misiko (2018) view organising as determining things to do, dividing and categorising organisational functions, allocating responsibilities, assigning authority and establishing roles, and harmonising authority and task interactions. In addition, some other authors explain organising as the process of utilising the planning function through the process of putting together and allocating needed

management resources for the accomplishment of the mission and vision of the organisation (Bateman & Snell, 2013; Liberman, 2014).

#### *2.5.3.4 Organising processes*

Management scholars offer various processes to organise business to implement the organisation's plan effectively and efficiently. For example, Kabiru, Theuri and Misiko (2018) state that organising is a logical process of synchronising activities of the organisation to available resources in order to attain specific organisational objectives. The authors identified five building blocks that managers could use to construct an organisation, also known as elements of organising or organisational structure. These are designing jobs, departmentalisation, establishing reporting relationships between jobs, distributing authority, and differentiating between positions (Kabiru, Theuri & Misiko, 2018).

Robbins and Coulter (2016) view the process of organising similarly, indicating that organising involves uniting individuals and group functions with resources required for its execution effectively and efficiently. They argue that the organising process involves sharing of work based on expertise, focus on goal attainment, organisation of employees, delegation of authority, and creation of effective communication channels for sound decision-making, harmonisation, inspection, control, problem-solving, and obtaining outcomes (Robbins & Coulter, 2016).

From the above explanations of the organising process, it is clear that the management function of organisation concerns itself with two aspects: (1) division of labour and allocation of roles and responsibilities to individuals and groups through the creation of departments, units and others; and (2) instituting communication systems, exercising influence, delegating authority to individuals and groups responsible for specific job function, and ensuring the synchronisation of their activities in relation to the given organisation goal.

Furthermore, the authors agree that the management function of organising processes primarily involves:

- i. assembling essential organisational resources such as material, human, and financial resources to create an efficient and effective structure for implementing plans to achieve desired results;
- ii. integrating various jobs into a logical organisational structure;
- iii. setting up the structure of authority and synchronisation mechanisms;
- iv. devising and identifying systems and modus operandi;
- v. recruiting, retaining, developing, and compensating staff; and
- vi. assembling all required resources to achieve the organisation's vision and mission.

The management function of organising is relevant to the current study, which explores ECCD centre directors' management practices. The reason is that centre directors are responsible for the management of their centres, which involves the management function of organising.

#### *2.5.3.5 Coordination*

Management scholars have offered various definitions of organisational coordination. For example, while Vanagas and Stankevič (2014) explain coordination as synchronising individual and group efforts to attain organisational objectives, Osifo (2013) refers to coordination as the logical organisation of employees' efforts to achieve common goals. Coordination also involves harmonising different segments of functions within the organisation in order to attain collective organisational goals (Demirel, 2020). Furthermore, coordination is referred to as the logical harmonisation of employees' work to perform the required tasks to achieve the stated goals (Aristidou & Barrett, 2018).

From the above definitions, it is apparent that the management function of coordination is an intentional process of integrating various activities of individuals and groups to accomplish specific organisational goals. Furthermore, from the above definitions, the following five key aims of coordination emerged:

- i. harmonisation of individual and group efforts;
- ii. unity of action whereby all the workers in the organisation perform certain unique and different types of works;
- iii. pursuit of a common purpose by all employees as they all have goals, perceptions, values, beliefs, attitudes and make every effort to achieve their own goals;

- iv. coordination involves harmonisation of all phases of management activities; and
- v. responsibility.

These aims imply that coordination is an essential function of managers as they try to harmonise the efforts of their subordinates. The management function of coordination is relevant to this study because, as part of their management responsibilities, ECCD directors are responsible for coordinating the activities of their centres with the internal and external stakeholders through various mechanisms.

#### *2.5.3.6 Coordination types and mechanisms*

Lussier (2021) argues that an organisation consists of several broad and complex components, and requires specific mechanisms to coordinate organisational activities. Based on scope and flow in an organisation, coordination may be categorised as internal and external, and horizontal and vertical. While internal coordination involves the harmonisation of the activities and efforts of groups and individuals within each of the various units, departments, plants and offices of an organisation, external coordination, on the other hand, relates to the harmonisation of the activities and efforts between an organisation and its external environment (Shermerhorn, 2013). Vertical coordination relates to the harmonisation of activities and efforts of people at different levels in the organisation. Meanwhile, horizontal coordination refers to coordination between respective positions at the same level in the organisation through meetings and teamwork (Bateman & Snell, 2013).

Management scholars identify several mechanisms used by managers to coordinate organisational activities. Lussier (2021) and Robbins and Coulter (2016) provide the following form of coordination mechanisms used by some managers: personal directive synchronised official structures that are useful in coordination in organisations with vertical hierarchical relationships; people coordination through committee systems, meetings, conferences, teams and other forms of communication, including organisational culture through codes of ethics, rules, and behaviours that are permitted in the establishment; and group coordination that is based on initiatives of group members established in organisation divisions. Other mechanisms include reward/settlement systems; official records describing operating procedures, benchmarks, methods, procedures, policies, systems, laws, and; coordination through established

organisational management structures by unique coordinating entities and comprehensive coordination plans of steps (Thibault & Whillans, 2018). Lussier (2021) identifies four coordination mechanisms: qualification controls, work processes, paradigms, and synchronisation of people's requests.

Several other management scholars further outlined management coordination mechanisms available to managers as follows:

- i. Coordination by rules or procedures: through rules and procedures, managers can easily specify in advance the expected actions required from subordinates;
- ii. Coordination by type of organisation and departments: coordination is achieved by departmentalisation where heads of departments wield delegated authority and coordinate on behalf of the manager;
- iii. Coordination by simple organisation structure: the chain of command and responsibility from higher to lower level is clearly demarcated to reduce relational conflicts and provides the opportunity for integrated action. Unity of purpose is the main goal of this coordination mechanism;
- iv. Coordination by chain of command: superior-subordinate links are created in the organisation using a chain of command to facilitate effective coordination;
- v. Coordination by committees;
- vi. Coordination by establishment of communication systems to facilitate decision making and problem solving;
- vii. Coordination by conference/meetings to discuss and solve problems;
- viii. Coordination by special coordinators appointed to assist managers to coordinate;
- ix. Coordination by leadership and supervision: establishment of personal supervision and informal contacts with people that help create a climate of cooperation, which is the footing of management coordination (Claggett & Karahanna, 2018; Demirel, 2020; Dolechek, Lippert, Vengrouskie & Lloyd, 2019; Osifo, 2013).

The above-mentioned coordination mechanisms suggest that the multifaceted nature of modern business organisations, including educational institutions like ECCD centres, leads to conflict between organisational and individual interests, and that the volatile nature of employees demands management to coordinate various activities in organisations to achieve their vision and

mission. All the authors agreed that coordination involves the harmonisation of activities of employees towards achieving organisational goals. Furthermore, all authors agree that through coordination, managers develop a logical pattern of individual and group efforts that guarantee the achievement of common objectives.

It also emerged that the main objective of coordination includes the reconciliation of goals, total attainment of organisational goals, safeguarding of acceptable interpersonal relationships, and effectiveness and efficiency in managerial operation. It can be concluded that effective and efficient coordination is accomplished through the continuous synchronisation of group efforts and unity of action in pursuit of common aims. Coordination, thus, assists the functions of management; hence it is the crux of management. Therefore, it can be concluded that coordination is continuous as it is usually carried out while planning by policies, rules, and procedures to help individuals and departments effectively follow these plans.

#### *2.5.3.7 Leading/Directing*

Bligh, Kohles and Yan (2018) refer to organisational leadership as a management function in which managers formulate tactical objectives and inspire employees to implement duties to accomplish organisational objectives effectively. King (2017), on the other hand, defines organisational leadership as the ability to lead employees toward achieving an organisation's mission, while Sinek (2017) and Sirisookslip, Ariratana and Ngang (2015) define leadership as the ability of an organisation's top personnel to accomplish complex goals by carrying out necessary actions at the right time, going beyond expectations, and motivating others to give their maximum effort. Leading involves inspiring maximum output by an organisation's employees (Bateman & Snell, 2013; King, 2017; Liberman, 2014; Sinek, 2017).

Based on the abovementioned definitions, organisational leadership is understood to communicate the organisation's mission and vision, establish the strategic plan, and inspire staff to perform assigned tasks effectively to achieve the goals aligned with the strategic plan and, ultimately, the organisation's vision. Management scholars also recognise directing as an important aspect of leadership that focuses on supervision, monitoring, motivation, communicating, and taking corrective measures to improve the professional development of staff (Raman & Chandrashekar, 2019).



#### *2.5.3.8 Staffing*

Ramaswamy (2014) points out that the main objective of staffing is to ensure that the correct personnel are recruited, developed, compensated, and retained. Raman and Chandrashekar (2019) claim that staffing includes personnel planning, utilising efficient recruitment mechanisms, evaluation, and the professional development of staff to occupy positions within the organisation. In other words, staffing deals primarily with personnel planning, recruitment, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal, promotions as well as transfer in some cases (Vélez, Lorenzo & Garrido, 2017).

The management function of staffing is relevant to the current study as job design, recruitment, selection, placement, professional development, promotion, and compensation, which constitute staffing, are all expected of directors of educational institutions such as ECCD centres.

#### *2.5.3.9 Controlling*

According to Massaro, Moro, Aschauer, and Fink (2019), controlling is a management function that involves comparing, monitoring and rectifying work performance to ascertain the achievement of desired organisational goals. Merchant and Van Der Stede (2012) indicate that controlling includes monitoring, evaluating, and remedying work deviations to safeguard compliance with the original work plan.

While Batemen and Snell (2013) claim that management control involves establishing processes to direct and monitor the performance of staff towards the attainment of desired organisational goals, Bedford (2015) points out that management control refers to the process in which institutions endeavour to accomplish the strategic desired organisational goals through the use of various action steps to curtail undesired outcomes that may result from the external and internal business environment. Some authors also view controlling from a system perspective. For instance, Carenys (2012) points out that a management control system involves enforcing norms, supervising staff behaviour, and measuring employee performance to implement plans to achieve desired objectives.

Sihag and Rijdsdijk (2019) assert that management control is a methodological action that establishes the expected performance outcome according to specific benchmarks to assess

nonconformities and discrepancies, establish their level of significance, and make necessary improvements to achieve the objectives and mission of the organisation.

Management scholars reveal that management control activities can be carried out through results control, action control, personnel control, and cultural control systems. While the results controls inspire personnel through a reward system, action controls involve steps taken by managers to ensure that staff take correct actions. On the other hand, personnel controls are used to encourage staff to control and motivate themselves by enacting certain activities that ensure that staff's behaviour aligns with the institution's interests. Finally, cultural controls aim at inspiring personnel to oversee and guide each other through the organisation's particular cultural context (Lopez-Valeiras, Gonzalez-Sanchez & Gomez-Conde, 2015; Merchant & Stede, 2012; Talab & Flayyih, 2018).

Merchant and Van der Stede (2012) argue that the cultural controls mechanism is effective when individual employees' personal interests align with the interests of the organisation, and this is attainable when the institutional culture is well embedded in the organisation to help motivate employees towards the accomplishment of a common objective (Bedford & Malmi, 2016). Management scholars argue that the results control mechanism is implemented through planning where specific performance targets are identified and shared with all the stakeholders concerned with the plan's implementation (Sihag & Rijdsdijk, 2019). The action controls mechanism is effectively implemented when all personnel regularly participate in all important actions to achieve the organisation's goals (Faeni, Faeni, Septiyanti, & Yuliansyah, 2020).

Some scholars further claim that formal planning can serve as a management control mechanism because it enables easy detection of deviations from organisational goals (Gschwantner & Hiebl 2016; Müller-Stewens, Widener, Moller, Steinmann, 2020; Pešalj, Pavlov, Micheli, 2018). Jamil and Mohamed (2013) and Merchant and Van Der Stede (2012) outlined four basic elements of controlling. These are:

- i. instituting performance benchmarks through which performance outcomes will be assessed;
- ii. measuring actual work performance by managers;
- iii. performance evaluation; and

- iv. taking corrective action to regulate and improve work performance and results.

The above authors explained that measuring includes determining how to measure tangible work output. They elaborate that comparing includes identifying deviations between the expected performance targets or standards, the actual performance, and areas of variations that require attention.

Malmi (2013) outlines the following five mechanisms of controlling: (i) cultural controls, (ii) planning controls, (iii) cybernetic controls, (iv) administrative controls, and (v) reward and compensation controls. While culture is a control system when it is used to control employee behaviour, planning control is used to guide activities and behaviours of employees through organisational goal setting, identification of plan implementation strategies and standard operation procedures, and expected outcome and coordination mechanisms. Cybernetic controls refer to the mechanisms whereby a feedback loop is established using performance standards, performance measurement, analysis of performance against benchmarks, and sending deviation feedback into the system for improvement action to be taken. Cybernetic control measures include (i) budgets, (ii) financial instruments, (iii) non-financial measures; and (iv) a mixture of financial instruments and non-financial measures. When implemented effectively, the reward and compensation control mechanism help inspire employees and improve productivity. Administrative controls aim to direct employee behaviour. Merchant and Van der Stede (2017) argue that administrative control can be achieved through organisational design and structure, establishing governance structures, and procedures and policies. Merchant and Van der Stede (2017) contend that organisational design and structure is a form of control that aims to organise staff and establish relationships. While governance structure can take the form of formal lines of authority and accountability, policies and procedures involve standard procedures and work practices.

Malmi (2013) contends that controls can be achieved through organisational design and structure, the establishment of good governance structures, and work procedures, policies and regulations. In addition to Malmi (2013)'s proposed control mechanism, Simons (2014) also outlines four control systems usually used by management. These are beliefs, boundaries, diagnostics, and interactive systems. The authors indicate that communicating or stating and sharing the

organisation's mission and vision with the employees help in embedding belief systems in the organisation. Furthermore, the boundary systems of the management control mechanism involve the use of codes of conduct and codes of ethics to guide the behaviour and actions of employees (Lussier, 2021; Shermerhorn, 2013). Diagnostic systems help directors to monitor and compensate the accomplishment of desired objectives by appraising key performance indicators. Directors also utilise diagnostic systems to improve deviations from expected standards of work enactment. Interactive systems, on the other hand, inspire institutional learning and permit new strategies to arise. Institutional stakeholders act in response to perceived prospects and risks. Regarding interactive control systems, directors directly and individually pay regular attention to staff through interaction and personal involvement in staff activities (Faeni, Faeni, Septiyanti & Yuliansyah, 2020). The above mechanism also facilitates staff motivation through data gathering through regular external routes (Dolechek, Lippert, Vengrouskie & Lloyd, 2019).

Authors agree that management control mechanisms are vital and worth practicing due to a lack of direction, motivation setbacks, and human inadequacies. The authors also hold forth that result controls, action controls, personnel controls, and cultural control are essential in ensuring institutional goals are effectively achieved. Furthermore, research revealed that the management function of control aims at avoiding deviations and correcting them to achieve the organisation's goals. The review of literature on the management function of controlling is relevant to this study in the sense that the study aims to explore the management practices of ECCD centre directors, including an assessment of how directors carry out the management function of control at ECCD centres. The following section reviews previous research on ECCD centre directors' management practices.

## **2.6. MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS OF ECCD DIRECTORS**

In ECCD, management responsibilities differ from country to country and are based on centre types, such as public or private. Nonetheless, Li, Forbes and Yang (2019) and Lindon and Lindon (2012) noted that ECCD centre directors perform many similar duties, including planning, organising, coordinating, and controlling ECCD programmes (Currid, 2017; Duffy, 2014). Similarly, other studies found that ECCD directors' management functions include planning, organising, coordination, directing, reporting, decision-making, leading, motivating staff,

budgeting, staffing, and controlling (Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris, 2012; Callanan, Anderson, Haywood, Hudson & Speight, 2017). The main management functions will be further explored in the following sections. The main management functions will be further explored in the following sections. The centre directors' management functions are summarised in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 2.1: Management Functions ECCD Directors**

Source: Agih (2015)

### **2.6.1 ECCD directors' planning functions**

ECCD directors' planning function involves preparing a performance improvement plan. In preparing the plan, directors perform comprehensive assessments of their ECCD centres' performance in the previous year and come up with a plan that serves as a tool and a roadmap for improving the needs and quality of ECCD outcomes (Ifeyinwe, 2019; Musingafi, Zebron, Kaseke & Chaminuka, 2014; Sadik, 2018). Meyers and VanGronigen (2019) view planning as one of the director's responsibilities, while Huber and Conway (2015) view performance

improvement planning as a tool to turn around low-performing ECCD centres. VanGronigen and Meyers (2017) identify the following aspects of a school improvement plan: (i) mission and vision of the ECCD centre; (ii) targets/goals to be accomplished and their action steps; (iii) implementation timeframe; and (iv) measurable results.

Andriany, Soefijanto and Wahyudi (2019) also identify the following as ECCD directors' management function of planning:

- i. comprehensive needs assessment of the ECCD centre, to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT);
- ii. formulation of ECCD centre's mission and vision;
- iii. statement of centre's values, development of centre's policies and philosophy;
- iv. identification of goals;
- v. statement of centre's strategic objectives;
- vi. development of plan's implementation strategies; and
- vii. design of control mechanisms.

Studies on school improvement plans revealed that school directors should ensure that the plans meet specific quality elements to accomplish their intended purpose. First, the plan should be comprehensive and unified to align with the centre's vision, mission, values, and priorities. Second, the plan should have the possibility of data-driven strategies. Third, the plan should contain clear goals and implementation strategies. Fourth, there must be a distinct description of data-based and monitoring mechanisms. Fifth, centre directors must involve key stakeholders, including community members, in the planning process. Sixth, there must be a provision for professional development opportunities for staff (Carvalho, Cabral, Verdasca, & Alves, 2021b; Strunk, Marsh, Bush-Mecenas & Duque, 2016; VanGronigen & Meyers, 2020).

Strunk et al. (2016) conducted a study on the quality of ECCD centre improvement plans and identified the following elements of ECCD centre plans, which directors must ensure when undertaking the management function of planning:

- i. plans that are aligned with ECCD centre's mission and vision;
- ii. plans that are tailored to children's context;
- iii. plans that provide good opportunities for children and centre personnel;

- iv. plans that are based on evidence and research;
- v. effective stakeholder involvement in planning processes, including parent and community members, to ensure cooperation and support;
- vi. tactical use of statistics;
- vii. realistic plans that ensure that it is implementable to achieve targets;
- viii. flexible governance system utilised by directors; and  
quality writing of plans to ensure the final plan is technically sound.

In addition to the above indicators of planning practices of ECCD centre directors, other researchers argue that quality planning practices can be achieved through a systems perspective. Previous researchers have acknowledged that adopting a systems perspective to planning and management ensures incessant appraisal of plan outputs and feedback to improve performance (Arnold & Wade, 2015; Bozkus, 2014). Managers must give equal attention to the various management phases, namely input, process, and output. Literature revealed that Von Bertalanffy's (1972) System Theory is gradually being imported into educational institution management. Planning using the inputs, processes, and outcomes approach is described below:

**Planning inputs:**

The planning input quality indicator assesses the following:

- i. The extent to which ECCD centre directors use external support, such as external agencies and documents, to guide planning for improvement.
- ii. Internal guidance, such as leadership and use of expertise within the ECCD centre community, which guides planning.
- iii. Professional development through the provision of in-service support for attending courses to enhance caregivers and teachers' capacity to engage in planning or support in other ways (Bickmore, Roberts, Gonzales, 2020; Strunk, Marsh, Bush-Mecenas & Duque, 2016; VanGronigen, & Meyers, 2017).

### **Planning processes:**

The planning process quality component includes indicators such as:

- i. The extent of collaboration such to which ECCD centre directors ensure all partners are actively engaged in the planning process.
- ii. Actions focused on improvements such as the use of whole-ECCCD centre review, establishing priorities, action planning, and regular monitoring of implementation.
- iii. Systematic, ongoing commitment to planning, such as the extent to which ECCD centre directors establish structures to support planning and commitment to improvement (Bickmore, Roberts & Gonzales, 2020; Strunk et al., 2016; VanGronigen & Meyers, 2017).

### **Planning outcomes:**

Planning outcomes quality component includes:

- i. ECCD centre director's awareness of concepts of ECCD improvement planning, such as appreciation of the value of whole-ECCD centre planning in leading improvement.
- ii. Professional development, such as measuring changes in attitudes and practices due to planning.
- iii. Effective use of a wide range of material resources such as provision, availability and use of resources to support learning in priority areas.
- iv. Effective use of a broad range of teaching methodologies, such as using a more comprehensive range of teaching approaches.
- v. Active, participative learning, such as ECCD experiences for children.
- vi. Improved attainment by children, which can be achieved through monitoring and measurement of children's ECCD achievement and the effect of planning on improved children's ECCD attainment (Bickmore, Roberts & Gonzales, 2020; Duke, 2015; Strunk et al., 2016; VanGronigen & Meyers, 2017).

Bickmore et al. (2020) suggest that school improvement plans should emerge from a comprehensive school strategy, and its implementation should be formulated to support the school's overall mission. Meyers and VanGronigen (2019) emphasise the relationship between the quality of the planning process and the quality of its implementation action steps since a high-quality planning process is regarded as the foundation that supports the school's activities in the



path of improvement. While Acton (2021) argues that quality plans can guide school personnel to specific prioritised targets and goals, Strunk et al. (2016) claim that quality improvement plans incorporate key stakeholders' views in implementing action steps.

The abovementioned studies have highlighted that ECCD centre improvement plans serve as holistic ECCD centre improvement tools. It is, therefore, not surprising that education reforms worldwide, including in Ghana, chose school improvement planning as a vehicle for achieving improvement (Agi, 2017; Schlebusch & Mokhatle, 2016). For instance, in Ghana, School Performance Improvement Planning (SPIP) was introduced in 2006 as a national policy due to the introduction of the governmental Capitation Grant to encourage public schools to efficiently utilise the grant to plan and implement school quality improvement programmes. Apart from the improvement purpose of the grant, it also intended to build the capacity of local communities to sufficiently implement fiscal decentralisation and encourage bottom-up planning at school level. Improvement planning in Ghanaian public basic schools, including ECCD centres, was introduced as a condition for awarding the Capitation Grant (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports [MoESS], 2006).

Studies have acknowledged some difficulties associated with school improvement planning, such as the rigidity of targets and their top-down nature and plans to have similar structures, goals, and strategies (Schlebusch & Mokhatle, 2016; Strunk et al., 2016). Studies found that some school directors engage in school improvement planning simply because it is a requirement for the awarding of funds (Immordino, Gigliotti, Ruben, & Tromp, 2016; Meyers & Hitt, 2018; Meyers & VanGronigen, 2019). VanGronigen and Meyers (2017) conducted a study on school improvement planning and found that most of the analysed plans lacked technical soundness and that planning processes lacked rigour and the involvement of key stakeholders.

The abovementioned studies focused almost exclusively on the disadvantages of government-sponsored school improvement planning at basic and secondary school levels. Furthermore, a closer investigation of literature on school improvement planning revealed that even though improvement planning has been widely adopted as a school improvement tool, research on the quality of planning inputs, processes, and outcomes at ECCD centres is sparse in the Ghanaian context. Additional studies are required to understand the key tenets of planning practices of

directors at ECCD centres in terms of quality improvement planning inputs, processes, and outcomes.

Existing research further showed that school improvement planning is not always acknowledged by stakeholders and is not planned with evidence-based data, which poses some questions about the technical soundness of the improvement planning processes. Some researchers also claimed that most ECCD stakeholders do not possess the skill set for planning and implementation processes (Schildkamp, 2019; Strunk et al., 2016; Wanjala & Rarieya, 2014). It is evident from the literature that knowledge of ECCD stakeholders on the quality of planning processes to ensure that the final plan is technically sound is lacking in some ECCD settings (Acton, 2021; Schildkamp, 2019; Wanjala & Rarieya, 2014).

The above scholars agree that it is necessary to engage in cohesive and complete self-assessment of the ECCD centre to identify its strengths and weaknesses to achieve quality planning. In this respect, data-based processes are needed to discover the needs for ECCD centres, to include various stakeholders from the beginning by understanding ECCD community data, priorities, and approaches, and to collaborate and authenticate directors' managerial decision-making (Acton, 2021; Schildkamp, 2019).

Finally, previous research showed that school improvement planning does not entirely assure school improvement and it entails considering the plans' quality. Accordingly, this current study deems it necessary to extend the understanding of the planning and enactment of methods for high-quality ECCD centre planning by directors.

## **2.6.2 Domains of Quality Improvement Planning**

Several management scholars identified twelve domains that guide quality school improvement planning processes from the perspective of vision, activities and progress measures, context, organisation, and resources. These domains are discussed in the following sections.

### *2.6.2.1 Collective development of overall school improvement vision planning*

Duke (2015), and Meyers and VanGronigen (2019) contend that a quality school improvement plan should be succinct and communicate a bold vision that distinctively transmits how the

school will be substantially improved from previous poor performance after implementing the plan. The plan should also exhibit convincing proof of the school's obligation to and desire for its improvement effort. In addition, the level to which a clear and concise vision transforms to internal stakeholders, such as teaching and non-teaching staff, and external stakeholders, such as parents and community members, largely reveals the general success or failure of the plan's implementation (Acton, 2021). Other researchers argue that engaging the school management team and community in this early vision-development phase builds awareness of collective authority and increases acceptance of the final school improvement plan (Schildkamp, 2019; Wanjala & Rarieya, 2014).

#### *2.6.2.2 Activities and progress measures planning*

Having developed an improvement vision collectively, Acton (2021) and Strunk et al. (2016) maintain that the next phase of the planning domain is the development of activities and progress measures, which includes priority identification, process outcomes, progress indicators, and development of action steps. These are briefly discussed below:

- *Identification and justification of improvement priorities domain*

Under this quality planning domain, the school improvement planning team must identify two to four specific and clear, highly influential improvement priorities as the plan's focus for a specific implementation period. Planners should also provide a fair and convincing justification for selecting each improvement priority that communicates why the priority requires immediate consideration to achieve the school's improvement vision (Acton, 2021; Carvalho et al., 2021b; Strunk et al., 2016).

- *Process outcomes domain*

Strunk et al. (2016) state that a quality school improvement plan should contain specific, realistic, and elaborate process outcomes for each priority to aid in achieving the school's improvement vision. Process outcomes should also be aligned to each priority properly through convincing justifications.

Scholars claim that due to the complexities surrounding modern school management, schools rely on data-driven decision-making, making it easy for policymakers to quickly judge whether

improvement in children's academic performance has increased or decreased (Strunk et al., 2016). Carvalho et al. (2021b) also found that many schools align their improvement plans with their national accountability benchmarks because those benchmarks are what the country uses to judge if a school is successful for a specific academic year. The author, therefore, recommends that instead of improvement plans concentrating on results, such as performance scores of learners, improvement process outcomes should instead focus on solving the fundamental problems that contribute to those results. Thus, process outcomes should also consider school-specific contextual factors contributing to attaining quality educational outcomes. Duke (2015) also added that quality school improvement plans should state all expected process outcomes and how each of those outcomes solves associated priorities, and this has the potential to increase stakeholders' commitment and the possibility of successful implementation of the improvement plan.

- *Progress indicators domain*

Scholars recommend that for each process outcome, the plan must contain a range of performance indicators that serve as progress checkpoints to gauge the school's current improvement in meeting the stated process outcomes. It was further recommended that all indicators implicitly and purposefully align with each process outcome. In addition, school self-review and reflection practices should be implicitly fused into the school's schedules or routines (Duke, 2015; Wanjala & Rarieya, 2014; Meyers & Hitt, 2018). Strunk et al. (2016) recommend effective common planning time where the school management team could review meeting notes for content and quality or observe teachers' interaction with learners to monitor progress and direction of achievement. Expected progress indicators in school settings can take the form of formative appraisal to monitor and modify methodologies quickly (Chukwumah, 2015; Domingo et al., 2020; Meyer, Bendikson & Le Fevre, 2020).

- *Action steps development domain*

The final component of activities and progress measures recommended by researchers states that the improvement plan should contain detailed, specific, and elaborate action steps for each process outcome (Acton, 2021; Schildkamp, 2019). It is recommended that stated action steps should not be routine and should properly present elaborate tactics for realising process outcomes (Duke, 2015). In addition, Dunaway et al. (2012), and Strunk et al. (2016) also recommend that

each action step must purposefully align with and present sound support to achieve all process outcomes. This domain is recognised as the operationalisation of the school improvement vision and related priorities since it manifests the activities that must be implemented to accomplish improvement goals (Duke, 2015). Nonetheless, other studies indicate that many school improvement plans usually state many action steps which are not focused and do not show creative strategies to solve poor performance issues (Garcia & Cerado, 2020). Therefore, this planning phase recommends that if a school develops an improvement vision that is focused on two to four priorities and based on comprehensive root cause analysis, action steps will be much more focused and influential in maximising the efforts of implementation stakeholders (Immordino et al., 2016).

#### *2.6.2.3 Context planning domain*

Researchers identified two categories of contexts that promote quality school improvement planning: school context and root cause analysis.

- *School context domain*

Acton (2021) and Strunk et al. (2016) indicate that a technically sound school improvement plan should establish a deep comprehension of the school's environment, involving the internal community, such as school personnel, and target learner population, and external community sub-groups, such as parents, community members, and the education district. It was further recommended that, if possible, a priority and its fundamental components purposely address and focus on the needs of specific learner target populations and their subcategories (Acton, 2021; Strunk et al., 2016).

Previous researchers maintain that an educational institution's conditions, realities, nuances and contexts necessitate a context-specific approach. One dominant belief is that efficient improvements in one school environment will be successful in another entirely different environment. While the above assertion proved true in some cases, the research identified some drawbacks of adopting a one-size-fits-all improvement effort without considering context-specific factors that influence improvement plan implementation (Acton, 2021; Strunk et al., 2016). Studies established that improvement approaches and resources from other contexts may

be entirely essential and appropriate to a school's improvement vision and environment but may require revisions to balance its specific environment and increase its effectiveness and efficiency.

- *Root cause analysis domain*

Root cause analysis, also known as environmental scanning, is a planning procedure that involves discovering why a performance gap has occurred or existed. Environmental scanning involves utilising statistics and evidence sources to detect and resolve the root causes of the gaps between the improvement vision and the current performance status of the school (Acton, 2021; Duke, 2015).

Scholars maintain that this planning domain involves ensuring that the improvement planning team uses a range of suitable data sources and evidence to communicate, in unambiguous terms, details of the root causes for all priorities identified with a comprehensive description of the associations between each priority's justification and its root causes. It is recommended that the association should be comprehensive, sound, and concisely describe the root causes of all priorities (Acton, 2021; Duke, 2015; Schildkamp, 2019). School environment analysis ensures that critical stakeholders collectively dig deep into the school's current performance and the root cause of the current performance, thereby unearthing the current behaviour and practices of the key improvement implementation team (Acton, 2021; Duke, 2015; Schildkamp, 2019). Thus, incorrect root cause analysis may cause a school to mistakenly identify causes, and their solutions may not be appropriate in bringing about ideal improvement. Consequently, Duke (2015) argues that it is valuable to comprehensively and accurately analyse the available data to identify root causes precisely. This can be achieved via exercises like fishbone diagrams and other SWOT analyses or exercises that encourage the planning team to continuously try to find answers to the root cause of the poor performance.

#### *2.6.2.4 Organisation planning domain*

A rubric for assessing the quality of school improvement plans developed by VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017) stipulates three domains that should be included in the organisation of improvement plans, namely sequencing, schedule/timeline, and alignment, as discussed below.

- *Sequencing domain*

To ensure proper sequencing, Duke (2015) argues that the planning team should ensure that a plan comprises a sequence of priorities, process outcomes, and action steps that is reasonable and deliberate, creating the required backing and impetus to help achieve process outcomes, priorities, and vision. VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017) suggest that the plan should contain a convincing sequencing justification. In his rubric for assessing the quality of school improvement planning, Duke (2015) recommends that a plan should be organised in such a way as to ensure that priorities come before process outcomes and then action steps in this specific sequence.

- *Schedule/timeline domain*

VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017), in their rubric for assessing the quality of school improvement planning, recommend that the planning team should ensure that the plan contains a comprehensive, detailed schedule/timeline of actions and processes to be undertaken within the plan's defined timeframe. Duke (2015) also notes that the planning team must ensure that the plan offers a specific and unambiguous indication of precise times that indicate how the school will achieve indicators aligned with process outcomes and help achieve priorities and, eventually, achieve its improvement vision.

- *Alignment domain*

Meyers and VanGronigen (2019) indicate that one of the quality characteristics of an improvement plan is that the planners ensure that it shows a complete internal alignment of all important aspects of the plan. Examples of these aspects include the priorities, school environment, process outcomes, and action steps to the school's main improvement vision. Strunk et al. (2016) further recommend that planners provide complete justification for alignment and details of the school's improvement vision and how it is connected with the district's improvement vision. Thus, the focus of this planning domain is on ensuring that there is coherence in all elements of the improvement plan.

#### 2.6.2.5 Resources planning domain

- *Directly responsible person domain*

The final planning domain recommended by VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017) is resources, which involve individuals responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and internal and external support for planning and implementation. The authors recommend that the planning team indicate accountable persons against each action step. This should be done so that responsibilities are evenly distributed among key responsible persons rather than concentrated around a few people or parties.

Assigning responsibilities to key implementers of the school improvement plan is an accountability mechanism that openly identifies the responsible person or people. Consequently, it makes it possible for the plan's action steps to be implemented effectively when key stakeholders are made to own the plan and its implementation (Domingo et al., 2020; Strunk et al., 2016). This implies that if action steps lack directly responsible persons or groups, implementation gaps could happen, which may reduce stakeholders' support, demoralise the governance and leadership team, and weaken more comprehensive school turnaround efforts.

Previous research recommends that school directors should not be directly responsible for any priority but instead play the role of facilitator to reinforce and ensure others are held responsible or accountable for progress on action steps (Duke, 2015; Meyers & Hitt, 2017). Two main benefits to be derived from a directly responsible person mechanism are that it averts utilising the director's restricted free time, promotes distributed leadership practice of school turnaround implementation efforts amongst the school community, and establishes opportunities for shared decision-making (Acton, 2021).

- *Supports domain*

The final planning domain under resources, as recommended by VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017), is that planners should ensure that the final plan purposely indicates available support that associates with and aids in carrying out the improvement efforts and provides a complete description of how support will be unified to help achieve the improvement vision. The authors recommend that the description should be concise and defend the utilisation of available support.



If there is no available support to implement an improvement vision, the plan should precisely indicate why and how the school will involve continuous school-community environmental scanning to find potential available support (Duke, 2015).

Prior research acknowledges that identifying available resources is crucial to improvement planning; hence efforts should be made to ensure that school improvement plans intentionally use all resources and support available within the school, district and community to help achieve the improvement vision. The authors maintain that improvement efforts are usually problematic, time and effort-intensive, and schools cannot improve without resources and support from within the school, community, and district (Duke, 2015; Meyer et al., 2020; Strunk et al., 2016).

From the literature, performance improvement planning scholars have identified twelve main domains that planners should consider ensuring plans are technically sound to achieve their intended purpose. There was no evidence in the literature indicating that studies have been conducted on school improvement planning practices of directors at ECCD centres in Ghana since the introduction of nationwide school improvement planning at public ECCD centres in 2007. Accordingly, this study needs to explore planning practices of directors to understand their experiences and planning challenges. The next sub-section reviews literature on organising practices of ECCD directors.

### **2.6.3 Organising functions of ECCD centre directors**

This section reviews literature on the organising practices of ECCD directors.

Smith, (2021) indicated that organising roles of ECCD director involves planning and coordinating the operation of an early childhood centre, developing policies, supervising staff, ensuring compliance with regulations, maintaining positive relationships with parents and families, collaborating with community organisations, managing budgets, overseeing curriculum development, evaluating program effectiveness, representing the centre at events, facilitating communication, supporting staff growth, handling conflicts, promoting inclusivity, and conducting regular assessments for quality and improvement.

Previous studies conducted on the roles of ECCD leader identified six basic organising practices of ECCD directors. Amongst them includes job specialisation, departmentalisation, delegation, decentralisation, the span of management, and line and staff authority. The authors outlined the following eight organising functions of ECCD directors:

- i. providing instructional and administrative leadership;
- ii. establishing ECCD centre governance and management structures;
- iii. organising human, instructional material and financial resources;
- iv. developing of ECCD centre policies;
- v. assigning duties and responsibilities;
- vi. ensuring strong parent-community-ECCD centre ties;
- vii. organising professional development for staff; and
- viii. providing appropriate ECCD learning environment (Ali & Abdalla, 2017; Mustafa & Pranoto, 2019; Strehmel, 2016; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014).

A study conducted by Kwashabawa and Oduwaiye (2016) focused on organisation of community resources. The study aims to investigate the extent of community participation, the types of infrastructure developed, and the sources of financing primary school projects in the North-west Zone. The findings of the study revealed that community participation in the development of basic school infrastructure was limited. Most of the projects were funded by the government or external donor agencies, with minimal contributions from the community. The authors revealed that establishing management structures is an organising mechanism that ECCD directors apply to guarantee the optimum use of their centres' resources to achieve managerial effectiveness and efficiency (Kwashabawa & Oduwaiye, 2016).

Studies conducted on early childhood leadership and management revealed the challenges of managing multiple responsibilities and competing demands, and the importance of ongoing professional development for leaders. The authors recommended some organising functions of ECCD leaders which include organising instructional, material, and financial resources and developing ECCD programmes and policies to meet the needs of the community, parents, and children, providing guidance to the centre's activities, and protecting the centre in a number of

ways (Aubrey, Godfrey & Harris, 2012; Carroll-Meehan, Bolshaw & Hadfield, 2017; Heikka, Waniganayake & Hujala, 2013).

In addition to the above, organising activities of directors involves acquiring an ECCD curriculum and distributing curriculum materials, as well as ensuring the availability of coherent instructional guidance systems. ECCD directors also display their organising skills by assigning duties and delegating authority to leaders at divisional units within the centre (Ang, 2012; Rouse & Spradbury, 2016; Slot, 2018; Waniganayake, & Hadley, 2017).

Organising ECCD centre-community resources through strong parent-community-ECCD centre ties is recognised as a mechanism for soliciting support from community members that could serve as a critical resource for ECCD programmes. Other organising functions of ECCD directors include staff recruitment, retention, continuing professional development, providing appropriate ECCD learning environments to ensure holistic child development, and a dynamic interplay of instructional and inclusive facilitative leadership to ensure quality ECCD outcomes (Ali & Abdalla, 2017; Mustafa & Pranoto, 2019; Rouse & Spradbury, 2016; Strehmel, 2016; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014). The next sub-section reviews literature on leading/directing functions of ECCD Directors.

#### **2.6.4 Leading/directing functions of ECCD directors**

This sub-section reviews literature on leading/directing function of ECCD directors.

The director of ECCD is responsible for developing an age-appropriate curriculum, supervising staff, managing financial resources, and ensuring parent communication. They oversee staff recruitment, training, and evaluation, monitor income and expenses, and ensure compliance with regulations. The Director also serves as the primary point of contact for parents, organising meetings, providing updates, and addressing concerns (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2017). The director of ECCD is also responsible for maintaining a safe environment for children and staff, ensuring compliance with regulations, and implementing health and safety policies. They also act as a liaison between the centre and the community, evaluating the effectiveness of programs and services, and supporting professional development.

The Director ensures the centre operates in accordance with licensing and regulatory requirements, develops emergency preparedness plans, and manages financial resources. They also serve as the primary point of contact for parents, ensuring regular communication and addressing any concerns or questions (Powell & Lambert, 2019; California Department of Education 2017).

Chan, Chandler, Morris, Rebisz, Turan, Shu, & Kpeglo (2019) conducted a study which focused on the self-perceptions of school principals regarding their roles and responsibilities in six different countries. The authors investigate the perceptions of school principals in terms of their professional duties, leadership practices, and educational priorities. The studies show that one of the functions of directors is to provide instructional leadership to the ECCD centre teachers to improve ECCD outcomes (Chan, Chandler, Morris, Rebisz, Turan, Shu, & Kpeglo, 2019). This suggests that ECCD directors should be able to solicit the support of caregivers and inspire them to accomplish ECCD goals cooperatively and unreservedly, and this can be effectively achieved through effective communication, induction of new staff, leadership, and motivation (Chiedozie & Victor, 2017).

From the above literature, it is evident that the leading function of ECCD directors is aimed at improving ECCD outcomes. Previous literature also shows that an effective communication system is required to achieve effective and efficient directing functions. Based on the foregoing discussion, it is clear that, ECCD director plays a crucial leadership role in the effective and efficient operation of the centre. They are responsible for ensuring the well-being and development of all children in their care, as well as maintaining positive relationships with staff, parents, and the wider community.

The next sub-section reviews literature on coordination functions of ECCD directors.

### **2.6.5 Coordinating functions of ECCD directors**

This section reviews the coordination functions of ECCD directors. Literature recognised specific coordination mechanisms utilised by ECCD directors. These include the use of ECCD centre routines, use of performance improvement plans and schedules, use of rules and

regulations, codes of ethics for behavioural control and performance appraisal, use of reward systems, use of communication networks, a committee system of management, effective administrative leadership, clearly defined aims and objectives of ECCD programmes, use of simplified organisation and effective chain of command, meetings and in-service training workshops, and harmonised ECCD programmes and policies (Aristidou & Barrett, 2018; Blakeney, Lavalley, Baik, Pambianco, O'Brien & Zierler, 2019; Reagans, Miron-Spektor & Argote, 2016).

In addition to the above, the following coordination mechanisms used by directors in ECCD settings were also recognised by management scholars:

- i. Use of ECCD centre organisational structure.
- ii. Assigning ECCD centre tasks to committees, holding meetings with staff and parents, parents' conferences, using various communication systems, and sharing ECCD centre philosophies, values, and norms with personnel and parents.
- iii. Appointment of unit heads/coordinators at various ECCD levels.
- iv. Use of reward systems such as salaries and bonuses.
- v. Development and use of ECCD centre policies and standards, procedures, rules, and codes of ethics for staff and children.
- vi. Coordination through established organisational management structures such as Parents Associations and centre management committees by special coordinating bodies and a detailed plan of step coordination (Carnochan, McBeath, Chuang & Austin, 2019; Claggett & Karahanna, 2018; Pilny, Proulx, Dinh, & Bryan, 2017; Thibault & Whillans, 2018).

From the literature, it is evident that the authors agree that coordination is an important management function performed by ECCD centre directors to harmonise efforts of internal and external ECCD stakeholders towards achieving ECCD goals. The management principle of coordination is relevant to this current study because, due to the complexities surrounding ECCD centre directors' responsibilities, an effective mechanism to achieve coordination within and outside the centre is very important. It is, therefore, necessary to explore how effectively directors of ECCD centres in Ghana coordinate the activities of internal and external ECCD stakeholders. The next sub-section reviews literature on management control functions of ECCD directors.

### **2.6.6 Controlling functions of ECCD directors**

This sub-section reviews literature on controlling functions of ECCD directors.

Smith (2018) identified the following controlling functions of ECCD directors which include setting and implementing policies, monitoring compliance with regulations, evaluating staff performance, managing budget and financial matters, and effectively managing resources. They ensure safety protocols, curriculum standards, staff guidelines, and parent participation policies are followed. They also oversee the centre's budget, manage expenses, and seek funding opportunities. Their role is to ensure efficient resource allocation and utilisation.

ECCD director is also responsible for effective communication, quality assurance, problem-solving, strategic planning, and continuous professional development in early childhood education. They foster a collaborative environment, address concerns, and maintain open lines of communication with staff, parents, and stakeholders. They also handle conflicts, analyse trends, and make strategic decisions to achieve the centre's mission. They attend conferences, workshops, and training sessions to stay updated (Smith, 2022).

Previous studies conducted on the role of principals in schools focused on understanding of what principals are expected to do. The findings revealed that the management function of controlling could be achieved through various mechanisms. For example, in educational set-ups such as ECCD centres, directors can achieve the controlling function by ensuring that essential teaching and learning resources such as toys, play materials, human resources, and financial resources are provided in sufficient quantity (Lunenburg, 2016; Musingafi et al., 2014). Furthermore, the provision of instructional leadership through supervision, vetting of learner plans, and mentorship have also been cited by some authors as controlling mechanisms (Chiedozie & Victor, 2017; Ombonga & Ongaga, 2017; Onuma, 2016).

Researchers argue that controlling is a compulsory management function of ECCD centre directors. This is because programme enactment and goal accomplishment are the major responsibilities of ECCD centre directors (Dos & Savas, 2015). In addition, Lunenburg (2016) and Musingafi et al. (2014) assert that checking progress and adjusting the degree of goal

attainment makes the management function of controlling a required management practice in ECCD centres.

Some authors contend that ECCD centre directors' management function of controlling involves setting personnel's performance standards, evaluating work performance with set standards, and taking remedial or corrective actions (Dos & Savas, 2015; Hallinger & Murphy, 2012). Agih (2015) indicated that controlling is an important function of ECCD directors because it allows directors to monitor, assess and supervise instruction, implement ECCD programmes, and attain quality ECCD outcomes at the centres.

Studies revealed that ECCD directors could achieve coordination through establishing monitoring standards of ECCD service provision, visits to classrooms and observation of curriculum implementation activities such as teaching and learning, and vetting of termly, weekly, and daily learner plans prepared by caregivers and teachers (Osiri, Piliyeesi & Ateka, 2019). Other coordination mechanisms include taking inventory of curriculum materials and teaching and learning resources to determine their availability for effective and efficient curriculum implementation, examining test results, undertaking performance appraisals at centres, appraisals of employee performance, establishing new performance standards, and articulating recommendations based on the existing established standards. Controlling can also be achieved through classroom visits and observation of interaction between children, teachers and caregivers (Kieleko et al., 2017; Kotirde et al., 2014; Madukwe et al., 2019; Musingafi et al., 2014).

Elliott (2015) and Ndungu, Allan, and Bomett (2015) further contend that performance appraisal increases the quality of ECCD outcomes. Hence, ECCD directors could use employee performance appraisal as an effective means of controlling the performance of the caregivers and teachers in ECCD centre to increase their service provision, ultimately leading to improved ECCD outcomes.

From the above discussions, it is apparent that ECCD directors' controlling function involves establishing monitoring criteria and standards, evaluating real performance with established standards, and devising curative actions. The management function of controlling is relevant to

this study because it guides the activities of ECCD directors and other stakeholders toward achieving ECCD goals. Hence, it is necessary to explore how ECCD directors enact controlling functions in their centres in the Ghanaian context.

## **2.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

In this section, related literature on the management functions of ECCD centre directors were reviewed. Previous literature revealed that the management functions of ECCD centre directors include planning, organising, directing, leading, coordinating, and controlling. Scientific Administrative Management theory seems to be the emerging trend in ECCD centre directors' management practices.

Regarding planning, school improvement planning appears to be the dominant planning form use by most directors. However, some authors raised concerns about the quality of planning inputs, process, and outcomes, as well as the knowledge and skills of the directors and members of the planning team.

With regards to directors' organising functions, the key trend in organising design processes emerging from the literature includes work specialisation, chain of command, span of control, departmentalisation, centralisation-decentralisation, and formalisation, which correspond with Henri Fayol's management principles.

The literature showed that the most significant coordination mechanism used by ECCD centre directors include the use of ECCD centre routines, performance improvement plans and schedules, rules and regulations, codes of ethics for behavioural control and performance appraisal, reward systems communication networks, committee management systems, effective administrative leadership, clearly-defined aims and objectives of ECCD programmes, simplified organisation and effective chain of command, meetings and in-service training workshops, and harmonised ECCD programmes and policies.

From the literature, it was evident that the dominant controlling mechanism adopted by directors includes ensuring that the essential teaching and learning resources such as toys, play materials,



human resources, and financial resources are provided in sufficient quantity, providing instructional leadership through supervision, and vetting of learner plans and mentorship.

An in-depth investigation of the management functions of ECCD directors, however, reveals many gaps and shortcomings regarding the quality of ECCD directors' management practices. It is evident that no previous research was conducted on the management practices of ECCD directors in Ghanaian ECCD centres. This study, therefore, aims at exploring the management practices of ECCD directors in Ghana.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH PARADIGM, APPROACH, DESIGN, AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter Two, theoretical and empirical literature related to early childhood care and development, as well as management practices in educational organisations were reviewed, and the gaps in literature were identified. Chapter Three describes the research paradigm underpinning this study, the research approach used, the case study design, as well as the data collection and analysis methods used. In addition, the chapter discusses research ethics and strategies employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the research findings.

### **3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

This sub-section describes the paradigm that underpinned this study. A research paradigm describes a researcher's beliefs about what constitutes knowledge and truth (Creswell, 2014; Ghiara, 2019). Lincoln and Guba (2013) identify three interconnected elements of a research paradigm: ontology, epistemology, and methodology, which encompass the fundamental beliefs, assumptions, values, and norms that each paradigm embraces. Researchers' ontological notions inform their epistemological beliefs, which in turn influence their methodological decisions in selecting specific data collection methods (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Ontological and epistemological assumptions are briefly explained in the next paragraph.

#### **3.2.1 Ontological and epistemological assumptions**

Ontology is a paradigm that deals with reality, in other words, the way the researcher defines the truth and reality or the nature of existence (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Gray, 2014; Lincoln & Guba 2013). Epistemology, conversely, explains how researchers understand reality or what constitutes sufficient and valid knowledge within the world (Gray, 2014). It deals with questions such as "Is knowledge something that can be learned, or is it something that has to be personally

experienced?” or “How do we know what we know?” It assesses the association between the knower and what is to be known (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

### **3.2.2 Analysis of various research paradigms**

#### *3.2.2.1 Constructivist paradigm*

The constructivist paradigm is connected with the qualitative research approach, which aims at understanding the participants’ personal experiences in their natural settings. A qualitative study’s findings are usually generated through interviews, documents, and observations, and the researcher’s interpretations of these are usually used to develop contextual models or theories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

#### *3.2.2.2 Positivist paradigm*

On the contrary, proponents of positivism believe that truth is not constructed but can be discovered, while reality is objective, quantifiable, external, and directed to the truth. Truth is static, fixed, and relies on general laws (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Positivism is usually aligned with a quantitative research approach, which aims at testing theories, establishing causal relations and predictions, and controlling and generalising the results of the study obtained through surveys, questionnaires, or experiments (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

#### *3.2.2.3 Interpretivist paradigm*

The interpretivist paradigm attempts to comprehend the subjective world of people’s experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Ponelis, 2015). This paradigm tries to understand the experiences of individuals being researched and interpret how those individuals understand their environment. The primary assumption of this paradigm is that knowledge is co-constructed by the researcher and participant through their social interactions in conversations and interviews, and the researcher’s focus is on understanding the experiences of the research participants and their interpretation of their world (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Typically, a researcher who intends to conduct studies under the interpretivist paradigm admits the importance of the participant’s contextual factors rather than laws, causes, and effects for understanding their social world (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The mode of enquiry in this paradigm

is interpretive, which aims at understanding specific situations, processes, and events instead of generalising the results to a population (Tuli, 2010).

The study's epistemological, ontological and methodological underpinnings are discussed in the subsequent subsection.

### **3.2.3 Ontological and epistemological foundations of the study**

This study is based on the ontological notion that ECCD centres are not considered restrictive organisations because management practice is the product of their objective realities. With this ontological notion, ECCD centres could be considered objective social institutions with external social actors.

The aim of this study was to explore the management practices of directors at ECCD centres in Ghana. The researcher believes that the reality of director's management practices is predicated on the social interactions of key ECCD stakeholders such as parents' associations, ECCD personnel, board members, parents, and community members, as well as certain contextual factors in the social and political environment. Accordingly, the researcher contends that there is a complex system of group actions in ECCD centres, and that stakeholders continually co-create the realities of ECCD centre management practices as a result of social processes. Finally, the researcher holds the notion that the reality of ECCD directors' management practices could emerge through the researcher's interaction with several directors in their natural settings, which are ECCD centres. Therefore, in this study, the reality of ECCD directors' application of basic management principles could emerge through the researcher's interactions with these directors and interpretation of their multiple viewpoints.

This study adopted the epistemological notion that the reality of the management practices of ECCD centre directors would be jointly created by the researcher and the interview participants through data collection and the interpretation of the participants' views in a specific context. Thus, the researcher's interaction with ECCD directors on their perspectives on applying management principles in specific socio-political contexts in collaboration with key stakeholders

and the researcher's interpretation of these experiences is the social constructivist viewpoint in this study.

The researcher is convinced that insight into ECCD directors' management experiences and perceptions could be gained through analysing ECCD centres' contextual documents and interpreting views and experiences expressed through interviews with ECCD directors and board members, as these participants perform management roles and responsibilities in early childhood education settings. Based on the above notions, this study is therefore grounded on the social constructivist-interpretivist philosophy in data gathering, processing, analysis, and interpretation of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative research approach**

A research approach is the methods or techniques used to navigate the research phases from the general philosophy to in-depth methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A qualitative approach was selected for this study, and the reasons for this selection are discussed below.

Firstly, the literature review in Chapter Two revealed that very few studies had been conducted on the management practices of directors at early childhood education centres in Ghana; hence very little is known about the effectiveness of this practice. Therefore, this study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings ECCD directors ascribe to their lived managerial experiences to discover what they perceive as effective and efficient application of basic management principles at their centres. Evidence from the literature review also revealed limited research on ECCD centre directors' pre-service training in management skills and their management practices at the ECCD centres. The available literature did not clarify whether management principles are being applied effectively and efficiently by directors at ECCD centres in the Ghanaian context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Secondly, this study is exploratory in nature. Exploratory qualitative research usually poses "why", "what", or "how" research questions to allow the researcher to acquire a detailed

understanding of the phenomenon being explored (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As this study aims to explore the management practices of directors at ECCD centres in Ghana, the following questions are considered:

- i. How do ECCD centre directors apply the basic management principles in their management practices in Ghana?
- ii. How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?
- iii. How do the directors organise ECCD centre activities?
- iv. How do the directors coordinate management activities with the centre's internal and external stakeholders?
- v. How do the directors maintain control in the ECCD centre?

Thirdly, the researcher in this study aimed to discover ECCD directors' feelings, lived experiences and thought processes regarding the application of basic management principles at ECCD centres, which is impossible by using a conventional quantitative research approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Adopting a qualitative approach would enable the researcher to explore ECCD centre directors' management experiences in their natural settings and to interpret the meanings they ascribe to their experiences. Thus, the qualitative approach could allow the researcher to gain insights into participants' multiple experiences and make sense of directors' management experiences and the researcher's interpretation of these.

Finally, because the qualitative research approach mainly aims at an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences and the researcher's interpretation of meanings participants ascribe to their experiences, the researcher usually plays an active role in data collection and interpretation of findings. This implies that the qualitative research approach produces findings linked to the researcher's sifting and interpretation of participants' viewpoints (Hoy & Adams, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

In this study, the choice of the qualitative research approach was guided by the social constructivist-interpretivist philosophical foundations of the study (Glesne, 2015). Rich and detailed descriptions also provided complete and thorough interpretations of the participants' experiences. Hence, using a qualitative research approach was deemed most suitable for a better

understanding of lived experiences of ECCD directors' management practices at their centres in Ghana.

#### *3.3.1.1 Advantages of a qualitative research approach*

The justification for utilising a qualitative research approach for this study is consistent with Creswell and Creswell (2018), who identified the following advantages:

- i. Using a qualitative research approach allows the researcher to discover an accurate and detailed account of phenomena, practices, situations, environments, procedures, and techniques, of a group or an individual.
- ii. Using a qualitative research approach allows the researcher to obtain new and detailed understandings about a particular event, fact, occurrence and the issues surrounding the phenomenon being explored.
- iii. Using a qualitative research approach allows the researcher to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of practices, policies, and systems of procedures of the phenomenon being studied.
- iv. A qualitative research approach utilises data-gathering methods suitable for studying the multifaceted nature of novel experiences.
- v. A qualitative research approach permits the enquirer to investigate the research participants' experiences in-depth.
- vi. A qualitative research approach permits the researcher to observe the case study interviewees as key data sources faithfully.
- vii. Adopting a qualitative research approach permits the enquirer to collect information within the physical location of the research participants, with minimal interruption of the physical environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

#### *3.3.1.2 Disadvantages of a qualitative research approach*

Using a qualitative research approach also presents some disadvantages, which researchers should be aware of. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) identify the following disadvantages of using a qualitative research approach:

- i. A qualitative research approach process is a time-consuming process.

- ii. The researcher's personal experience and knowledge could limit interpretations which might influence observations and conclusions because the process explores individual social interactions for data collection. Consequently, interviews frequently tend to deviate from the main issue of the study.
- iii. A qualitative research approach cannot be used to study causality because the process needs considerable planning to ensure accurate findings.
- iv. The nature of qualitative data does not provide the opportunity to carry out statistical analysis. Accordingly, its findings are based on participants' and researcher's opinions and judgements.
- v. In addition, since all qualitative research is distinct, there are difficulties associated with the transferability of its findings because findings are perspective-based, sometimes leaving out context sensitivities and concentrating more on meanings and experiences.
- vi. With regard to the research method, qualitative research uses a purposively selected smaller sample size, making it difficult to generalise the findings to the general population.
- vii. The researcher's prior experience can potentially influence the data collection, analysis, and interpretation if not checked well and can pose credibility and trustworthiness issues to the outcome of the study.
- viii. Some participants may have been influenced previously, which can affect the research outcome.
- ix. Some contextual evidence may be omitted.
- x. The research participants may not be representative of the larger population.
- xi. The researcher can be biased in the analysis of observations.
- xii. The researcher's presence can change participants' feelings and moods to some degree, and any data collected may be skewed.

In qualitative research, diverse qualitative research designs exist, namely, case study phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory. The above research designs vary in terms of research purpose, focus, data collection methods, and data analysis (Creswell & Creswell,



2018). This study uses a case study to understand the phenomenon being studied. A discussion of a case study as a research design is presented in the next section to underscore its suitability.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Yin (2018) asserts that a case study design is suitable when using a qualitative research approach because it allows the researcher to do a detailed study on the phenomenon of interest in a natural setting. This study uses a case study design due to its flexibility to various environments, procedures, groups and individuals. In addition, it allows the researcher to interact with participants through questions and answers to gain deep insights into multiple meanings that the participants assign to their ECCD centre management experiences.

#### **3.4.1 Rationale for using a case study design**

The following are the reasons for utilising a case study design for this study:

- i. Firstly, the study aims to explore directors' management practices at early childhood education centres in Ghana. Accordingly, using a case study design allows the researcher to study, probe and accurately explain ECCD directors' lived experiences at their centres. The case study design assists in deeply engaging ECCD directors in their individual settings during interviews (Yin, 2018).
- ii. Furthermore, a case study design permits the researcher to triangulate various data-gathering strategies, specifically interviews and document reviews, to gain insights into ECCD directors' lived experiences of management practices at their centres. With the above qualitative tools, the researcher may gain complete insight into ECCD directors' lived experiences regarding management practices at ECCD centres, thereby providing sufficient data to answer the study's research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018).
- iii. The case study in this research involved ECCD directors whose roles with regard to their management practices were studied in multiple ECCD sites (sixteen centres) in five municipalities in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

- iv. This study's exploratory and descriptive nature required an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences in their natural environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018).
- v. A case study design was most suitable for this research primarily because the study sought to explore the current shared lived experiences of ECCD directors in a natural setting, making it necessary for the researcher to interact with the directors at their centres in order to gain in-depth insights into their lived experiences with regard to their management practices (Yin, 2018). Furthermore, it allows the researcher to triangulate interviews with document reviews to gather data on contextual factors influencing directors' management practices.
- vi. In addition, since this study seeks to explore the current situation of directors' management practices at ECCD centres in Ghana through exemplary case sites, a case study design could make it possible for the evidence of management practices to be traced at the case sites (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018).
- vii. The case study design is appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to gather rich and thick data in a multi-dimensional manner, as the case study approach can explore the complexity of social truths that emerge from various viewpoints held by different ECCD directors. More so, it significantly contributes to collecting detailed information on the directors' management practices to analyse, synthesise and evaluate data so that the findings can be used to develop a framework for the effective management of ECCD centres. Therefore, the case study design best fits this study because it allows the researcher to gain in-depth insights into ECCD centre management practices from the directors' perspective (Yin, 2018).
- viii. Finally, using a multi-site single case design allows the researcher to do case site evaluation of theoretical repetition. Data gathered using multiple case sites tend to be more believable because it is regarded as being more robust (Yin, 2018).

### 3.4.2 Limitations of a case study design

Even though this study utilised a case study design, there are limitations to this design that should be recognised and minimised to enhance the trustworthiness of the research findings. Yin (2018) acknowledges the following key limitations of a case study design:

- i. A researcher's personal biases can influence the application of logical, methodological procedures of research processes, which can affect the accuracy of research findings and conclusions and raise the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research outcomes.
- ii. Another argument against case study design is the use of a small sample size, which is usually purposively selected, making it impossible to generalise the findings to the general population of the study. It is worth noting that the goal of a case study is to expand theories. This weakness, however, can be resolved by ensuring that new understandings are possible and that people in different settings may adapt findings to their own settings (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).
- iii. Lincoln and Guba (2013) also argue that sharing personal views, contexts, and experiences by participants and researchers in a case study risks exposure, embarrassment or self-esteem loss if not handled professionally. They further assert that researchers in case studies may be discriminatory and biased simply because they are not likely to be available for verification.

Despite the above limitations of a case study design, the researcher took the following steps to ensure the rigour of the case study design.

- i. The researcher in this study employed various systematic procedures and meticulous practices during data gathering and analysis.
- ii. In resolving the problem of generalisability of case studies, the researcher tried to conduct a robust case study by sharing major lessons and suggestions for similar cases. The researcher also sought to achieve key theoretical responsibilities by using the themes

from the data to expand Fayol's Administrative Management Theory, which could replicate the study in other settings with similar contextual characteristics.

- iii. In resolving the concern about ethical issues, the researcher ensured strict adherence to ethics processes approved by the Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH) of the University of South Africa through careful planning of data collection, analysis, and presentation to minimise the inherent risk to participants. Furthermore, the researcher used an inductive approach in gathering thick and rich data from participants from which themes were formed to develop a framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana to guide practitioners' experiences (Punch, 2014).

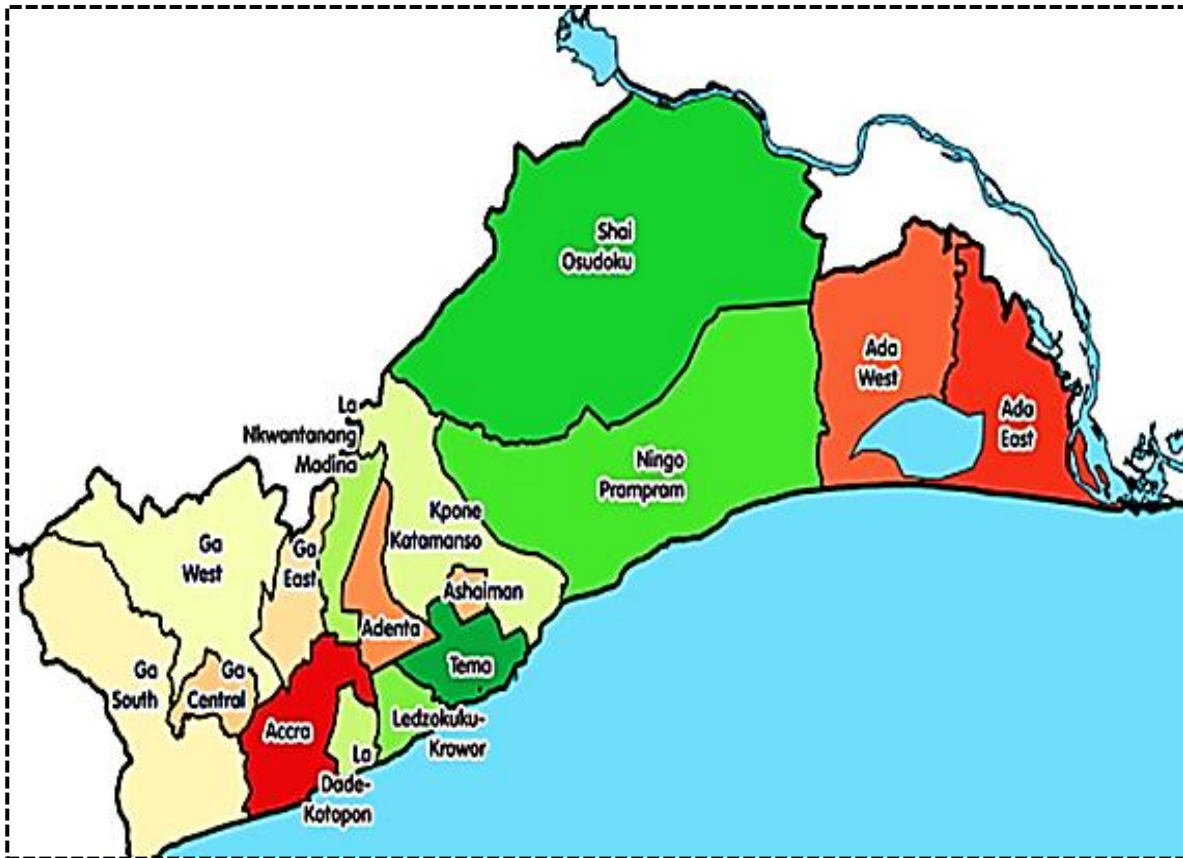
## **3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

### **3.5.1 Population**

The population for this study is composed of all the directors of ECCD centres in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Prior to selecting the sites for this study, the researcher took into account factors such as time availability and willingness to participate, as well as ensuring a diverse representation and capturing variations in management practices across the district, municipality, and metropolitan areas (Marshall et al., 2016).

### **3.5.2 Sampling of sites**

The researcher purposively selected sixteen ECCD centres, made up of eight public and eight private centres located in Accra Metropolis, Tema Metropolis, Ga South Municipality, Ga Central Municipality, and Ga East Municipality of the Greater Accra Region in Ghana to represent the ECCD centres for this study. The research sites selected have the characteristics of metropolitan, municipal, and peri-urban districts. Figure 3.2 below shows the map of the Greater Accra Region.



**Figure 3.1: Map of Greater Accra Region of Ghana and Districts**

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater\\_Accra\\_Region#Geography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Accra_Region#Geography)

There are 26 districts within the Greater Accra Region, comprising two metropolitan, 19 municipal, and five peri-urban districts. The Greater Accra Region is believed to be an information-rich site compared to other regions for the following reasons:

- i. The Greater Accra Region hosts the capital city of Ghana, all the Ministries, and the Headquarters of the Ghana Education Service. The region has the highest number of public and private ECCD centres. Available records at the Ghana Education headquarters indicate that there are 724 public kindergartens and 2520 private registered centres in the region, which gives a sum of 3244 ECCD centres within the region. The region also has the highest pre-primary enrolment rate of 94 percent (Kelly & Loïc, 2014).

- ii. The region has different types of early childhood centres, such as government-owned, privately-owned, community-based and religious-affiliated centres. This provided insights into how management practices differ across different types of centres.

### **3.5.3 Purposeful sampling**

#### *3.5.3.1 Criteria for choosing purposeful sampling.*

Based on the research topic, research design, and the aim of the study, the researcher carefully considered the following criteria and choose participants who can provide the most relevant and valuable insights for the study:

- *Relevance*: Participants were selected based on their relevance to the research question and objective. They possess perspectives that align with the specific focus of the study.
- *Maximum Variation*: In order to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences related to the research topic, participants professional roles were considered.
- *Availability and accessibility*: The research considered accessibility and willingness of the participants to participate in the study. This criterion considered factors such as participants' availability, and their willingness to provide the required information.
- *Contrasting cases*: Finally, the researcher purposively selected participants from both public and private ECCD centres with varied level of experience to represent contrasting cases or extreme variations within the research context. This helped to enhance the depth and breadth of the study findings by comparing and contrasting diverse perspectives.

### **3.5.4 Sampling by case type**

The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select twenty participants, comprised of sixteen ECCD directors and four board members, for the study.

Concept-based sampling involves information-rich participants who are willing to participate in the study (Patton, 2015). Based on the above, the selection criteria used were based on the ECCD centres' potential to provide rich information on directors' management practices to decide on samples and site selection.

#### 3.5.4.1 Sample size

The sample size used was contingent on information-rich cases. The sample for the study included sixteen ECCD directors and four board members purposively selected from the sixteen ECCD centres, as summarised in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Samples and sample size**

<b>Interview Participants</b>	<b>Number</b>
ECCD Directors	16
ECCD Board Members	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

The selection criteria considered participants' availability and willingness to participate in the study. The sample case sites included new and existing ECCD centres with student populations of at least seventy and a staff complement of at least seven. From each ECCD centre, the researcher chose one ECCD director. The researcher also purposively chose four board members, two from public ECCD centres and two from private ECCD centres who were available and willing to participate in the study.

#### 3.5.4.2 Justification for selecting only directors and board members for the study

This sub-section gives justification for excluding other stakeholders from the study. The following are the reasons for focusing the study on only directors and board members:

First, the focus of the study was on specific management practices and decisions of directors, not general practices and decisions within the centre. Directors and board members lead ECCD centres and have important decision-making power. They are responsible for setting the centre's direction and policies. They also manage the centre's resources and personnel. It is therefore important to understand their management practices in order to gain insight into how these centres function.

In addition, directors and board members have a broad view of the centre's operations. They are involved in a variety of activities, such as strategic planning, programming, financial management and staff oversight.

Furthermore, directors and board members are often in charge of the centre's overall success and long-term sustainability. They are in charge of maintaining high standards of care and education, making sure the centre is compliant with regulations, and maintaining good relationships with the parents and community. Excluding other ECCD stakeholders allowed the study to focus more on the specific challenges and responsibilities facing directors.

In addition, directors and teachers have different roles and perspectives of the centre. For example, while the role of directors and board members focuses on leading and managing the centre, teachers' role focuses on the care and education of the children. Excluding other ECCD stakeholders such as teachers would help the study to more accurately capture the specific management practices and challenges facing directors. The researcher also felt that inclusion of other stakeholders could potentially lead to a more diverse range of responses and perspectives in the study. Therefore, to ensure consistency and focus on the findings, the study excluded other important ECCD stakeholders.

The data collection instruments and data analytic techniques are discussed in subsequent subsections.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

The researcher used two data collection instruments to ensure the rigor of the study's conclusions. These were interviews triangulated with document analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015). These data collection instruments are discussed in the following sections.



### **3.6.1 Interviews**

Interviews are widely acknowledged as a regularly powerful qualitative data-gathering strategy used by qualitative researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Owen, 2014). In addition, Corbin and Strauss (2015) view interviews as the most appropriate data-gathering method frequently utilised to gain insight into the practices of individuals and the sense they make out of them.

The researcher was convinced that the interview method was most suitable because it enabled the researcher to interact with the research participants and obtain detailed information on how they perceive the effectiveness and efficiency of their application of basic management principles. The researcher gained knowledge based on the interviewees' explanations of their experiences in natural settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Interviews generated direct quotes from the participants about their feelings, beliefs, practices, opinions, experiences, and skills.

Specifically, the data collection strategy used was personal individual semi-structured interviews conducted telephonically. Two sets of interview protocols were developed one for ECCD directors and one for selected board members. The interview questions were based on the research questions (see Annexure H). The interview process involved interaction between the researcher and participants (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Before the fieldwork commenced, the researcher sought permission and informed consent from the Director General of Ghana Education Service and selected ECCD directors and board members. Consent letters were given to the participants, which they signed and returned to show their acceptance to participate in the study voluntarily. Due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), interview appointments and all interviews were conducted via telephone.

The interview format had an introduction phase, a main interview phase, and a closing phase. In the introduction stage, the researcher reassured the participants of the confidentiality of the data, informed them of the study's aim, and sought permission to record the interviews. The main part of the interview involved biographical questions followed by in-depth questions in the interview guide based on the application of basic management principles, challenges the participants face, and how they think those challenges could be resolved. The interview comprised open-ended and

probing questions to obtain comprehensive information on how ECCD directors and board members understand their managerial functions and how these functions influence their ECCD centre management efficiency and effectiveness. Clarifications were sought from both parties when necessary. Participants were given enough time to think and respond to the questions adequately.

The researcher complemented the audio recordings with field notes during the interviews. The interview with ECCD directors lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, and those with board members were between 30 and 45 minutes. ECCD directors were interviewed first, followed by the board members. The ice-breaker interviews were followed by some followed-up interviews for further clarifications during data analysis. Interviews were conducted in August, September, and October 2021. All the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed.

#### *3.6.1.1 Justification for using interviews*

The researcher found interviews to be the most appropriate research instrument in this study due to the following reasons:

- i. Semi-structured interviews provide a flexible way of gathering data, allowing the researcher to get various and in-depth answers to the questions.
- ii. The interview method permits the researchers to use probes to explain unclear answers or seek elaboration of partial responses.
- iii. Open-ended questions allow interviewees to express and clarify what is most relevant to them.
- iv. The interview protocol utilised in this study will guarantee full coverage of all the important parts of the study.
- v. The use of open-ended interviews ensures flexibility in data collection.
- vi. Interviews allow the interviewer to create comprehensive data due to interactions with participants.
- vii. Interviews can create in-depth accounts of the event being explored.
- viii. In-depth interviews allow the researcher to interact with interviewees, mutually dialogue to access their experiences and settings, and probe for clarification when in doubt of any issues during the discussion on the subject matter being explored.

- ix. Interviews permit the enquirer to be an active participant and generator of data, allowing for verbatim recording of answers.
- x. Semi-structured interviews are most suitable for topics that demand open-ended questions and explanatory responses.
- xi. Interviews permit body language cues to be observed and interpreted; accordingly, the information obtained can be validated for genuineness.

#### *3.6.1.2 Limitations of interviews*

The interview method of data collection has some inherent limitations that the researcher attempted to minimise. Firstly, the nature of the researcher's questioning can be influenced by the researcher's prior knowledge and bias, questioning style, and how responses are heard. Consequently, the researcher controlled his own biases, choice of vocabulary, and cultural norms to avoid imposing his views on the interviewees' beliefs. The second limitation of the interview method is that the researcher cannot observe the participants directly in their daily activities. The researcher is therefore denied the opportunity to observe the participants' previous experiences, which would allow the researcher to gain more insights into participants' ethnographical contexts (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2014).

#### **3.6.2 Document analysis**

Records in the form of documents can generate extensive data with high trustworthiness (Wach, Ward, & Jacimovic, 2013). Unlike observations and interviews, document analysis generates effortlessly obtainable data devoid of participants' manipulation (Wood, Sebar & Vecchio, 2020). In addition, using document review does not require responses from participants that can pose issues of misinformation on the event being explored. The use of document analysis as a data collection strategy provided both contextual and background evidence to the study, enabling the researcher to use the data from documents reviews to triangulate with interviews by cross-checking and verifying facts during the interviews process (Wood, Sebar & Vecchio, 2020). The researcher in this study also utilised official records from ECCD centres to authenticate the information obtained from the interviews.

The centre directors' consent was sought telephonically before requesting official documents through email. These documents included head teachers' handbooks, ECCD curricula and standards, Early Childhood Care and Development Policy (2019), Early Childhood Education Policy Framework (2020), meeting minutes, reports, and performance improvement plans (see Annexure I). ECCD directors were requested to sign and stamp all documents for authentication. The contents of these documents relevant to this study were analysed.

#### *3.6.2.1 Justification for using document analysis*

In this study, document analysis was utilised to triangulate the interviews because of the following reasons:

- i. Document analysis allows researchers to select rather than collect data, making it less time-consuming and more efficient than surveys.
- ii. Document analysis appears to be less costly than surveys and other methods because it has been collected already for the researcher to evaluate the quality of its contents.
- iii. Besides, the researcher's personal biases do not influence the data collection process when using the document analysis method because documents cannot react to feelings and expressions as the case may be during interviews. This implies that reflexivity is typically not a problem in utilising documents for research purposes.
- iv. In addition, when using document analysis, the researcher's presence does not influence the phenomenon being studied, making it suitable for repeated reviews.
- v. Inserting precise names, making references, and giving particulars of events make qualitative researchers adopt document analysis as the most preferred data collection method (Yin, 2018).
- vi. Finally, because documents cover an extended period, many events, and many settings, they provide broad coverage (Yin, 2018).

#### *3.6.2.2 Disadvantages of document analysis*

Despite the numerous advantages of document analysis, the following limitations are associated with its use, which the researcher guarded against.

- i. The documents may be falsified, incorrect, and unobtainable, affecting the research outcome's trustworthiness.

- ii. Records may be complicated, poorly kept, and incongruent, and obtaining them could be frustrating.
- iii. The main limitations of document analysis as far as this study is concerned were availability and accessibility as the researcher was limited to only available and accessible documents such as policy documents and some official records such as budget. Some documents were intentionally blocked from being accessed, making retrieving difficult.
- iv. The purpose for which some documents are prepared may differ from a particular study's intended aim and cannot help answer the research questions.
- v. An incomplete gathering of documents can lead to a biased selection, making it difficult to obtain detailed information on the organisation (Yin, 2018).

To overcome the above limitations, the researcher adopted techniques such as document authentication or verification to obtain useful documents related to the study. Documents should be regarded as located products rather than immovable and unchanging, and are created in a social environment and are always to be viewed as shared social products. Thus, deciding how documents are used in controlled environments, that is, how they function, should be the focus of any qualitative research. In adopting document analysis as a data collection tool, the researcher would observe the relationship between document production, consumption, and content (Owen, 2014). Furthermore, document analysis is usually triangulated with other qualitative instruments to enhance the trustworthiness of the research outcome. To minimise the limitations posed by document analysis, the researcher used more appropriate documents that can generate information to answer the research questions. In addition, in choosing the documents for this study, the researcher confirmed their existence, usefulness, and accessibility and ensured that ECCD centre authorities authenticated them. Also, the researcher considered the primary aim of each document, the context in which it was prepared, and its expected users. Finally, throughout the study, the researcher was conscious of being a subjective interpreter of the contents of the documents, so efforts were made to ensure that the data analysis and interpretation processes were transparent and vigorous to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

The techniques used to analyse the data from the interviews and document review are explained in the subsequent sections.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that qualitative data analysis techniques may include familiarisation with the data before the analysis phase. In analysing the data collected for this study, the researcher used a thematic analysis technique to analyse the interview data and a content analysis technique for document analysis. The research followed the following procedures for analysing qualitative data, as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018):

- i. The researcher transcribed all the audio-recorded interviews word for word directly following the interview process to maintain the interviewee's style and form of expression. Common emerging ideas were noticed and analysed, which directed modifications to the interview questions for the rest of the interviewees.
- ii. The researcher used QSR Nvivo 20.2 software to develop a codebook and data analysis matrix, which assisted in identifying code frequencies and basic themes.
- iii. The researcher then examined all the interview transcripts and documents collected and wrote down broad ideas in the margins of the data analysis matrix table. This was done on all the key and minor topics, which were subsequently condensed as codes.
- iv. The researcher formulated codes and categories by examining the most descriptive words.
- v. The categories were condensed to arrive at basic and broad themes. Data reduction techniques of using categorisation and coding allowed for detailed descriptions and interpretations of interview participants in a more convenient way and were also used as the foundation for arriving at the findings and conclusions of the study.

The following section discusses the measures adopted by the researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of the study's outcomes.

### **3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

This study adopted a qualitative methodology that necessitates the data being trustworthy/credible. Hence, the researcher ensured that all descriptions, findings, and conclusions were credible and truthful (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Specifically, the researcher

ensured that participating ECCD centres were from the same region with similar contextual characteristics to guarantee comparable findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher triangulated the data collected from ECCD directors with those from the board members. Similarly, data from the interviews and document analysis were triangulated for authentication (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Loh, 2013; Yin, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (2013) recommend four trustworthiness measures: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria are described in the following subsection to illustrate how they were utilised in this study.

### **3.8.1 Credibility**

This study was conducted through a social constructivist-interpretivist lens. This research paradigm recognises that both the researcher and participants engage in social interaction and, in the process, co-create knowledge of reality. Unlike quantitative research, this means there is no objective truth external to participants' contexts to compare research findings. As such, through member-checking, the researcher ensured that interviewees could access the interview transcripts after transcriptions to enable them to confirm their responses. Furthermore, the researcher also stated his positionality, which addressed the researcher's possible biases during data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Shenton, 2014; Tong Flemming, McInnes, Oliver & Craig, 2012).

In addition, the research used debriefing with fellow PhD candidates to increase the credibility of the research. This means that during the research process, the researcher also sought support from fellow PhD candidates by presenting findings to them. The quality of the findings was further improved through feedback from the researcher's supervisor (Pitney & Parker, 2009). The researcher also followed the interview protocol and data collection procedures approved by the CEDU REC of UNISA. The researcher used the respondents' words in direct quotations as part of the data presentation to ensure that respondents' opinions constitute part of the thick descriptions of data.

### **3.8.2 Transferability**

In ensuring the transferability of the research findings, the researcher provided enough contextual and background information about the case sites in the report to enable readers to compare it with other cases (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Noble & Smith, 2015; Yin, 2015).

### **3.8.3 Dependability**

The researcher provided a rich and detailed explanation of the research process to ensure that similar findings are obtainable in settings with similar contexts. This allows for a clear understanding of the research process followed throughout the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Krippendorf, 2013; Silverman, 2016). The final thesis will contain illustrative excerpts from the interviews and document analysis to guarantee rich data descriptions to enable an understanding of the study's context and interpret the data presented.

### **3.8.4 Confirmability**

The researcher triangulated various information sources such as interviews and document reviews and explained the data analysis processes in detail so that other researchers could verify the findings and ensure their confirmability. During the study, the researcher also recorded incidents that occurred during the fieldwork in a reflexive journal as recommended by (Anney, 2014). This serves as an audit trail to help other researchers to verify the entire research process. The researcher believes that detailed descriptions of the contexts of the study provided would guide other researchers to judge context similarities or differences.

## **3.9 REFLEXIVITY**

Scholars have acknowledged the total avoidance of qualitative researchers' personal biases in the research process as one of the major limitations of qualitative research because the interpretation of findings is left to the discretion of the qualitative researcher (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2014). It is necessary to establish what kind of relationship must exist between the qualitative researcher and the study participants. Furthermore, the viewpoints and prior experiences the researcher brings to the enquiry process should be considered.



An unequal power relation exists between the researcher and the participants, which can influence the collaborative nature of the qualitative research process due to inherent social power variations occasioned by social relations. In qualitative studies, researchers could influence participants into a position of trust with the researcher since they hold some control over the interview process to satisfy their interests rather than being responsive to participants through conversational interviews to empower them. Also, the researcher inevitably interprets the data from the participants (Mariam & Julian, 2017).

A researcher's prior experiences, perspectives, personal values, and biases can influence the enquiry process, from data collection through analysis to interpretation, and ultimately affect the study results (Creswell, 2014; Mariam & Julian, 2017). It is, therefore, essential to elucidate the researcher's perspectives, previous knowledge, and importance attached to the phenomenon being studied. Clarifying the researcher's position assists in understanding the study's perspective (Mariam & Julian, 2017).

For this qualitative research, the researcher safeguarded against personal biases that could influence data collection, analysis, and interpretation of ECCD centre directors' management experiences in Ghana, by doing the following:

- i. As a professionally trained teacher, the researcher was familiar with some issues affecting quality education delivery in Ghana. The researcher attempted not to let personal experience in education management influence their judgement, but instead capitalised on their own management experiences to understand ECCD directors' management experiences at ECCD centres.
- ii. Furthermore, the supervisor's reviews controlled the researcher's association and familiarity with contextual challenges affecting Ghana's education sector.
- iii. The researcher's prior experience assisted in understanding the management experiences of directors at ECCD level.
- iv. The researcher stringently adhered to the approved ethics practices and tried to be careful, precise, and unbiased throughout the research process.
- v. The researchers also engaged in self-analysis to keep personal biases in check.

### **3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical principles and rules guided the researcher's conduct towards ECCD authorities, directors, and board members during this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Zegwaard, 2015). Hence, every ethical principle of UNISA was meticulously observed. The researcher applied and received a certificate of ethical clearance from CEDU REC, UNISA, prior to the commencement of data collection (see Annexure D). The researcher obtained official permission from the Ghana Education Service's Head Quarters, Division of Early Childhood Education, and approval was granted to carry out the research in its ECCD centres in the selected Metropolitan and Municipal districts in the Greater Accra Region. Similarly, the researcher sent official letters to ECCD centre to request their permission to participate in the study. In all, informed consent was obtained, and permission to conduct the study was granted by the authorities from the Ghana Education Service, Division of ECCD (see Annexures B and C respectively). The following subsections discuss how the researcher observed participant-related ethical issues during the study.

#### **3.10.1 Informed consent**

Sarantakos (2013) and Scott (2013) explain that informed consent is a contract between the researcher and the participants informing them about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, risks and benefits associated with the study, and the confines of confidentiality before they accept to partake in the research.

In this study, letters of consent were given to ECCD directors and board members who signed and returned them before participation (see Annexure F). Furthermore, participants were made aware that should they feel like withdrawing from the study at any point in the research process, they are free to do so without any consequence. Moreover, through the request letters, ECCD directors and board members were duly aware of the aim of the study and the use of the findings (see Annexures D and E, respectively).

#### **3.10.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

The researcher assured the participants that anonymity and confidentiality of their information were ensured and that only the researcher and the supervisor could access it. The researcher

ensured that hard copies of participants' information were shredded and electronic copies were permanently deleted from the computer's hard drive through Microsoft software. Furthermore, the names of the ECCD centres, directors, and board members were coded to avoid revealing their identity. ECCD centres were coded as ECCD centre 1: Public, and ECCD centre 2: Private, while directors were coded as P1: Public Director and P2: Private Director, respectively. In addition, the researcher assured the ECCD directors and the board members that the information obtained from them would be used for the sole purpose of this study.

### **3.10.3 Harm and fairness**

In this study, the researcher was fair to all participants and respected their privacy and dignity throughout the data collection process. Specifically, the researcher was cautious about the prevalence of COVID-19 at the time of data collection. The researcher observed all COVID-19-related restriction protocols and used telephone interviews instead of face-to-face interviews and emails for document gathering from various ECCD centres, to prevent participants from any physical and mental harm.

### **3.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the study's social constructivist-interpretivist paradigm that provides the philosophical base for the research. The chapter also discussed the qualitative research approach used for the research. The chapter also discussed the case study design and the use of interviews, and document analysis for data collection. The study's data analysis techniques were also described. Furthermore, this chapter explained the researcher's reflexivity and the measures to ensure rigor and the trustworthiness of the study's outcomes. Finally, the chapter ended with a presentation of ethical considerations. The findings and interpretation of this study will be presented and discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines management principles of planning, organising, coordinating and controlling applied by Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) directors in their respective centres. A thematic analysis technique was used to analyse the data generated from the interviews (Clarke, Braun, Terry & Hayfield, 2019), and a content analysis technique was used for data from the document analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2018). The main documents reviewed included headteachers' handbooks, ECCD curricula and standards, minutes of meetings, reports, and performance improvement plans retrieved from the centres. The discussion that follows starts with the profiles of the directors. The second part of the analysis explores how ECCD centre directors apply management principles of planning in their centres. The third part analyses data on how ECCD centre directors apply management principles of organising in their centres, and this is followed by how ECCD centre directors apply management principles of coordination with their internal and external stakeholders. Data on what the directors do in maintaining control in their ECCD centres are also analysed. In each section, key themes are identified from the interview transcripts and documents reviewed, while sample quotes from the participants and extracts from the reviewed documents are presented to elaborate on those themes.

#### **4.2 DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Table 4.1 presents the biographical information of the sixteen directors and four board members interviewed for this study. The table comprises eight public ECCD centre directors, eight private ECCD centre directors, and four board members. The table illustrates that the number of staff in ECCD centres ranges from seven to 50. The number of children in ECCD centres ranges from 70 to 3020. Nine of the sixteen directors have previously held positions as classroom teachers before assuming the director position. The data revealed that six participants previously held assistant headteacher positions. The lowest educational qualification held by the participants was a diploma, while the highest qualification was MPhil/MBA. The majority of the directors have attained a diploma in basic education. Out of the sixteen participants, ten have attained a diploma in basic education. Only one person has a Masters in an educational-related programme. One

participant holds a Master of Business Administration degree, and four hold Masters degrees in programmes unrelated to education.

**Table 4.1: Detailed profiling of participants' in-depth interviews**

Participants code names	Type of Centre [Private/Public]	Number of Students	Number of staff	Previous Positions Held	Educational Qualifications
P1	Public	3020	32	Assistant Head Teacher & Headmaster	B.Ed. Education Ghanaian Language
P 2	Public	634	44	Class Teacher & Head Master	Teachers' Certificate "A" & BSc Marketing
P 3	Public	500	42	Assistant Head Teacher & Headmaster	Bachelor of Psychological Foundation in Education
P 4	Private	70	7	Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher	Diploma in Basic Education
P 5	Public	830	43	Assistant Head Teacher	Diploma in Basic Education, MPhil in Finance
P 6	Public	1314	23	Subject Teacher	B ED in Basic Education.
P 7	Private	95	10	Caterer	Certificate in Basic Education, NVTI Certificate
P 8	Private	128	7	Teacher	Diploma in Business Management
P 9	Private	1250	28	Banker, HR, Customer Service	Diploma in Basic Education, MBA-HRM option
P 10	Public	1000	50	Class Teacher & Headmistress	Master's in Business Administration
P 11	Private	500	42	Assistant Head & Head Teacher	Diploma in Basic Education
P 12	Public	400	28	Assistant Head	Diploma in Basic Education, MPhil Finance
P 13	Private	453	28	Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher	B.Ed. Basic Education
P 14	Private	217	20	Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher	Certificate in Child Development Associate, HND

P 15	Public	735	37	Assistant Head & Head Master	in Secretaryship and Management Studies B.Ed. Basic Education – Ghanaian Language, Ewe, Master in Education in Management Certificate in Basic Education
P 16	Private	438	31	Teacher, Head teacher	

### Board Members

Participants code names	Centre Type	Position
P 17	Private	Board Member
P 18	Public	Board Member
P 19	Private	Board Member
P 20	Public	Board Member

The main question the study sought to address was, how do ECCD centre directors in Ghana apply basic management principles in their management practices?

The sub-research questions are as follows:

- i. How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?
- ii. How do the directors organise ECCD centre activities?
- iii. How do the directors coordinate management activities with the ECCD centres' internal and external stakeholders?
- iv. How do the directors maintain control in ECCD centres?

### 4.3. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF ECCD CENTRE DIRECTORS

This research aimed to explore the application of basic management principles by directors at ECCD centres. The study's findings are presented in Table 4.2 based on the following four primary management function's themes that emerged from the data: planning practices, organising practices, coordination practices, and directing practices.

**Table 4.2: Research questions, major themes and sub-themes**

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Major themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
i. How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?	Planning practices of ECCD centre directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews of mission, vision, and guiding principles.</li> <li>• Assessment of ECCD centre-community needs.</li> <li>• Development of strategic goals, objectives and strategies.</li> <li>• Formulating ECCD centre improvement plans.</li> <li>• Planning for monitoring and evaluation of the improvement plan.</li> </ul>
ii. How do the directors organise ECCD centre activities?	Organising practices of ECCD centre directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing instructional and administrative leadership.</li> <li>• Establishing ECCD centre governance and management structures.</li> <li>• Organising human, instructional material and financial resources.</li> <li>• Developing ECCD centre policies.</li> <li>• Assigning duties and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Ensuring strong parent-community-ECCD centre ties.</li> <li>• Organising professional staff development.</li> <li>• viii. Providing an appropriate ECCD learning environment.</li> </ul>
iii. How do the directors coordinate management activities with the ECCD centres' internal and external stakeholders?	Coordination practices of ECCD centre directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination through the use of ECCD centre routines.</li> <li>• Coordination through the use of performance improvement plans and schedules.</li> <li>• Coordination through the use of behavioural control and performance appraisals.</li> <li>• Coordination through the use of reward systems.</li> <li>• Coordination through communication networks.</li> <li>• Coordination through a committee system of management.</li> <li>• Coordination through leadership.</li> <li>• Coordination through clearly defined aims and objectives.</li> <li>• Coordination through simplified organisation and effective chain of command.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination through the use of meetings and in-service training workshops.</li> <li>• Coordination through harmonised ECCD programmes and policies.</li> </ul>
iv. How do the directors maintain control in ECCD centres?	Controlling practices of ECCD centre directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECCD outcome control through performance improvement planning.</li> <li>• Control of ECCD stakeholders' behaviours and actions.</li> <li>• Control by strategic ECCD staff recruitment, placement and continuing professional development.</li> <li>• Control by belief systems of ECCD centres.</li> </ul>

Source: Field data, 2021

#### **4.3.1. Planning practices of ECCD centre directors**

The first sub-research question the study sought to answer was: “How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?” The focus of this objective was to understand ECCD centre directors’ planning perspectives. Data was gathered through semi-structured interview sessions with the directors and selected board members. The interview data was triangulated with reviews of documents related to ECCD centre planning.

From the analysis of the interview data, the following sub-themes were identified by the researcher as the various phases of ECCD centre planning activities shared by the participants: reviews of mission, vision, and guiding principles; assessments of ECCD centre-community needs; development of strategic goals, objectives; development of tactics and implementation plan; and development of information systems. The sub-themes are presented in the following sub-sections.

##### *4.3.1.1 Reviews of mission, vision, and guiding principles*

The study found that some participants mentioned reviews of their centres' mission, vision, and guiding principles through research and self-analysis when undertaking ECCD centre planning. At the end of the self-analysis process, the renewed mission, vision, and guiding principles



helped centres articulate and document their reason for being, aspirations, core beliefs, and philosophies. This practice seems to align with the organisational planning process that usually begins with vision and mission statements that serve as a navigational tool toward which the ECCD centres align their strategies to reach their desired goals.

In addition to the interviews, ECCD centre performance improvement plans were reviewed and evaluated. The study found that few ECCD centre improvement plans aligned their centre's mission and vision with national ECCD priority areas. The national ECCD priority areas captured in some of the planning documents include access and participation, quality, management efficiency, and pupils' learning tools. For example, some of the vision and mission statements in a sample plan read: "To help pupils achieve their full potential", while the mission statement read "Provision of a stimulating environment to learn and act responsibly".

Alignment of ECCD centre management planning to centres' visions, missions, and national priorities is one of the main characteristics of quality ECCD setting planning. From the review of samples of the ECCD centre improvement plans, it was observed that most of the sample plans analysed did not explicitly link their centre's mission and vision with the national ECCD priority areas. This finding suggests that while some participants seemed to be aware of the ECCD centre's planning principle of aligning the ECCD centre's mission and vision with the national ECCD priorities, the majority of the centres appeared unaware of this important characteristic of quality planning processes, suggesting some of the centre directors appeared to be lacking knowledge in planning.

Based on this finding, it can be concluded that due to the non-alignment of some of the ECCD centre improvement plans regarding visions and missions with the national ECCD priorities, some of them seem not technically sound. Consequently, implementing such proposed ECCD centre performance improvement plans may not lead to the achievement of the national ECCD priorities.

The following sample quotes captured experiences shared by some participants:

*As a public setting, we are required to prepare a performance improvement plan, which we use to apply for a Capitation Grant. So, we use the planning framework from the Ministry of Education. ...I review the mission, vision and fundamental aims of my centre, because they*

*articulate why the centre exists, what it wants to create, and what it considers to be the fundamental purpose of early childhood education...I do this by examining whom the ECCD centre serves, what services the centre provides, how the service is provided, and I review the key ideals, beliefs and values that the centre stands for... Our interventions are targeted at children's improvement in English Language, Mathematics and Integrated Science. We have scheduled time for our appraisal meetings that favours everybody. Sometimes, we involve SISO, the PTA Chairman and the SMC Chairman during our self-study meetings. The self-study report is submitted to the District Director when we apply for a Capitation Grant. We are usually guided by the new KG curriculum, Head Teachers Handbook as well as Teachers Resource Packs. My teachers and non-teaching staff are very cooperative during our self-review meetings... (P10: Public Director).*

*...The centre's vision and mission focused on three areas; one is academic work which is the main thing. Then we look at the children's social lives as well; so, we plan activities that will let them to grow socially well and then lastly, we look at their physical growth... when the members of the community are aware of the vision and mission, they will help us achieve them. We evaluate our performance using our mission and vision. We ask ourselves whether we are achieving why we are in existence ... (P14: Private Director)*

*I usually call a meeting with my staff during which we review our performance, state improvement visions and what we should do to improve our children's performance. Currently, we don't have a functional PTA and SMC. We are now trying to form the SMC. My husband and I take most of the decisions when we are planning for the centre, but in case there is something my teachers need to know, I inform them. (P9: Private Director).*

From the above-captured interview quotes, it emerged that some ECCD centres are becoming more aware that ECCD centre planning begins with a review of their centres' vision, mission, and guiding principles, which is in line with a good planning process. Only a few of the ECCD centres involved in this study showed evidence of knowledge about good planning processes by reviewing their centres' mission and vision with some key stakeholders.

The findings revealed some positive characteristics of planning where some ECCD centres involved school improvement support officers and district directors of education in their review process, suggesting using some level of external support as planning inputs. Some centres also relied on planning frameworks, curricula, and curriculum materials provided by the Ministry of Education during planning. These findings suggest an acceptable use of external supports as inputs for ECCD centre planning and are likely due to the relevant directors' knowledge of the need to use external support during planning. In addition, at most centres, the directors lead the self-review process with support from teachers and unit heads, the Parents Association chairperson, and the school management committee chairperson. These seemed to serve as internal support available to these centres. The study further found that in some centres, time was

allocated for planning and regular meetings, which appears to be a formal structure established for planning.

The findings also revealed that at some centres, directors do self-review without engaging internal and external stakeholders, which suggests insufficient use of external and internal support. For example, some directors appear to hold themselves accountable for planning, suggesting inadequate delegation of planning roles and responsibilities to other key stakeholders. It was also discovered that parents, community members, and school management committee members seem not to be playing an active role in the ECCD centre self-review process. This finding implies limited use of structured planning frameworks and planning inputs, likely due to the directors' ignorance of the existence of such structures or lack of accountability or neglect.

#### *4.3.1.2 Assessment of ECCD centre-community needs*

One major theme worth reporting is comprehensive needs assessments. As applied in the ECCD centre planning process, needs assessment is a systematic method for determining ECCD centre-community needs by examining their nature and causes, focusing on defining the centre's performance problems. From the analysis of interview data, the study found that some of the ECCD centres conduct research by collecting ECCD centre data and the demographic profiles of parents. Participants revealed that this phase of the planning process helps them to carry out an internal and external needs assessment of their centres to determine the gaps between what currently is and what ought to be. The study found that needs assessments address ECCD centre's challenges and shortcomings. Participants indicated that performance gap analyses document the current reality in the context of the centre's mission and vision and stakeholders' values and priorities that justify the need to step up ECCD centre planning processes.

The following interview excerpts captured the views of some participants about what their ECCD centre needs assessments entail.

*...To get a clear picture of the centre, it is also necessary to collect information on each key domain and its components, also called indicators. This information is collected in numbers that are called data. Once this is done, the core subject scores, such as Mathematics, English language and Integrated Science is compared with previous years serving as the baseline to determine whether the centre is on the path of improvement... ...The ultimate goal of this self-*

*analysis is to identify the centre's key gaps and challenges that form the strategic priorities to be addressed... (P10: Public Director)*

*...In this centre I usually review children's performance in the previous term and if I notice some were performing poorly, I invite the teacher concerned and we plan how to help that child...I don't involve parents in this review session, but when they bring suggestions, I take it into consideration... (P 13: Private Director)*

*...Appraisal of the centre's performance through SWOT analysis helps us to know our strengths and weaknesses. Root cause analysis is a way of detecting the centre's needs that must be addressed during the centre's performance improvement planning and development priorities. We also collect data on children's place of residence and occupations of their parents. This helps us to plan for access... (P1: Public Director).*

From the findings, there was some evidence to suggest that the assessment of ECCD centre-community needs focuses to some extent on external reviews through data gathering on the demographic profile of parents and internal review components that include the centre's data analysis by reviewing the centre's performance in access and participation, quality, management efficiency, and pupils' learning tools, including the appraisal of children's academic performance. The findings suggest that some centres are aware of the need to conduct ECCD centre-community needs assessment as a necessary step in planning.

Some of the positive ECCD centre-community needs assessment practices that emerged from the data were that the needs assessment focused on children's learning and reviewed some of the centre's internal and external needs. Despite the above positive needs assessment practices, limiting internal needs assessment data to only reviews of children's performance and limiting external needs assessment data to only the demographic profile of parents suggest reliance on limited quantitative data sources instead of using quantitative and qualitative data sources to ensure data triangulation. Furthermore, the needs assessment data collection and analysis team appeared to involve only centre directors, teachers, school improvement officers, district directors, Parents Association chairpersons, and school management committee chairpersons. Their roles are largely confined to discussing children's academic performance and how to improve it. The above finding implies the non-existence of a system to facilitate collaborative work between ECCD centres, parents, and community members in identifying their ECCD needs and addressing them through participation in ECCD programme planning practices. The

following sub-section presents an analysis of how ECCD centre directors develop strategic goals as a step the in the planning process.

#### *4.3.1.3 Development of strategic goals, objectives and strategies*

It has emerged from the interview data that some ECCD centres define goals and objectives to be achieved by implementing improvement plans. The study found that the improvement goals shared by the majority of the centres include improving access and participation, improving quality of teaching and learning, improving management efficiency, providing in-service training, and provision of pupils' learning tools. The study found that a valuable planning practice of most ECCD centres is the development of objectives that serve as tangible strategies necessary to accomplish the strategic goals. From the analysis of the interview data, the study found that some ECCD centres develop strategic goals when planning ECCD centre activities to come up with solutions to the prioritised needs through specific strategies. Some centres also indicated that developing specific strategic goals help them to identify factors contributing to each priority area as they provide remedies in the form of strategies. The following quotes from the interviews shed light on the sub-theme strategic objectives development:

*So far, only the SMC chairman and PA chairman, my teachers, the School Improvement Officer (SISO) and the district director actively participate in the appraisal meetings and improvement planning... We usually meet at district, circuit, community and centre levels to appraise the performance of our centre. During such meetings, we all discuss how we can improve on the areas we did not do well. We are also informed at the meetings about district, circuit, and centre levels improvement targets for the year. For example, problems militating against quality learning are thoroughly analysed through frank and objective discussion. Realistic performance targets are set for the centres. Strategies for improving the situation are developed for the respective centres. ...The district director facilitates the district appraisal meeting; our School Improvement Support Office facilitates circuit and community-level appraisal meetings and I facilitate the centre-level appraisal meeting. We usually invite parents, the SMC Chairperson and the PTA Chairperson, opinion leaders, and members of the community, but most of the time, they don't come, especially on market days. (P 6: Public Director).*

*We set goals using the guidelines provided by the Ghana Education Service. There is national, district, circuit as well as centre goals. So, we are guided by all these when we identify poor performance, we meet and strategies as to how we can turn things around... We set goals and objectives based on the vision and mission of the centre. The mission and vision are pasted everywhere in the centre. Actually, we discuss the plan itself, and the minutes will capture that we agree that this plan should be done, after which teachers will go and put it into an action plan. (P 15: Public Director).*

From the above sample quotes, it is evident that as a corollary to identifying ECCD centres' most pressing needs, some centres set clear goals to address their needs through the improvement planning process. It was also observed that ECCD centre directors, Parents Association chairpersons, school management committee chairpersons, school improvement support officers, and teachers seem to be the main ECCD stakeholders involved in developing strategic goals and objectives. These findings suggest a limited degree of involvement of key local ECCD stakeholders.

The following sub-section presents findings and an analysis of how ECCD centre directors develop performance improvement plans.

#### *4.3.1.4 Formulating ECCD centre improvement plans*

Another sub-theme in planning worth reporting is the formulation of ECCD centre improvement plans. To ensure plans are effectively implemented, planners develop a logical framework that maps out how the priorities and the proposed objectives are identified and the strategies are linked to an implementation plan.

From the interview data, this study found that some ECCD centres prepare performance improvement plans, which help them specify actions and timelines necessary to achieve the goals and objectives, the person responsible for specific actions, and the resources needed to achieve those targets. Recounting the importance of this phase of the ECCD centre planning process, some directors said that it helps them to develop improvement plans that delineate steps and timelines necessary to achieve objectives. Below are some of the experiences shared by the interview participants:

*...with the help of my teachers, we develop an annual implementation activity plan that we implement termly and it contains our targets, objectives, start date and end date, person responsible, resources needed and expected outcomes. So, at the end of the year, I write a self-analysis report that we use for the next cycle of planning... (P12: Public Director).*

*... the centre performance improvement plan budget is prepared to access the Government of Ghana Capitation Grant; covering improving the quality of ECCD services, teaching and learning materials, administration, staff development, access, extra curriculum activities, repairs and maintenance... Implementation action plan are prepared where project milestones are established and project in-charges are assigned. Final plans are signed by the centre director, the Chair of school board and the Municipal Education Office Director approves it.....As board members, we are more concerned with planning, implementation*

*and monitoring of the ECCD centre performance improvement plan. Based on my experiences, she is doing well. However, the centre Director needs further training in budgeting. Alternatively, services of experts in planning and budgeting could be employed so as to enhance our planning... (P 18: Public Board Member)*

*We discuss the students' performance at the appraisal meetings and, together, we discuss the solutions. With the assistance from my teachers, I prepare the plan based on the circuit and district performance targets for the year. The plan contains the profile of the centre, mission and vision of the centre, objectives and goals, performance targets with their associated implementation cost, the person responsible, delivery timeline, and annual implementation action plan. The Capitation Grant supports only four priority areas. These are access and participation, quality, management efficiency and pupil's learning tools, so we make sure our priority areas do not go beyond these four, else, we cannot receive the grant. When I finish the draft plan, I sign it and then give it to SISO and SMC chairman to sign. We are required to submit the draft plan to the district office for the auditor to check if the items budgeted for is in line with what the grant will support. The auditor also checks the previous expenses. Apart from the Capitation Grant, PTA support us with their PTA levy for infrastructure development because the Capitation Grant is very small and we can only do repairs and maintenance. Sometimes the grant delays make it difficult to implement our plans. Yes, I can say this form of planning has created the opportunity for the local community members to be involved in the management of the schools... (P 6: Public Director).*

The comments captured above revealed that some ECCD centres develop a logical framework in a performance improvement plan that maps out how the identified priorities will be implemented. It was evident from the findings that some of the ECCD centres understood that effective improvement planning requires the identification of priority needs, in other words, the areas of focus that the ECCD centre regard as more important than others.

From the analysed sample of improvement plans, most centres identified key activities as interventions they intend to address as their priority needs. Another important component identified was performance indicators, which describe tangible evidence that seemed to serve as a pointer or proof that an activity has occurred. Only a few of the plans indicated expected outcomes describing the consequences or effects of the implemented activities on the children's learning outcomes. Most of the analysed plans identified resources needed and their sources as inputs required to implement the planned activities, such as time, personnel, pupils, stakeholders, teachers, and funds. The main sources of funding mentioned by most of the analysed reports were the governmental Capitation Grant, funding from Parents Associations, parents, and internally generated funds.

The findings in this sub-theme revealed the availability of some level of internal planning support to some of the ECCD centres in the form of ECCD centre management committees, teachers and caregivers, directors, and Parents Association members. Teachers were relatively engaged in planning processes in a few of these centres. In most centres, the director appeared to be the sole person guiding the planning process, while in some centres, planning committees were used for planning. In a few centres, time was allotted for planning, and regular meetings were held to discuss and plan for improvement. The above finding appeared to be the structure that guides planning activities in some of the ECCD centres.

The analysis found that in most private and a few public ECCD centres, there seemed to be a lack of procedures to assist planning. Planning teams, Parents Associations, and management boards were virtually absent. In fact, formal planning was not the practice. In addition, some public ECCD centres appeared to be engaging in the planning process solely to fulfil the Ministry of Education's statutory requirements for awarding the Government of Ghana capitation grant instead of for the centre's advancement.

Professional development was incorporated into performance improvement plans at only a few ECCD centres. In these centres, external agencies support planning through the provision of in-service training, and it has influenced staff member— positively - teachers started to engage in research through the Internet and participated in circuit and district-initiated in-service training workshops. Evidence suggests that continuous professional development was not considered in their termly plans for key ECCD stakeholders, but as and when an opportunity comes, some teachers participate in circuit and district-initiated in-service training workshops.

The study further found that the participation of ECCD management committees and Parents Associations in planning processes was limited to attending performance appraisal meetings and signing draft performance improvement plans. Furthermore, structures for soliciting additional funding sources from the community appeared not well-created; hence, their role in ECCD centre management planning had not been fully explored.



#### *4.3.1.5 Planning for monitoring and evaluation of the improvement plan*

An important component of improvement planning is the information system communicating the degree to which improvement has been attained. This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of how ECCD centres link children's learning improvement to ECCD centre planning. From the interviews, a few of the centres indicated that they created an annual action plan that shows clear and time-based targets, funding sources, responsibilities of school management committee members and other players involved in the process, key milestones, and key performance indicators. Most of the private ECCD directors revealed that even though they do not engage in formal improvement planning, they have a system to monitor their children's progress through their academic performance, changes in their attitude, and parental feedback.

This finding implies that some public centres examine and review children's records to monitor children's test results, which provides the basis for improvement planning. In some public centres, directors said they report improvement attained by pupils in the stated priority areas to school management committees and Parents Association members. From the analysis of the contents of samples of the ECCD centre improvement plans, the study found that some centres stated measures to gauge improvement plan implementation progress. Some good practices include developing a comprehensive policy on assessment, measuring attainment systematically, devising formats for plotting progress and monitoring improvement. These findings suggest that while some public centres succeeded in monitoring and evaluating ECCD outcomes, most of the analysed improvement plans did not specify a connection between the ECCD centre planning process and ECCD outcomes. The following interview excerpt captured experiences shared by some of the participants.

*At my centre I usually prepare an annual implementation action plan with my team at a meeting. We prepare an annual implementation action plan that we implement on a termly basis. In the plan we identify the centre's agreed priorities, strategies to achieve priorities, targets to focus resources on, improvement goals and objectives, expected outcomes, persons responsible, timelines, resources and their mobilisation, performance indicators and evaluation strategies, which are all part of the action plan. We also prepare the implementation budget using the approved national early childhood care and development priority areas covered by the government Capitation Grant, and we attach it as a costing sheet for approval... So, you see it is important that we all know what needs to be done, why, by whom, when, with what, how to determine that the implementation of the plan is on track and how to determine the impact of implemented activities on the intended objectives (P 10: Public Director).*

*Planning for action implementation and monitoring system during our planning process is necessary as it helps me to evaluate whether the plan has achieved the expected outcomes...In my experience, I know that if you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure and if you cannot see success, you cannot reward it. In addition, if you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure and if you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it. If you cannot recognise failure, you cannot correct it. I have observed that if you can demonstrate results, you can win stakeholder support. So, you see, continuous data gathering is the main priority of my monitoring and information system. I write termly reports to the school management committee and we use it to assess the success of our improvement plan...We even have a way of plotting children's progress graphically... (P15: Public Director).*

*For now, we don't prepare any formal plans, but my teachers prepare lesson plans before teaching. I check children's performance and compare it with their previous term. I can tell you that there have been significant changes in the attitude of the children. For example, my children can read, and blend sounds, which they were not able to do when they came initially. Some parents also give us feedback about their children's progress. I can tell you that right from crèche, nursery, KG to lower primary, we monitor the progress of our children... I have an assessment policy that guides my teachers ... (P7: Private Director).*

From the findings, it was discovered that most of the ECCD centres could not specify a connection between ECCD centre planning and ECCD outcomes, and such policies did not exist. Even though some participants revealed that improvements had been recorded, there was no evidence to back these claims. This finding suggests an absence or a relaxed accountability system at some ECCD centres. In general, it appears that most of the ECCD centres were yet to establish systems for monitoring and reporting procedures to communicate ECCD centre improvements due to the implementation of performance improvement plans to the ECCD management committee, Parents Association members, and community members.

The following section presents an analysis and interpretation of how ECCD directors apply organising principles at their centres.

#### **4.3.2 Organising practices of ECCD centre directors**

The second research question the study sought to answer is “How do ECCD directors organise ECCD centre activities?” To answer this research question, data was gathered through interviews. The findings and analysis of the interviews are presented under the following sub-themes that emerged from the data:

- i. Providing instructional and administrative leadership.
- ii. Establishing ECCD centre governance and management structures.
- iii. Organising human, instructional material and financial resources.
- iv. Developing ECCD centre policies.
- v. Assigning duties and responsibilities.
- vi. Ensuring strong parent-community-ECCD centre ties.
- vii. Organising professional staff development.
- viii. Providing an appropriate ECCD learning environment.

#### *4.3.2.1 Providing instructional and administrative leadership*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of instructional and administrative leadership as a sub-theme that emerged from participant interviews. The study found that some participants provide pedagogical and administrative leadership at their centres. For example, some participants said they engage in ECCD curriculum planning, organise in-service training for caregivers and teachers, procure teaching and learning resources, allocate teachers to their various classes, vet teachers' lesson plans, delegate responsibilities by appointing programme level coordinators, monitor teaching and learning, motivate staff, mentor inexperienced teachers, and share the centre's vision with staff and parents through engagements with community members. The study also found that while some centres established a Parents Association and board of management as part of their centre's management and leadership structures, most private centres were yet to form these structures to augment their centre's leadership structures.

The following quotes capture the opinions expressed by some of the participants:

*...I vet their lesson plans and schemes of work and monitor during lesson delivery to make sure what they have planned is what they are teaching, so I go around to observe teaching in the classrooms and also try to reinforce good teaching attitudes of the teachers and look at their interpersonal relationship with children. I also teach one of the subjects. So, when they see me doing that, they won't have a choice but to be morally upright in discharging their teaching duties appropriately... (P2: Public Director)*

*...I motivate my staff by giving praise when they do well. Sometimes, I give them financial incentives for hard work to motivate them to work harder. I also delegate my authority to the various in-charges and they report to me when there is something. I know I cannot do it alone so I involve all of them... I know I must involve parents also, so I am now thinking of forming*

*a Parents Association and school board to assist me to manage the school properly... (P13: Private Director)*

*... at the beginning of each term, I do classification by allocating teachers to classes I know they can competently handle, I vet their termly plans and weekly lesson plans, and if I see some deficiencies, I help them to correct them ...This school is big, so I know I cannot manage it alone, so I delegate responsibilities to coordinators at each level and they report to me. We also have curriculum leaders who provide instructional leadership whenever teachers encounter some subject-specific problems. ...I can say I practice servant leadership by doing(sic) by example. I personally lead in communal labour we normally organise every year, I involve the community opinion leaders and we mobilise members of the community to carry out clean-up exercises...We try our best to link up with the community and families (P6: Public Director).*

An analysis of the quotes above suggests that some ECCD centres directors have demonstrated that they are experienced and knowledgeable in child growth and development, skilled in leveraging resources, exhibited a sense of ownership, maintained a strong assistant and administrative team, focused on the big picture, supported staff training, remained active in the early childhood community, exhibited a vision, were collaborative and encouraged teamwork, were caring individuals, showed appreciation toward the staff, and listened to the voices of parents. This finding means that some directors were trying to cultivate a growing cadre of leaders such as teachers, parents, and community members who can help expand the reach of centre's work and share overall responsibility for the improvement of the ECCD centre's quality. The findings indicate a masterful blend of both administrative and pedagogical leadership issues directly pertinent to the work of ECCD directors. The study argues that these are characteristics of quality of ECCD centre leadership that must be encouraged in the organising practices of ECCD centre directors.

The findings also showed that even though some centre directors demonstrated an awareness of and, in some instances, even established systems to encourage quality administrative and instructional leadership practices, other centres were yet to establish practices such as delegation of responsibilities and authority, forming Parents Associations and boards of management to facilitate delivery of quality ECCD services. The analysis suggests that while some ECCD centres seemed to be organising their centres successfully through decent administrative and instructional leadership practices via distributed leadership system, other centres appeared not to

fully embrace the practice, which implies insufficient ECCD centre organisational practices that require improvement.

#### *4.3.2.2 Establishing ECCD centre governance and management structures*

This section presents findings and an analysis of the experiences shared by participants regarding ECCD centre governance and management practices. Organising ECCD centres includes establishing authority, including the board of directors, parents' association and ECCD centre management and administration. The findings revealed that by transferring public ECCD centres to the community to manage, local government and communities were given more responsibility regarding the centre's governance and management. Some interview participants said that part of their management roles was establishing a functional school management committee and a Parents Association. From the interviews, the study found that some centres indicated that establishing an organisational structure assisted them in creating job descriptions and establishing reporting lines. The analysis also found that in some of the centres, formalisation and the use of organisational structures, management structures, and procedures have not yet been established. The following interview quotes present some of the participants' opinions:

*With the introduction of the government Capitation Grant, all public centres are required to establish a Parents Association and school management committee. Currently, I have a functional SMC and for the PTA, I cannot say it is effective because they are not willing to pay any levy as a way for raising funds for infrastructural development. If I call meetings, they don't come. Usually, you see a parent deputising for three or four parents in a meeting. .... Our organogram assists us to know who does what and our reporting line is defined by the organisational structure...So, this helps me to give out job descriptions to my staff. There is a Board of Directors. I report to the board. Then I have six key management staff who report to me. Therefore, we have the coordinators of finance, operation, academics, and pre-school, and then school counsellor and the under each of them, so the administrator, for instance, works with the Director... (P4: Private Director).*

*For now, I don't have an organogram to show you. I am the only one managing the centre but sometimes I ask some of the teachers to help me. I also consult my husband for advice. I'm now planning to form a PTA and school management committee. Most of the time when I invite parents for meeting, they don't turn up but I am trying my best to see how best I can involve them in the management of the centre...I cannot lie to you, there is no proper governance structure yet, nor a PTA, and there is no SMC yet. I manage the centre by myself. I have noticed that I am not doing the right thing so I am thinking of forming a SMC and PTA. I have discussed it with some people and they promised to help me. I have some committees made up of some of the teachers. These committees have been tasked to perform certain functions and they report to me (P 4: Private)*

*Because of the new educational reform, the government said local communities should be responsible for governance and management of the schools. So, they elected me as the school management committee chairman. The committee ensures there is accountability and transparency in the use of funds and improvement in children's learning, and I endorse the draft plan. I work closely with the director of the centre during school improvement planning. So far, we have been facing funding challenges because the Capitation Grant from the government is not enough and it does not come regularly. So far, it is only the PTA that is supporting us with their levy for infrastructural development (P 20: Public Board Member).*

From the quotes above, it is evident that few participants understood the need to establish governance and management structures that included Parents Associations and school management committees. This finding suggests that few participants knew that stakeholder involvement is one of the most important steps in achieving a well-managed and well-functioning ECCD centre. This practice must be encouraged as it can promote transparency and accountability to community members, who are the primary ECCD service recipients. This finding suggests that some participants knew that the ECCD director's organising activities include mobilising social resources within the ECCD community, and this must be encouraged.

An apparent challenge affecting effective organising practices was the absence of functional school management committees and Parents Associations in most private centres. In addition, some centres reported that parents were not interested in attending centre meetings and refused to assist in financing centre programmes. This finding suggests that the role of local community members is limited, which implies insufficient transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation in some centres. In addition, some centres' active and productive collaboration with local community stakeholders, such as the school management committee and Parents Association, seemed insufficient to enable those centres to capitalise on their critical role in improving ECCD centre governance and management practices. The ECCD centres are encouraged to focus on building the three pillars of governance: transparency, accountability, and participation, which would facilitate the involvement of all the concerned stakeholders and promote a good working relationship with parents and community members. This is also needed to ensure and enforce the regularity and efficiency of the different social accountability tools, such as social and financial audits and public hearings, that can be used to hold ECCD centres accountable. The following sub-section analyses the directors' organising activities of instructional, material, and financial resources.

#### 4.3.2.3 Organising human, instructional material and financial resources

This section presents findings and the organising of human, instructional, and financial resources. From the interview data, it was found that some of the participants comprising both public and private directors cited organising human and financial resources as some of the structures of organising ECCD centre activities. The study also found that majority of the participants cited mobilisation of instructional and financial resources as structures that form part of organising the centres activities. The findings indicate that some participants mentioned internal and external institutional layout, establishing a Parents Association for financial support, and providing staff ECCD curricula and teaching and learning resources, including Ghana Education Service's code of ethics. The fact that directors in both public and private settings mentioned human, teaching and learning resources, and the layout of the governance centre's system suggests how relevant these are to the success of ECCD programmes.

The study also revealed that participants at some centres indicated that part of their management activity is acquiring teaching and learning materials such as markers, curriculum materials, and syllabi. Financial constraints were found to be one major common challenge to organising quality ECCD centre activities. The participants indicated that most of their centres' activities are capital-intensive and need adequate financial support. Another challenge identified in organising quality ECCD centre activities was inadequate specialist teachers, inappropriate instructional resources, and insufficient in-service training for teachers and caregivers. The following interview excerpts illustrate some of the participants' opinions:

*...The main source of funding for the centre is the government Capitation Grant. This fund is meant for improving access, quality, management efficiency and pupils' learning tools. We are currently struggling with funding for infrastructural development because the Capitation Grant covers only minor repairs. We are not getting enough support from the parents to undertake projects. So, our main challenge here is funding, and support from parents and members of the community. Our learning environment is not the best for the children. We don't have play equipment to implement the play component of the curriculum. In terms of teachers, we are using teachers who hold degrees in basic education to teach at KG, so, you see, we don't have early childhood specialist at this school.... I usually ask teachers to specify the type and quantity of teaching and learning materials needed for the performance of academic duties in their performance improvement plans... (P5: Public Director)*

*...As the director, I am responsible for procuring teaching and learning resources. I normally buy things in bulk for a year in order to cut down costs. I recruit teachers and give them training, especially to the WASSCE certificate holders. As a director, my duties include*

*staffing, mobilisation of TLR - that is teaching and learning resources, fundraising, and organising parents and members of the community to support us, especially through donations and PTA levies.....But there are a lot of challenges. For example, we don't have enough teaching and learning resources for the KG and the teachers are hardly given in-service training, so, if you are a director and you don't have enough insight into the place, you will see that it will be lacking and that is the foundation of the centre. So, if the foundation is not strong, just imagine what happens. So, I think the KG needs more teaching and learning resources and qualified teachers so that they be on top of their work over there. (P1: Public Director).*

*For the past three years, we have not received the Capitation Grant, so we depend on PTA levies for infrastructure development. We are overwhelmed with admissions at the KG and we need extra classrooms, but there is no money to undertake that project. We don't have trained early childhood teachers...When you call staff meetings, I need to provide some refreshments for them, but where is the money?... ..The challenges, most of the challenges the most common one is finances. How do we finance for the activities that we organise? Like the ECCD programme awareness campaign we talked about, we can just go with the car, play our school band and create awareness of our centre, but you can't do that without at least not buying yoghurts for the kids. So, we have not been able to organise such activities as a result of a lack of finances (P1: Public Director).*

The quotes above suggest that most ECCD centres are highly dependent on the governmental Capitation Grant to implement centre programmes and that some centres get extra funding support from community members through Parents Associations levies, which is commendable. As narrated above, it is evident that the lack of adequate teaching and learning resources at public ECCD centres may be attributed to a lack of sufficient funds to procure the materials and organised in-service training.

Regarding the efficiency of resource mobilisation, some centres mentioned inadequate funding from the government and a lack of support from parents and community members. Some centres also identified inappropriate learning environments and a lack of play equipment. These findings indicate that apart from the government Capitation Grant, some centres could not source alternative funding to support infrastructure development and purchase other relevant ECCD resources.

#### *4.3.2.4 Developing ECCD centre policies*

This section presents findings and an analysis of the development of ECCD centre policies as a director's management function of organising. An analysis of the interviews shows that all



sixteen participants indicated that there are policies that guide them in handling issues of child abuse at their centres. Some participants cited the availability of other external policies, such as the Ghana Education Service (GES) code of ethics and guidelines from the Ministry of Education (MoE), as well as internal policies, including teachers' handbooks, health and safety protocols, and parents' handbooks that serve as the blueprint for managing educational activities. The analysis also suggests that few centres were yet to embrace the organising practice of policy development to guide centres' procedures and activities. The following quotes capture the opinions expressed by some participants:

*... a teacher abusing a child has never happened before even though we don't have a written policy yet, but we guide against it that if a female girl is coming too close to the male teacher, the male teacher should take precaution and try to avoid that particular female girl because you don't know what will happen or what will come out of it. We also abolished caning in our school so we don't cane... ...We are now trying to develop policies such as a handbook for parents containing all the programmes and then the information that the parents are supposed to know about the centre and their level of involvement, policies on health and safety, a code of ethics, the admission policy and others... (P11: Private Director)*

*We have the Ghana Education Service code of ethics for teachers. We are government teachers, so we have the GES policy documents that I make available to my teachers We have a policy of health and safety, a policy on supervision of children at play, a nutritional guide, a staff development policy and a staff handbook. Sometimes too, our Headteacher's Handbook contains policies, especially on how to manage the school... (P1: Public Director).*

The quotes above reveal that the development and mobilisation of ECCD centre policies and programmes emanating from external authorities and internal arrangements appear to be one of the anchors through which ECCD centres are managed. The finding suggests that policies could help guide the centre's activities, protect the centre in several ways, and facilitate the achievement of ECCD goals. From the analysis, it can be deduced that some participants were aware that developing ECCD centre policies is one of their organising responsibilities, and this is an important organising practice that must be encouraged.

Even though policies have the potential to give direction and guide the implementation of ECCD goals and priorities, the study found that in some centres, there were no policies. This finding implies that inefficient management practices may affect the quality of ECCD service provision at such centres due to a lack of guiding principles.

#### 4.3.2.5 Assigning duties and responsibilities

This section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of assigning duties and responsibilities as an organising function of ECCD directors. The interviews revealed that at some centres, participants cited assigning teachers to classes and subjects they will teach as a planning activity before an academic term resumes. In a few centres, participants said they practice delegation of duties by assigning leadership roles to specific staff who reports to the director, while other participants indicated they do not delegate management responsibilities to their staff. The following interview excerpts reflect the opinions of some participants:

*Before the school resumes, we plan for things that we will do, teachers that will be on duty, we put them in a list, ...we do subject classification, teachers that will handle which classes, which teachers will handle pre-school and which teacher will be in this class. We do all that planning before school resumes and how much are we going to do for the term ... (P12: Public Director).*

*For now, I do everything by myself. Currently, I don't have any assistants, so as a director, I plan at the begging of the term, and assign teachers to their various classes. I check their lesson plans and monitor their teaching. Currently, I don't prepare a budget. I know my bookkeeping is not the best, so I am planning to employ an accountant. (P8: Private Director).*

*I know you cannot do it alone, so must delegate. I have unit coordinators for KG, lower primary and upper primary. So, at the beginning of the term, I assign teachers with subject areas they have a strength in and at each department, we have a curriculum leader who provides expert advice on particular topic teachers are having difficulty in. We have committees and boards whose leaders report to me periodically. I have an assistant who helps me a lot in vetting lesson plans prepared by teachers. In each class, we have a class prefect. So, we practice a prefectorial system. (P6: Public Director).*

The above quotes demonstrate that assigning roles and responsibilities and delegating authority duties to personnel based on specialisation facilitates management efficiency and effectiveness. This finding suggests that a few ECCD centre directors displayed strong organisational skills by knowing their staff well and delegating effectively due to their multiple responsibilities, which is commendable. However, deficiencies were found in some centres where directors do not delegate responsibilities to centre staff and other stakeholders, such as parents and school management committee members in the centre's management activities. The finding suggests that the organising principle of role delegation and participative management practice is yet to be embraced in some ECCD centres, and this may affect the effectiveness of ECCD directors'

management. Role delegation and the practice of participative management are therefore encouraged.

#### *4.3.2.6 Ensuring strong parent-community-ECCD centre ties*

This sub-section presents findings on ECCD centre directors' organising experiences in maintaining relationships with parents, community members, and ECCD centres. During the interviews, some participants observed that ensuring support from the parents and community members enhances the activities of the ECCD centre to a great extent. This support occurs when there is a synergy of work between the centre's teachers, the parents, and community members. A few centres indicated that they maintain ties with their communities through communal labour. However, most participants indicated that their centres hardly get community support, which has been affecting improvement efforts negatively. The following quotes capture the opinions shared by the participants:

*...When all teachers come together and we get support from the parents and members of the communities, it will prove the activities of the centre. We try to encourage teachers to treat parents well.... (P5: Public Director).*

*...We usually mobilise community members mostly through PTA and SMC meetings. At times, we invite prominent community members such as the assemblyman, the queen and chiefs to some of our events, such as graduations, speeches and prize-giving days and when they come, they mostly give us donations such as cash and furniture... (P3: Private Director).*

*Our main challenge here is how to mobilise support from the community. We solely depend on the little financial support from the government. We have been operating this centre for years, but we have not been benefiting from the members of this community. We try our best to organise communal labour every term as a way of supporting the community (P 8: Private Director).*

The quotes above indicate that some ECCD centre directors were aware of how to avoid a disconnect between ECCD centre staff, the parents, and community members their centres intend to serve. This finding suggests that some centres recognised that the absence of vital ties would affect community resources support, which is a multifaceted resource for improvement.

Some challenges indicated by participants in ensuring ECCD centre-community ties included the difficulty in benefiting from community social capital as centres heavily depend on the

government as a source of funding. Others complained about community members' lack of interest in participating in ECCD centres' activities. These findings suggest that in most ECCD centres, social and personal connections with families and communities are tenuous, implying that implementing ECCD improvement programmes may be harder to sustain in some community contexts. In addition, the social capital of a neighbourhood is a significant resource for improving ECCD centres, but evidence from the interviews suggests that a large proportion of ECCD centres' needs remain high and pressing. The findings also point to the fact that the capacity of some of the centres to sustain attention to developing essential ECCD centre-community support appeared to have fallen by the wayside.

#### *4.3.2.7 Organising professional development for staff*

This sub-section presents the findings and an analysis of experiences shared by participants regarding staff recruitment, retention, and professional development. From the interviews, the study found that all the participants (16) mentioned professional development as part of their human resource management practice. The study found that while government is responsible for staff recruitment for public ECCD centres, directors play a critical role in their professional development. It has emerged from the study that some centres organise professional development programmes for their staff to build their capacity through in-house and external in-service training at least twice a term. ECCD centres use various approaches in providing continuous professional development to their staff. These approaches include internal training delivered by curriculum leaders, feedback from peer-to-peer and director's observations, embedded strategies to disseminate learning from external training courses to all staff, online training courses, and support to staff to work towards qualifications.

The study also found that some of the centres could not provide sufficient continuous professional development training to their staff due to insufficient funding. The following quotes shed light on the experiences of the participants:

*...We do in-service training. Once every week. Formally, we call it in-service training now is no more in-service training. Now we call it PLC (Professional Learning Community). Therefore, we treat it like a Professional Learning Community. Therefore, if there is a need to bring a resource person, we bring external people. At times, it is mostly facilitated by curriculum leaders.... (P1: Public Director).*

*...Sometimes the District invite the private centres for training and we also do in-house in-service training and invite external resource persons at times. Sometimes the School Improvement Officer formerly called Circuit Supervisor also helps us in in-service training, so we invite them as a resource to come and then train our teachers and the Proprietor, the Head, everybody is involved... (P4: Private Director).*

*As a director, some of my duties include motivating staff to work hard and ensuring their continuous professional development at least twice a term. Mostly I do in-house training for them when I notice during my supervision that they are lacking something... We sometimes have difficulties to organise effective CPD in my centre due to inadequate funding and this has reduced our regular participation in external training; there is always pressure on our budgets. I find it difficult sometimes to release staff for training because of costs... (P8: Private Director).*

The above comments suggest that ECCD centre-based professional development is one of the director's organising activities designed to advance instructional improvement and enhance a sense of community and shared commitments among caregivers and teachers to advance the children's learning and thus experience a sense of efficiency. The findings suggest that some ECCD centres recognise that high-quality ECCD service provision can be ensured through ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) to develop professional practice, keep up-to-date with new research on effective practices, build networks, share good practices, and support staff retention. Some ECCD directors seem to have sound knowledge of their staff's strengths and weaknesses to enable them to invest effectively in their training opportunities. The finding also suggests that some of the directors valued investing in staff through offering opportunities for training and continuing professional development as another aspect of strong leadership. This means directors were training staff to think about the individual child's needs and keeping them up-to-date with new research on effective practices, and this practice must be encouraged.

However, certain challenges affecting the organisation of effective continuous professional development were reported by some centres. For example, some directors complained about inadequate funding to participate in external in-service training, restricting their in-service training to in-house primarily once a term. A possible conclusion that may be drawn from the analysis is that some centres lacked knowledge of funding strategies leading to inadequate

funding. This seems to be inhibiting the organisation of continuing professional development practices in some ECCD centres.

#### *4.3.2.8 Providing appropriate ECCD learning environment*

This sub-section presents the findings and an analysis of ECCD centre directors' organising experiences in relation to the ECCD learning environment. Based on the analysis of the interview data, the study found that the provision of an appropriate ECCD learning environment is one of the organising activities of the directors. The study found that some participants demonstrated their knowledge and awareness of the need for an appropriate ECCD learning environment and ensured they provided it. However, while the directors of other centres, mostly in public settings, demonstrated an awareness of the need to provide appropriate ECCD learning environments, they seemed to be limited by inadequate funding and other. The study revealed that half of the participants (8) from the public centres expressed concern about a lack of appropriate ECCD learning environments. They lamented the lack of age-appropriate ECCD environments negatively affecting ECCD service provision. For example, some directors of public ECCD centres said that a lack of physical space impedes the progress of ECCD centres and that the current physical space deprives students of having playgrounds and separate washrooms for boys and girls closer to their classrooms. The following quotes elaborate on this theme:

*.... At this centre, we practice the Montessori philosophy so provide temporal, social, and physical learning environments to facilitate physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of the children. ...I make sure all the learning materials are appropriate to the age of the children and the learning environments are good to promote free movement that allows the children to explore the environment without any inhibition. The chairs and tables are up to their ages, even at the crèche you will see mats there, play materials, toys. All my classrooms are well painted and things are well-labelled. So, I procure all the Montessori approach learning materials and train all the teachers on how to use them. I make sure both indoor and outdoor learning environments are appropriate and safe at all time. You see, we know that appropriate early childhood learning environments serve a teacher on its own... Therefore, in terms of resources, the teachers are provided with the needed resources. We set up the main categories for literacy, numeracy. We have the outdoor environment and all those things. Therefore, the kids, I think we started sustainability (sic), so we even have gardens and all those things... (P14: Private Director)*

*Our pre-school physical environment is not the best. We don't have urinals for boys and girls, the classroom floor is very dusty and their chairs and tables are not good for their age. I wish the classroom walls are painted with bright primary colours. We do not have a playground currently, so the children play with the senior students and they look dirty as they play in the soil.....Not exactly, because with my KGs especially I have a challenge over there. Their*

*structure is not good enough or is not befitting a KG structure because as a KG we need to have a very big room where they can carry out playing and other things, but the room when you go is not good enough and we don't have separate washrooms closer to them. Boys and girls share the same washroom and it is too far away, so some of them soil themselves before they get to the washroom... The classrooms are dusty and hot, there are no play equipment and no playground as I speak to you. (P6: Public director).*

*Our pre-school learning environments are expected to be appropriate to the age of the children to promote cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of the children, but this centre is attached to the primary school, so they are treating the children like grown-ups. My main challenge is that their chairs and tables are not according to their heights, when they sit you can see their legs hanging in the air. The rooms are hot and dusty, so even the teachers are not comfortable especially in the afternoons. I am trying my best to ensure teachers improvise some of the play materials and learning materials because the Capitation Grant is not enough to purchase modern play equipment. In fact, the learning environment is not safe for the children... (P13: Private Director).*

From the quotations above, it appears private ECCD settings have embraced the practice of organising appropriate ECCD learning environments compared to their public counterparts. The provision of appropriate ECCD learning environments is commendable in that it provides a climate that enables children to think of themselves as learners in a safe and orderly environment, which is the most basic prerequisite for holistic child development.

The findings show that learning environments in public ECCD settings are inappropriate for holistic child development. The finding suggests that some of the ECCD centres' physical environments do not have appropriate furnishings for care, play, and learning, room arrangement for play and learning, space for privacy, and child-related displays. Furthermore, the finding indicates that providing appropriate learning environments to facilitate personal care routines, such as meals/snacks, toileting/diapering, and safety practices that promote children's personal care practices, appears insufficiently organised. It was also found that the provision of appropriate ECCD social environments that could help promote language and literacy development in children through encouraging children to use language, encouraging children's use of books, and becoming familiar with print is yet to be fully embraced in most public centres. The above findings imply that in some public settings, while there seems to be a vast array of fine motor activities, such settings do not typically have interconnecting materials.

The following section presents an analysis and interpretation of how ECCD directors apply the management principle of coordination at their centres.

### **4.3.3 Coordination practices of ECCD centre directors**

The third research question the study sought to answer was “How do the directors coordinate management activities with the ECCD centre’s internal and external stakeholders?”. The findings and analysis are presented according to the following eleven sub-themes that emerged from the data:

- i. Coordination through the use of ECCD centre routines.
- ii. Coordination through the use of performance improvement plans and schedules.
- iii. Coordination through the use of behavioural control and performance appraisals.
- iv. Coordination through the use of reward systems.
- v. Coordination through communication networks.
- vi. Coordination through a committee system of management.
- vii. Coordination through leadership.
- viii. Coordination through clearly defined aims and objectives.
- ix. Coordination through simplified organisation and effective chain of command.
- x. Coordination through the use of meetings and in-service training workshops
- xi. Coordination through harmonised ECCD programmes and policies.

#### *4.3.3.1 Coordinating through the use of ECCD centre routines*

This sub-section presents the findings and an analysis of how ECCD centres use routines to coordinate their activities. From the interview data and reviews of samples of ECCD centre routines, the study found that most centres use their organisational routines as a cost-effective means to coordinate their activities. The following excerpts and interview quotes show a typical ECCD centre routine that helps coordinate staff competencies:

*Nursery Daily Routines: 8:00 - 9:00 Arrival, Morning Routines & Exploration Good Morning! Children arrive, settle in and make connections; Children explore and engage independently and/or through learning centres; Teachers notice, recognise and respond to children’s interests as inspiration for extended study or projects 9:00 - 9:55 Play and Learn: Outdoor Exploration/Recess Children explore their outdoor environment; Teachers notice, recognise and respond to interests, social interactions, and activities 10:00 Snacks\* & Book Time Children enjoy snacks and relaxed social time, followed by story time at the Library Centre.*



*10:30 Circle Time Children gather together to sing, enjoy music, and listen to stories; Project provocations may be introduced 10:45 Play & Learn: Indoor and Outdoor Exploration The environment is set up to invite and foster the development of positive play; Teachers notice, recognise and respond to children's curiosity and exploration of project-related provocations and activities 11:20 Circle Time Calming down activities: Story Time and Good Bye Songs. 11:30 Good Bye & Home Time, Time to say "Good Bye" to friends at school. (Private Centre 8 Routine)*

*We use a daily routine prepared by the Ghana Education Services for the KG programme. For example, on Mondays, we know we have circle time, group activities, indoor and outdoor activities, phonics time, learning centre time and story-sharing time. So, I make sure we follow the approved daily routines so that at the end of the day, we can achieve the aims and objectives of the KG curriculum. (P1: Public Director).*

*We are following the GES curriculum that specifies what we should do as a centre. We went for workshops and every staff member seemed to know what to do. I give orientation to new staff on our routines. I can say this makes it easy for me to coordinate what my teachers are doing. I vet their lesson plans and supervise them as well. All my teachers know they must submit their weekly forecast and learner plans for vetting, so they all follow my directives. The only challenge is the frequent changes in our ECCD policy and this makes it difficult to keep to one routine. For example, last month they changed our closing time from 1:30pm to 2:30pm and we don't have relevant teaching and learning resources (P5: Public Director).*

The findings suggest that routines are one form of coordination through regulation. Participants indicated that routines allow them to take advantage of previous experience without reinventing the wheel, and it also decreases the need for interaction between staff, implying that a routine could be used as a cost-efficient way for coordination at ECCD centres. In addition, the findings indicate that routines can be used to transform caregivers' and teachers' competencies into ECCD programme capabilities, and this seems to constitute a potential source of competitive advantage. The study found this practice to align with the management principle of coordination that all ECCD centres should embrace. Some centres identified frequent changes in ECCD policies as a major challenge affecting the effective use of routines for coordinating ECCD centre activities. The finding suggests that the use of routines as a tool for coordination seemed to be more sufficiently and effectively used in private ECCD centres than public centres due to the relative certainty and flexibility with which they operate their centres.

#### *4.3.3.2 Coordinating by use of performance improvement plans and schedules*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of directors' coordinating experiences by using performance improvement plans and schedules. From the analysis of

interview data and a review of samples of school improvement plans, ECCD centres' academic calendars, and teaching timetables, it emerged that most public centres use plans and schedules as a tool for coordinating their activities. Participants indicated that they could achieve their centre's goals by strictly following approved plans.

The findings indicate that some participants adopted coordination of centre activities through establishing schedules to guide the work of teachers, caregivers, Parents Associations and school management committee members. Some centres determine the ECCD targets to be reached, permitting stakeholders to choose the appropriate behaviour to achieve those targets. However, it was found that the strict following of plans and schedules varies significantly between public and private ECCD centres. Some public centres complained about insufficient funds to implement their plans entirely, and frequent changes in ECCD policies have made it challenging to keep to their plans and schedules. The following quotes capture some participants' opinions:

*...Every teacher is required to prepare learner plans. So, I vet their learner plans. When we vet the learner plans and we realise that there are mistakes in the learner plans we call the teacher to correct it, we ask the teacher to go back and do it again and bring it. So, when the teacher is back and we realise is okay, then the teacher could go and then implement it or when we realise that still the teacher is not able to correct that mistake, we insist and we try and train the teacher or we give them in-service training to also be able to do the right thing so that we too we don't want the supervisors from the office to come and see any loopholes or any problems... (P4: Private Director)*

*.... We have a timetable that we follow. Then on the timetable, the head is supposed to do this, the teacher is supposed to do this with the pupils together. This time this is what we do. The assistant helps me in monitoring. These are the things we do and when there is the need to call for the SISO to also come in (sic). That is how we coordinate activities. We have a channel of communication. I always educate parents too about it. We have deputies, so through the deputies, if they are not able to solve it or whatever or handle it, it gets to me. In addition, if I am not able to handle it, our SISO is there. It goes back that way like the organogram... (P 2: Public Director)*

*Every year we prepare performance improvement plans that spells out what we intend to do in each term and those responsible for specific activities. So, we all play our roles well, including the PTA and SMC that supervise some of our projects. The improvement plan includes performance targets for the year, so we work hard to achieve it. For example, we indicate dates for meetings with parents and staff. We plan for INSERT, enrolment campaigns, when to carry out minor repairs and who is responsible. So, by following the plan, coordination becomes easy for me. We follow timelines we set out in the plan. My teachers always plan their lesson and I vet them before they use it to teach... (P1: Public Director).*

The findings show that some centres use ECCD improvement planning as an integrative device, as these plans specify what tasks will be conducted and when. The use of plans appears to help centres reduce the need for excessive inter-stakeholder communication if the stakeholders can operate within the planned targets. In addition, the findings suggest that setting plans reduces equivocality; after the plans have been set, they may serve as data processing devices.

The study reveals that participation in the strategic planning process and communication of the resulting priorities likely decreases the tendency of ECCD personnel to deviate from the ECCD centre's goals. In other words, the study shows that participatory strategic planning and communication make inter-stakeholder and hierarchical conflicts less likely and thus may decrease directors' excessive need for additional coordination efforts. The ECCD centre's activity planning and implementation process specifications seem to be used as a starting point in developing the technique of establishing timelines as milestones to guide the work of each role player, thereby making coordination easier for directors.

#### *4.3.3.3 Coordinating through behavioural control and performance appraisal*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis on behavioural control and performance appraisal as directors' management functions. From the analysis of interview data, the study found that most directors inherently control their staff's activities by vetting teachers' work schemes, weekly forecasts, and daily learner plans. The study also reveals that in addition to vetting learner plans, some directors visit classrooms to observe how lessons are delivered. Other coordination techniques shared by the participants include weekly self-appraisals with the teachers to identify the level of achievement of agreed targets. Some participants indicated that this practice enables them to ensure that the ECCD curriculum is implemented at all times according to the plan adopted. The following quotes shed light on this particular theme:

*... I try my best to coordinate whatever is going on in the classroom. Mostly when teachers are teaching, I walk around; sometimes, I enter the classrooms to observe what they are teaching to be sure that what they prepare for me to vet is what they are teaching. I also observe them right from my office through the CCT camera. ... (P 13: Private Director).*

*...Every week we do self-appraisal. I invite the teachers and we talk about things that went well and things that did not go well. Through this appraisal, we identified some of the children that are bullying other children in the class and we plan how to work with the parents to help the child to behave well... (P7: Private Director)*

*My teachers usually plan for the week, so at the end of the week, we meet and do self-appraisals to check if all the objectives for the week were achieved or not. I vet all the lesson plans and check the assignments and marks children are getting. So, if a teacher stated three assignments for a week but gave only one, I query the person, so with these checks, I coordinate them very well... (P 9: Public Director).*

The findings in this section illustrate the use of behaviour and output controls as ECCD centre coordination mechanisms, which include directors' inspection visits to classrooms, monitoring of lesson delivery, vetting of learner plans and work schemes to scope the planned targets, and reporting on the progress of target achievement through weekly performance appraisal. The findings suggest that the coordination mechanism of behavioural control based on direct personal surveillance by ECCD centre directors and output controls based on the measurement of outputs appear to be an effective coordination principle in management that all centres should embrace. The findings further suggest that using behavioural control may be possible in ECCD centres because directors seemed to understand every facet of ECCD service provision clearly.

Moreover, the use of output controls also suggests that centre directors can provide legitimate evidence of performance increases through self-assessment and self-monitoring. It can be inferred from the findings that coordination through outcome or behavioural control seems closely related to and partly overlaps with coordination through standardisation, formalisation, and planning. Despite the advantages of the behavioural control and performance appraisal coordination mechanism, all the sampled centres do not embrace the practice. Therefore, this practice must be embraced by all other ECCD centres that are not practicing it.

#### *4.3.3.4 Coordination through the use of reward systems*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of coordination through the use of reward systems as part of directors' management principles. From the interview data, the study revealed that some ECCD centres use reward systems as a mechanism for coordination. It was found that to ensure achieving common goals, some directors said they rewarded both individual and group achievement at their centres. The reward strategy was found to include sharing of gifts, giving prizes, and financial incentives. The following quotes further illustrate participants' opinions:

*I try to reward good performance. For example, when parents give a good commendation of any of my staff consistently, at the end of the term I give the person some extra money to*

*motivate the person to continue the good work. Sometimes I monitor positive growth and development in some of the children and at the end of the year I give my staff Christmas bonuses... (P9: Private Director).*

*Even though I don't have enough money to pay my staff well, in my small way I try to give them what they deserve. For example, there is a policy that if a parent gives us some gift, we all share it and since we started, all my staff try to work together as a team in order to impress the parents so that they are appreciated... (P5: Public Director).*

The above quotes indicate that using a reward system is expected to increase the collaboration between the ECCD centre staff, thereby serving as a means to coordinate interdependent tasks. The finding also means that performance evaluations that recognise interrelated rewards will likely decrease the barriers in ECCD service provisions. The reward system as a coordination mechanism is in line with classical management practices as it has the potential to increase cross-functional decision-making and leads to increased cooperation among staff.

In terms of levels of practice, evidence suggests that private directors use the reward system as a coordination mechanism more often than directors at public centres. The reason was that, unlike at private centres, government is responsible for any financial obligation at public centres, thereby limiting those centres' directors from being directly involved in any financial rewards. The findings reveal that ECCD centres use at least two strategies to reward staff - an individual-based reward approach and an aggregate pay incentives approach. Individual-based rewards are based on the reflection of an individual employee's performance. It can be inferred from the analysis that public centres depend on government funding, which seems to limit directors' capacity to implement a financial reward system. Public centres are therefore advised to adopt innovative ways of raising community funds to improve their reward system and promote better team spirit, ensuring better coordination.

#### *4.3.3.5 Coordination through communication networks*

This section presents findings and an analysis of the establishment of communication systems as a directors' coordination mechanism. The findings show that most interviewees indicated they had established various communication channels as a coordination mechanism. The study also found that both internal and external communication systems were being used to coordinate

internal and external stakeholders. Internally, notice boards, face-to-face meetings, telephonic conversations, and internal memos are the most commonly used communication channels.

The findings also reveal that some centres use social media platforms such as WhatsApp to coordinate the centre's internal stakeholders. Most public ECCD directors complained that a lack of information communication facilities such as the internet, electricity sources and computers have rendered them unable to use electronic coordination. The following quotes capture the views of some of the participants:

*There are established channels of communication we have here. Especially during COVID-19 pandemic era, we leveraged ICT to communicate with parents and children and teachers. We used Zoom a lot. I have a management software called Info view that helps me to do coordination easily. The most common one is WhatsApp, e-mail, notice boards, letters, reports, internal memos, meetings, morning assemblies, we have the parent platform and then we do newsletters at the beginning of the term and end of the term. We have an organisational chart that clearly lay out the chain of command and reporting lines. With the early childhood, because they use the thematic approach, every month, we send letters to parents telling them of the theme we will be doing and what is expected of them. Sometimes, in addition, we call parents you know, we need to discuss issues. For the internal one, we have made it so easy for the students to communicate to, in fact any level. We have not restricted them to a channel that has to go through this level. We want them to feel free and have a very good environment to learn, so with the students, every teacher is accessible to them. Then the head, the management is accessible to them, including the proprietress. We have given the proprietors' numbers out to the parents as well as my number.... (P11: Private Director).*

*... we make public announcements at the assembly and the wards communicate to them at home aside from that we serve them with written notices. Also, we have interpersonal relationships with them through the phone, they have my contact and the contact of the headmistress, so in case of anything, and they communicate with us. So, we have an effective communication system...Yes, so from time to time we do meet with them. They give me verbal reports. We also have the staff WhatsApp platform where we do share and discuss issues on apart from the one with the parents, we also have some for the staff. We suffered during COVID-19 pandemic era when they closed down the centres because we didn't have access to computers and the internet. In fact, we don't have electricity in the centre to help us use information communication technology to make our coordination work easy... (P2: Public Director).*

The findings reveal that most public centres have adopted traditional communication channels as a coordination mechanism due to a lack of information communication technology facilities. On the other hand, their private counterparts have adopted both traditional and electronic communication channels as a coordination mechanism.

The findings indicate that an effective communication system can be a successful mechanism for coordinating ECCD centre activities since the director's position can be easily unified through a functional communication system. The findings also suggest that ECCD centre role players can easily understand their roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines through effective communication. A regular exchange of information facilitates understanding between ECCD stakeholders for whom coordination is to be achieved. This finding seems to align with the management principle of coordination; hence, ECCD centres that are yet to establish effective communication systems are encouraged to adopt communication as a coordination mechanism to promote teamwork.

#### *4.3.3.6 Coordination through a committee system of management*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of coordination of ECCD stakeholders through a committee system of management. From the interview data, the study found that some centres have adopted a committee management system as a coordination mechanism. Some participants indicated that they coordinate parents' and community members' participation in ECCD service provision through school management committees and Parents Association meetings where they discuss issues pertaining to the centres' affairs. The study found that even though this practice is commendable, it is not yet embraced by most private ECCD centres. The following quotes express some of the participants' views:

*Within, what we do is we have committees that are headed by individual teachers. We have the sports committee, we have the health committee, sanitation, entertainment committee and all this. A committee system is what we normally do over here, and aside from that we have an open administration that is what we do over here. It will amaze you, any teacher at all can just come here with his suggestion, opinion about any issue and it is well taken. We discuss things together. We practice a democratic system of leadership, and open communication. Everybody is free and when we are in a meeting, it will surprise you, everybody is a proprietor here. I always tell them that I taught in an ECCD centre before and I never knew I will come and establish an ECCD centre; likewise, some of them will teach here today and tomorrow...* (P9: Private Director).

*We have weekly group meetings, and management meetings so the meeting is more of information sharing and coordinating and then there is one-on-one meetings with the management. So apart from the group meetings; I do one-on-one with them. Therefore, that is how you try to coordinate whatever they are doing...* (P6: Public Director).

*With the help of the School Management Committee, we have been able to manage the centre through cooperation between staff, members of the community and parents. They are involved*

*in the performance improvement planning and monitoring of the centre's activities. I report to the Committee Chairman termly. The Parents Association helps in funding our infrastructure projects and I work closely with the Chairman. So, I can say through these committees, I have been able to involve parents and members of the community in the management of this centre. We hold meetings with the committees and we discuss how to improve the centre... (P3: Public Director).*

The above quotes indicate that some participants perceive teams and committees as crucial mechanisms to maintain harmonisation in ECCD centres. For example, School Management Committees and Parents Associations may help committees solve common problems facing the centre. The finding further illustrates that participants perceive a committee management system as helpful in harmonising management activities and executing ECCD programmes. In addition, adopting a committee management system ensures participative management and improved implementation of ECCD programmes. It can be inferred from the analysis that using a committee as a mechanism for coordination seems to involve fewer efforts in coordinating ECCD stakeholders' activities; hence, all ECCD centres should embrace the practice.

#### *4.3.3.7 Coordination through leadership*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of coordination experiences through leadership as a common theme shared by most directors. An analysis of the interview data found that most participants indicated that they take the lead in their centre's activities by, for example, providing leadership during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the centre's programmes. Some directors said they motivate their staff, mentor new staff and supervise lesson preparation, delivery, and assessment. Most participants indicated they vet teachers' termly and weekly forecasts and daily learner plans to ensure they keep to the centre's philosophy. The quotes below illustrate participants' opinions:

*As a director, I provide leadership in all our activities. I make sure I come to work very early to serve as an example for my staff, because of that, they all come to work early. I involve myself in teaching at times so that they feel I am closer to them. I lead my staff when we are doing communal labour as a way of engaging with the community. So, you see, if I am doing all this my staff cannot say they won't do it.... P6: Public Director).*

*I practice servant leadership by involving myself in all activities. I delegate some of my responsibilities to my assistant and some of the teachers and motivate them. So, at pre-school department, KG, and lower primary level, I have coordinators there who provide leadership on my behalf and report to me. So, I encourage teamwork and it is working perfectly for me. I*



*always supervise their learner plans, lesson delivery and children's assessments so that I keep them on track...* (P10: Public Director).

From the above quotes, some participants demonstrate that good leadership practices can achieve effective management coordination. In addition, the finding suggests that a good ECCD centre leader provides guidance and direction to motivate personnel to attain quality ECCD outcomes. The finding implies that effective and efficient ECCD centre directors utilise their leadership skills to convince the employees to harmonise the centre's activities at will, suggesting that confusion and misunderstandings can be prevented easily through distributed leadership enactment. The finding also illustrates that effective leadership inspires staff and promotes esprit de corps among personnel with common interests.

The finding further indicates that coordination can also be achieved through active guidance, monitoring, supervision, and evaluation. For example, some participants indicated they consistently supervise teachers' weekly and termly forecasts and daily learner plans. This implies that some directors guide their staff if the situation demands; hence, supervision is an important mechanism in coordinating ECCD centre services at executive level. This finding suggests that through supervision, directors are likely to meet the overall objectives of the ECCD centre. Consequently, coordination through leadership appears to align with the scientific administrative management principle of coordination, which must be encouraged.

Effective and sufficient ECCD stakeholder coordination seems to likely require excellent leadership since coordination is a human effort in which the director's character, temperament, and morals are very important. This means the examples that directors set may have a lasting effect on their staff, who may emulate them, and if this happens, a self-co-ordination attitude may develop among staff. Taking these benefits into account, the leadership technique of ECCD stakeholders' coordination should be embraced by centres that have yet to adopt this coordination mechanism.

#### 4.3.3.8 Coordination through clearly defined aims and objectives

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of coordination through clearly defined aims and objectives of the ECCD programme. The data analysis revealed that defining aims and objectives in clear terms and communicating them to the stakeholders was perceived by some directors as a mechanism through which they coordinate their ECCD centre activities. Some participants also perceived adherence to ECCD curriculum aims and objectives and supervising and monitoring teachers' lesson delivery and assessment results as a suitable coordination mechanism. The following quotes capture some of the participants' experiences:

*We are guided by the aims and objectives of the ECCD curriculum. So, when we are drafting a performance improvement plan, we make sure we plan for the ECCD targets the Government Capitation Grant will support and these are access and participation, quality, management efficiency and pupils' learning tools. So, I involve the teachers in the preparation of the plan so all of them understand the specific targets we want to achieve in a particular year.... We discuss the plan at meetings and we all contribute during its implementation so that together we achieve quality ECCD outcome... (P5: Public Director).*

*Here we don't have any formal written plan but when my teachers prepare their learner plans, they state the objectives they intend to achieve with the children at the end of each lesson, so I monitor them to find out if they are actually achieving the stated objectives. I do this by checking the children's assignment and test results. Sometimes I ask children questions to test their level of understanding... (P9: Private Director).*

The above findings suggest that every ECCD stakeholder should understand the centre's aims and objectives, implying that harmony of objectives is necessary for accomplishing effective work harmonisation. The findings also suggest that ECCD stakeholders' knowledge of clearly defined ECCD aims will ensure that all stakeholders understand the ECCD programme aims and can contribute to its achievement. In practice, it was evident that while the preparation of learner plans appears to be widely embraced by most centres, only a few engaged in formal management planning of their centres where stakeholders were involved in defining the centre's aims and objectives. This implies that such centres find it difficult to adopt the mechanism of clearly defined ECCD aims and objectives for stakeholder coordination. Therefore, formal planning and communicating the centre's aims and objectives to stakeholders is encouraged.

#### 4.3.3.9 Coordination through simplified organisation and effective chain of command

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of coordination through simplified organisation and effective chain of command. An analysis of the interview data revealed that some participants adopted reorganising their centres into sub-units and appointing a coordinator to be in charge of the unit. For example, some participants said they have a coordinator in charge of the crèche, one in charge of the nursery, another in charge of the kindergarten, and one for lower primary. This means that directors use departmentalisation as a coordination mechanism. The study also found that some centres developed an organisational chart that clearly defines the chain of command and line of authority through which coordination is achieved. The following quotes capture some of the opinions expressed by the participants:

*...I can say that the organisational chart of the centre clearly defines the authority structure of the centre. So, the chain of command here is from the director, then we have the school management committee chairman, then two assistants, one in charge of academic and another in charge of administration, then we have unit coordinators for crèche, nursery, KG and lower primary, then we have the teachers and caregivers. So, with this simplified structure, I easily coordinate from my office since all the coordinators report to me on a daily basis... (P2: Public Director).*

*...At my centre, I don't have an organisational structure yet, but I am the one in charge and the teachers are under my control. They take instructions from me. We operate a duty roster, so every week I assign teachers who will be on duty and I supervise them very well to make sure they do the right thing... (P7: Private Director).*

An analysis of the above quotes points to the fact that establishing a line of authority helps staff to know who is responsible and to whom and that if the line of authority and responsibility are clearly defined, the centre director has proper control over his subordinates. This suggests that centre directors can coordinate the efforts of their subordinates using their authority, and if the line of authority is clearly defined, directors could decrease conflicts and improve coordination.

The findings also revealed that some participants perceived an organisational chart and the simplification of their organisation to be a suitable mechanism for coordination. The finding suggests arranging ECCD programme levels into departments could facilitate better coordination among departmental heads. The findings further illustrate that horizontal coordination could be achieved at different ECCD programme levels by adopting sound organisational structure, and

this practice is commendable. In terms of the level of practice among centres, it can be inferred from the finding that even though some ECCD centres have adopted the use of a sound organisational chart, a simplified organisation, and a clear chain of command as mechanisms for coordination, the practice is yet to be adopted by the majority of the centres. ECCD centres are encouraged to embrace these mechanisms for effective and sufficient coordination.

#### 4.3.3.10 Coordinating through meetings and in-service training workshops

This section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of coordinating through group meetings and in-service training. The data analysis shows that most ECCD centres hold meetings with staff, parents and school management committee members to discuss ECCD centre affairs. Participants also perceived in-service training workshops as important coordination devices where ECCD instructional challenges are addressed through capacity building. Some interviewees said that at staff meetings, common problems of the centre are discussed and achieved through that coordination. The following quotes lend credence to the above findings:

*One way I coordinate my staff is through meetings. I hold daily meetings with my teachers every morning before we begin classes and at such meetings we discuss our tasks for the day, we remind ourselves what is expected of us and how we can work as a team to achieve it....*  
(P11: Private Director).

*..... Sometimes coordination of activities is through in-service training. I organise in-service training for my staff when I notice through my regular vetting of their learner plans and visits to their classrooms when they are teaching that they are deficient in some area of the curriculum. Sometimes I train them myself, and sometimes I invite a resource person from outside. So, this training helps in the long run to achieve the objectives of the centre...* (P14: Private Director).

*... I hold meetings with my teachers to discuss general issues of the centres. We use this platform to solve problems facing the teachers and children. I also hold Parents Association meetings as well as board meetings to discuss how to improve teaching and learning at the centre. So, we all discuss and agree on specific targets we want to achieve and where we can get resources from. By doing this, I am involving parents in the management of the centre...*  
(P5: Public Director).

The above quotes suggest that teams, committees, and meetings when managed well, serve as mechanisms for coordinating ECCD activities, and this practice has the potential to bring stakeholders together to undertake common tasks. Most participants indicated that in-service

training workshops provide a meaningful platform for ECCD centre directors and curriculum leaders to sit together and share their expertise with their colleagues. This finding further suggests that to coordinate ECCD centre activities effectively, centre directors must hold periodical staff meetings. At such group meetings, a platform is created to resolve grievances that hinder achieving the centre's goals. Such meetings also allow for the free exchange of ideas. The findings further showed that in-service training workshops appear to be an effective mechanism for achieving coordination as it enables dialogue among members and promotes participative management and shared decision-making. This means that if open dialogue is permitted, it will create an opportunity for resolving interpersonal conflicts among staff. From the participants' perspective, group meetings seem to be an effective coordination mechanism, and this study found its use by directors to align with the management principle of coordination.

#### *4.3.3.11 Coordination through harmonised ECCD programmes and policies*

This final sub-section presents findings and an analysis on using harmonised programmes and policies as one of the directors' coordination mechanisms. From the interview data, the study revealed that some interview participants perceived the use of harmonised ECCD programmes and policies as an effective coordination mechanism. Specifically, it appears that using a standardised ECCD curriculum, a code of conduct for teachers, and some policies developed internally, provides a mechanism through which some directors coordinate their centre's activities. The quotes below captured the experiences shared by some of the interviewees:

*Our activities are regulated by policies. We have rules and regulations for teachers and children. For teachers, we have a code of ethical conduct, a staff development policy, a policy on health and safety, and a policy on nutrition, child abuse, bullying and supervision of children at play. We follow a prescribed ECCD curriculum. Now the learner plans are prepared by the Ghana Education Service so that we all deliver the same content... (P 15: Public Director).*

*.... we run the approved GES ECCD curriculum. I prepare a schedule, budget and observation checklist. So, I make sure my teachers follow our routines all the time. We are now planning to develop some policies to help us more. Currently, I don't have an admission policy, I don't have a parents' handbook. A policy on health and safety, an emergency evacuation policy, and a financial management policy are being developed by a committee. Even though most of our policies are not yet written, we try our best to do the right thing... (P 11: Private Director).*

The above findings point to the fact that ECCD centre policies, harmonised programmes and guidelines, and regulations help ECCD directors control the behaviour of staff, parents, and children and reference points for decision-making. This implies that ECCD centre policies are used to bring uniformity and consistency in decision-making and resolve everyday difficulties confronted by ECCD stakeholders. Furthermore, the study found that harmonised programmes, policies, budgets, schedules, and observation checklists appeared to be efficient coordination tools because they specify the predictable model of conduct necessary for coordinated activities. The study found this practice an appropriate coordination mechanism in that guidelines and rules, processes and curricula ensure uniformity of stakeholder actions at all times. It was evident from the finding that some of the ECCD centres had yet to develop relevant policies to facilitate their coordination activities, suggesting an area of deficiency requiring improvement.

The following section presents findings and an analysis of how ECCD centre directors maintain control at their centres.

#### **4.3.4 Controlling practices of ECCD centre directors**

The fourth research question the study sought to answer was “How do the directors maintain control in their ECCD centres?” Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with directors and board members and document analysis to answer this research question. The findings and analysis are presented based on the following four sub-themes: ECCD outcome control through performance improvement planning, control of ECCD stakeholders’ behaviours and actions, control by strategic ECCD staff recruitment, placement, and continuing professional development, and control by sharing the ECCD centre’s vision, philosophy and values with relevant stakeholders and the use of rules and regulations.

##### *4.3.4.1 ECCD outcome control through performance improvement planning*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of ECCD outcome control through performance improvement planning. From the analysis of interviews and ECCD centre improvement plans, the study found that some participants perceived the identification of ECCD centre performance targets, performance dimensions, and systems of measuring performance in their performance improvement plans as mechanisms for controlling the centre's activities. The

study revealed that in Ghana, the performance of ECCD centres is evaluated at centre, circuit and district levels against the following four quality ECCD indicators: access and participation, quality, management efficiency and pupils' learning tools. The study revealed that preparing a performance improvement plan implementation budget serves as a financial control mechanism. Although some participants perceive the preparation of improvement planning as a control mechanism, the study found that the practice seems limited to public centres receiving the governmental Capitation Grant. The following quotes lend credence to the above findings:

*As a requirement to qualify for the Government of Ghana's Capitation Grant, we are required to prepare a performance improvement plan. The grant supports access and participation, quality, management efficiency and pupils' learning tools. We were given a template for preparing the improvement plan to ensure uniformity. Together with my teachers, the SMC Chairman, and the School Improvement Support Officer, we set targets to achieve for a particular year. We conduct performance appraisals at the centre, circuit and district levels and we identify areas we did well and areas we did not do well, and we all discuss how we can improve on those areas. So, I can say performance improvement planning helps us to define performance dimensions, setting performance targets and embed mechanisms of measuring performance. We prepare a performance improvement plan implementation budget that we spend within, you cannot go beyond it... (P 15: Public Director).*

*We have an attendance book and we check on a daily basis the time you come to the ECCD centre. At the end of every term, after the terminal examinations, we sit down as staff to look at their performance as staff. Here we do subject teaching, so, let's say, if in Mathematics, the students score low marks, we ask the teacher what might be the cause, is that you are not teaching them well and we check their exercise books too every two weeks to see if learners are doing well. We also do a little teaching in our homes as teachers. During the speech and prize-giving day, we have a best teacher award and there are packages for deserving teachers as well in all the areas to serve as an incentive to the teachers. So, they work towards that. So, we have a system of measuring the actual performance and do an evaluation of the actual performance...The introduction of the preparation of performance improvement planning in public centres provides a mechanism for controlling activities at the centres as it involves members of the community in setting targets and monitoring activities of the centres. I must say that the concept is a laudable one, but the irregular flow of the Capitation Grant is affecting quality management of the centre. This means that funds are not always available to purchase some important items captured in the SPIP for ECCD centre improvement. The plans of the ECCD centre through the SPIP can only be effective if money is available to execute the SPIP. Therefore, the quality of public ECCD centres is yet to be seen in terms of improved teaching and learning after the introduction of the SPIP and the Capitation Grant... (P20: Public Board Member).*

*...I get both positive and negative feedback from the parents, then from the municipal office ranking. We have a programme with the KG2, USAID learning programme that begins from KG2 to P2 that we have been doing. In that programme, KG2 is doing well. In that programme, at certain times, the kids are expected to identify two letter words, to be able to pronounce it. They will not get it, to be able to pronounce a two-letter word.... To be able to put the words*

*together and pronounce sounds. Then after that, there is another stage, three-letter words. Pronounce it, write it and mention the alphabets. Yes, there is a programme like that. Therefore, if you enter KG2 classroom right now, they will be able to read a newspaper for you. You will be surprised. Therefore, with that programme they do assessments. Even the assessment is online. It is the GES curriculum but this one is... how do I say it... a partnership programme adopted from that level, the GES level from Accra....*

An analysis of the participants' comments suggests that embedding performance indicators, performance targets, and a system for measuring performance in ECCD centres' performance improvement planning appear to provide a sufficient mechanism for controlling ECCD activities, including using financial resources. The findings indicate that ECCD centres' annual performance appraisal at centre, circuit and district levels seems to serve as an encouragement to control the behaviours of ECCD centres' role players towards achieving better ECCD outcomes. Furthermore, the findings suggest that defining ECCD centre performance is crucial since the goals/objectives established inform ECCD role players which ECCD targets are most important to focus on in the Ghanaian context. The analysis further revealed that implementing their improvement plans may be inefficient due to the irregular release of government funds. This finding suggests that insufficient funds could negatively affect the use of improvement plans as an effective control mechanism.

#### *4.3.4.2 Control of ECCD stakeholders' behaviours and actions*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of control of ECCD stakeholders' behaviours and actions. The data analysis found that most ECCD centre directors perceived using rules and regulations, supervision, monitoring, rewards, and punishment as tools for maintaining control at their centres. Some participants said they use rules and regulations from internal and external sources such as the Ghana Education Service's code of conduct for teachers, code of ethical conduct, staff handbooks, parents' handbooks, rules and regulations for children, and others to control the behaviour of their staff, parents and children. The study further found that participants perceived the Ghana Education Service, the Department of Social Welfare, the Department of Children, the National Inspectorate Authority, the National Fire Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Ghana Health Service, and local government authorities as external regulators of ECCD programmes. Participants indicated that the above regulators help maintain control of ECCD centres through periodic inspections, licensing and annual renewal of



centres' licenses. Even though most participants complained about the lack of inspection feedback from the above external regulators, they believe their activities provide guidelines for ECCD services provision to some extent.

Furthermore, at some centres, vetting teachers' learner plans, monitoring and supervising staff, and taking corrective action were perceived as effective control mechanisms. It was found that most centre directors perceived the use of staff attendance books, class register marking, and teacher's movement books as control mechanisms at their centres. Other control techniques mentioned by some participants were using reward and punishment for exhibiting acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by staff and children. The following excerpts elucidate the experiences of some participants:

*We have an attendance book. We sign in and sign out. Then we also have a movement book which we also use to check the movement of the teachers. Then when you look at the Early Childhood level, we fence the area with wire gauze. So, I use to lock that place as soon as lessons begin, then 5 minutes to break, we open it, but there was this instance the kids will say we want to go to the toilet, we want to urinate, so now we don't lock it any longer, but I make sure the teachers make sure the kids don't go out running around. We have a standard for the school programme – a standardised curriculum that we use to assess performance. I also vet their lesson plans. I appraise the teachers during the term meeting - when a teacher has done well, we observe and that is done during the end-of-term meeting. I sometimes identify some deficiencies... I make sure the teachers come to school on time, I make sure they do their work very well. If there is anybody that is not trying to cooperate, I build dossiers and when it is about three, I give a written query to the teacher... Everything is spelled out in the staff handbook. We have a staff handbook. We do not whip the children here. We do not use capital punishment here. If the child misbehaves, we prefer you sit the child down individually. Letting the child know how his behaviour is affecting the other children, so if the child is not cooperating, the child is sent to the office... (P9: Private Director).*

*Yes, we have formal and informal observation. I do the walk through and if I notice something, I jot it down and bring it to a meeting, but sometimes I address it there. We have formal observation where we go in to observe. I observe lessons formally and informally, that is, without you noticing it. I have stopped doing that because I have noticed that when I enter a class, the children's behaviour is not what they normally show. Therefore, I minimise my interruptions, because with the very formal supervision you cannot get the true picture. Well, as for the cameras, we monitor the system. Sometimes I sit in the office and monitor the system. Sometimes the teacher is attending to a child at a blind side (sic), so I send to call the teacher. I also let them do self-appraisal and then students appraise them.... So, when I vet their lesson notes, for instance, I sometimes come across some deficiencies. I correct them. At times it is just a minor mistake, so I use red pen to correct them, at times I call them. When I need to address something during a meeting, I address it during meetings. When I see that something is not going well, I make sure I call that teacher to address that issue... (P 13; Private Director).*

*We have external regulators such as the National Inspectorate Authority, the Department of Social Welfare, the Ghana Education Services and EPA. Regularly the School Improvement Officer (SISO) comes for supervision, then the Department of Social Welfare also comes to inspect and renew licenses for the 0-3 years programme, so I can say, in a way, they control what we do. My main challenge is that we don't receive any written feedback from them after inspection visits, then another year they come... (P 11: Private Director).*

An analysis of the participants' comments shows that review of teachers' learner plans by directors before their implementation, inspection, and supervision were perceived by participants as efficient control mechanisms. The findings suggest that some directors control the behaviour of their staff, children, and parents physically or administratively by enforcing rules and regulations. The findings also suggest that some participants perceived rewards for appropriate actions and punishments for inappropriate actions as mechanisms for ensuring action accountability at ECCD centres. The study found these practices to be appropriate to the management principle of administrative control.

#### *4.3.4.3 Control by strategic ECCD staff recruitment, placement and continuing professional development*

This sub-section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of control by strategic ECCD staff recruitment, placement, and continuing professional development. From the analysis of the interview data, recruitment of appropriate ECCD experts, placing them at the right level of the ECCD programme, and providing continuous professional development emerged as a common theme. The study revealed that most participants perceived recruitment of qualified ECCD staff, placing them at appropriate levels, providing them with the necessary resources, and ensuring their regular professional development as an avenue for ensuring that quality ECCD service outcomes are achieved. The study found that the lack of qualified ECCD personnel, inappropriate ECCD learning environments, and inadequate play materials and equipment appeared to be significant challenges militating against the efforts of most public centres in achieving their desired ECCD outcomes. The following quotes capture the opinions of some of the participants:

*...At the public centres, government is responsible for training and posting teachers, but it is my duty to place the teachers at the appropriate level. I am also responsible for organising in-service training for them. But the challenge is that people were posted from the headquarters directly to the pre-school without any qualification in early childhood education. We need experts who understand how children learn at their various developmental stages, how to assess their growth and development using appropriate assessment methods...In fact, I am*

*finding it difficult to control these teachers because they are related to some political figures in government, so they don't prepare learner plans for me to vet before they teach...* (P10: Public Director).

*One way I control my teachers is reshuffling, when necessary, by assigning the right people at places where they can handle classes with competence. I make sure I provide them with the required resources and regular insert (sic). If we identify some teaching challenges, we invite SISO or mostly, the curriculum leaders try to step in quickly. I try to recruit teachers who have a passion for teaching children, I don't just look at the qualification...* (P13: Private Director).

The above comments suggest that some participants perceived the utilisation of strategic staffing, appropriate placement, provision of requisite teaching and learning resources, and professional development as an effective method of achieving the desired ECCD outcomes. This is a good practice that must be encouraged. From the experiences shared by some of the public centres, a lack of qualified ECCD personnel, inappropriate ECCD learning environments, and inadequate play equipment appeared to be significant challenges inhibiting the achievement of quality ECCD outcomes. It can be inferred from the analysis that the strategic staffing, placement, and professional development control mechanisms of directors achieve ECCD programme controls at the input and process levels of the ECCD system.

#### *4.3.4.4 Control by belief systems of ECCD centres*

This final sub-section presents findings and an analysis of the theme of control by belief systems of the ECCD centre. The data revealed that some participants perceived encouraging and inspiring ECCD centre role players through centre's norms, values, and traditions to attain control informally. The participants indicated that when ECCD centre staff have emotional ties with the ECCD centre and its mission and vision statements, core values, and philosophies, it may help shape the centre's culture. The following quotes illustrate the opinions of some participants:

*... I make sure things that are supposed to be done are always done. We always want to achieve the best, so we make sure teachers always achieve that goal. The mission and vision of the ECCD centre is boldly written everywhere for everyone to see so we maintain discipline and we are all working hard to achieve that. At staff meetings, we remind ourselves about the mission and vision and our philosophy....* (P7: Private Director).

*...our mission and vision are always stated in our performance improvement plan so that we can communicate it to all the key stakeholders. We discuss this plan with staff, parents, and the education district. We enforce our code of conduct. In my own way, I motivate my staff and parents so that we can live up to our expectations. So, with this we try to establish some culture within the centre that all of us try to follow...* (P11: Private Director).

*... I must say that for now we don't have our mission and vision written anywhere but we follow GES rules and regulations. We are mature and understand what is required of all of us. I am always on the teachers, supervising their lessons, vetting their learner plans. We have GES codes of professional conduct for teachers, so, we go by it. I will try my best to write a vision and mission, core values and philosophies for my centre and make it known to my staff and parents...* (P5: Public Director).

An analysis of the participants' comments illustrates that in maintaining effective control through ECCD centre culture, codes of conduct can be employed to assist ECCD centre role players in understanding how they should act. This finding shows that through codes of conduct, directors indirectly communicate information on the ECCD centre's quality of services, staff and children's safety, and ethical principles to the staff.

Furthermore, the study revealed that ECCD centre control mechanisms seem to be based on the ideas of shared and internalised cultural values, norms, and expectations that guide the work of ECCD staff. The finding demonstrates that using the ECCD centre cultural control mechanism aims at ensuring that all centre members have an implicit understanding of the values and beliefs that define the limits of appropriate behaviour within the centre. In addition, it can be inferred that the ECCD centre's values reflect how directors understand its overall strategic mission and vision of an ideal future, as values and attitudes seem deeply rooted in the ECCD centre's culture. The finding also suggests that participants adopting culture as a management control technique seems to be a step in the right direction. The reason is that the approach seems to have the potential to provide a sense of community with shared values, traditions, and obligations that contribute to normative patterns and norms of social interaction, which supports, and partly substitutes, other control mechanisms in the ECCD centre. The next chapter will discuss the findings in relation to existing literature and the development of a contextual ECCD centre management model.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

Analysis and interpretations of the study's findings are presented in this chapter using data from the interviews and document review. Four key themes emerged from the data. These are: planning practices, organising practices, coordination practices and controlling practices of ECCD centre directors. Although the findings from the analysis revealed that ECCD directors put a lot of effort into managing their centres, the information gathered from the literature, interviews, and document reviews also suggested that ECCD directors are confronted with numerous challenges in their efforts to apply basic management principles at their centres. The identified challenges that were brought about by ECCD contextual factors, included but were not limited to ECCD directors' inadequate knowledge and skills in principles of management; lack of technical support from district education offices to support inexperienced directors during planning; lack of active engagement of key external and internal ECCD stakeholders in the management process; lack of utilisation of enablers of effective and efficient management functions at the inputs, process and outputs phases of management. Other challenges included inadequate utilisation of external planning inputs, lack of use of varied data sources for planning, inadequate mobilisation of resources, and support from the ECCD community/environment.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the empirical findings and connects them with the existing literature within the research field presented in the literature review. The chapter also presents the contribution of the study to the existing research and proposes a contextual framework based on the themes that emerged from the data to guide the management practices of ECCD directors.

#### **5.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS**

The study explored ECCD centre directors' application of basic management principles.

The research questions the study sought to answer were:

- i. How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?
- ii. How do the directors organise ECCD centre activities?
- iii. How do the directors coordinate management activities with the centre's internal and external stakeholders?
- iv. How do the directors maintain control in the ECCD centre?

#### **5.3 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

##### **5.3.1 Theme 1: Planning practices of ECCD centre directors**

*Research question 1: How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?*

Chapter Two identified dimensions of assessing the quality of school improvement planning practices. These dimensions include vision statements, activities, and progress measures, identification of contextual factors, organisation, and resources (VanGronigen & Meyers, 2017). The findings in Chapter Four revealed that most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans stated a vision that communicates how the ECCD centre will be different once improvement targets are achieved, but these plans lacked depth. Furthermore, most of the vision statements do not show the ECCD centre's dedication to its improvement efforts and do

not appear to consider the interest of key ECCD stakeholders such as children, parents, and local community members.

These findings partially contrast with those of Acton (2021), who argued that quality school improvement plans should contain a comprehensive but brief vision that considers the needs of key stakeholders such as teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, guardians, and community members. Thus, how the improvement vision is formulated reveals the general success or failure of the improvement plan's implementation. The above discussion can allude to the fact that at some ECCD centres, criteria for formulating a quality improvement vision appear to be at a beginning stage. When comparing the findings with the elements of the study's theoretical framework, it can be confirmed that planning corresponds well with the elements of Fayol's management functions.

The literature review revealed that a quality school improvement plan must have activities and progress measure components, which should include priority identification, process outcomes, progress indicators, and development of action steps (Acton, 2021; Carvalho et al., 2021b; Meyers & Hitt, 2017; Strunk et al., 2016). However, the findings of this study revealed that most sampled analysed plans stated only up to four performance improvement priorities as the concentration for the plan's time frame. The findings also showed that convincing justifications were not offered to express why the priorities needed urgent attention to achieve the ECCD centre's improvement vision. This finding partially contradicts the findings of Acton (2021), Carvalho et al. (2021), Meyers and Hitt (2017), and Strunk et al. (2016), who argued that as part of the activities and progress measures planning domain, the planning team should justify selecting each improvement priority. The preceding discussion implies that identifying quality improvement priorities in most ECCD centres was only partially effective. This means that plans may not be technically sound to help achieve the stated improvement vision due to imperfect priorities statements.

In addition to identifying priorities, the statement of specific, realistic, and elaborate process outcomes was recommended by Meyers and Hitt (2017). The findings revealed that most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans incorporated minimally detailed process

outcomes for each priority. It was further observed that all management process results were not correctly connected to the improvement targets. Furthermore, no justifications were offered to illustrate the alignment between each improvement target and its expected outcomes. In addition, most of the analysed sample plans did not contain specific expected outcomes for each performance target to help achieve the ECCD centre's overall improvement target. The findings are not entirely in agreement with Strunk et al. (2016), who argued that quality school improvement plans should contain specific, realistic, and detailed expected outcomes for each improvement target to aid in achieving the school's improvement target and that the expected outcomes should align to each performance improvement target through convincing justifications. The abovementioned findings also partially contradict those by Meyers and VanGronigen (2019) and Carvalho et al. (2021b), who assert that quality school improvement plans should state all expected process outcomes and show how each outcome solves the associated priorities. The above discussion suggests that including process outcomes can increase stakeholders' commitment and the possibility of successfully implementing the improvement plan. Consequently, the researcher proposes that process outcomes should also consider ECCD centre-specific contextual factors that contribute to the attainment of quality ECCD outcomes.

The literature review revealed the need to include progress indicators in the improvement plan (Meyers & Hitt, 2018). The findings in Chapter Four revealed that for some of the process outcomes, most of the sampled analysed performance improvement plans contain some performance indicators to serve as monitoring tools to gauge ECCD centres' current improvement in achieving those process outcomes within the improvement plan's time frame. However, it was noticed that the incorporated performance indicators required detailed descriptions and did not seem to be aligned with the process outcomes. In addition, even though most of these analysed sample performance improvement plans referred to self-appraisal exercises, the plans did not clearly show how they would be unified with the ECCD centre's practices.

This finding partially corresponds with those of Duke (2015) and Meyers and Hitt (2018), who argue that performance improvement plans should contain expected outcomes with performance indicators serving as progress monitors to gauge the improvement toward meeting the stated



process outcomes. The above authors further contend that all indicators should be implicitly and purposefully aligned with each process outcome, and the school self-review and reflection practices should be implicitly fused into the school's schedules or routines.

Similarly, the researcher would like to argue that the level of excellence in the practice of stating performance indicators, as revealed in the findings, appeared to be at the beginning of development levels of quality planning practices, which calls for improvement in this planning domain. Judging from the preceding discussion, the researcher proposes that for each expected outcome, the performance improvement plan should contain a range of performance indicators serving as progress monitors to gauge the ECCD centre's improvement toward meeting the stated process outcomes. Furthermore, all performance indicators must implicitly and purposefully align with each process outcome.

In addition to including performance indicators in improvement plans, the literature review also revealed that in planning activities and progress measures of performance improvement plans, crucial action steps must be implemented to accomplish the process outcomes and, ultimately, a priority or performance target (Acton, 2021; Schildkamp, 2019). This study's findings on including action steps for stated priorities revealed that at a few centres, the plans did not have action steps for the stated priorities. This study's empirical findings revealed that most performance improvement plans contained few designated action steps for the process outcomes. However, all the action steps were routine in quality and did not show innovative procedures for achieving improvement process outcomes. Thus, the action steps seemed only partially aligned with the process outcomes.

The above findings do not entirely correspond with the quality action steps practice recommended by many researchers in the literature. For example, Acton (2021) and Schildkamp (2019) argue that a performance improvement plan should contain comprehensive, precise, and elaborate actionable phases for each expected outcome. Similarly, Duke (2015) also argues that stated action steps should not be routine and should properly present elaborate strategies for achieving process outcomes. In addition, Dunaway et al. (2012) and Strunk et al. (2016) further assert that each action step must be purposefully aligned with and offer proper support to achieve all process outcomes.

Based on the above discussions, the researcher argues that since the quality of action step planning appeared completely absent in some ECCD centres' performance improvement plans, the practice seems to be at its development stage at most ECCD centres.

The previous discussion seems to imply that preparing comprehensive action steps is crucial in planning. ECCD directors need to recognise that the action steps of an improvement plan enable operationalisation of the centre's performance improvement vision and related priorities since it manifests the activities that must be implemented for the ECCD centre to accomplish its performance improvement targets.

The literature review also revealed that context scanning is an important stage in the planning process. Specifically, two categories of contexts that promote quality ECCD centre improvement planning were identified. These were centre context and root cause analysis (Acton, 2021; Strunk et al., 2016). However, this study showed that most of the plans did not make much reference to the external community, specifically parents, local community members, metropolitan, municipal, and district education authorities, as well as other regulatory bodies such as Ministries of Health, Women, Children and Social Protection, Local Government and Rural Development. It was found that most of the sample plans contained little or no information on the needs of children within disadvantaged groups. In cases where disadvantaged children were identified, there was no evidence to suggest how the plan would purposefully help them.

Based on the above discussions, the researcher argues that the sampled ECCD directors appeared to have little understanding of the ECCD centre's specific contextual factors that permit effective and efficient implementation of improvement. The above findings do not entirely align with quality school context scanning practices identified by many improvement planning scholars. For example, Acton (2021) and Strunk et al. (2016) assert that a technically sound school improvement plan should establish a detailed comprehension of the school's environment, involving internal community such as school personnel, target learner population and external community sub-groups such as parents, local community members, and the education district. The abovementioned authors also suggest that a priority and its fundamental components should purposely address and focus on specific learner target populations' needs and subcategories.

Based on the discussion above, the researcher argues that most ECCD directors' current school context analysis seems insufficient to ensure effective and efficient ECCD outcomes. In addition, the quality of practice appears to be at its beginning to developing stages. The previous discussions imply that for a comprehensive context scanning to be achieved, ECCD directors should extend ECCD centre-community context analysis to involve more internal and external environmental factors that require attention. Subsequently, the researcher suggests the relevant role appropriate application of elements of system theory can play in improving context analysis practice. For example, identifying ECCD environmental factors that influence planning appeared to be an ideal approach to achieving ECCD programme planning and management efficiency.

Root cause analysis, or environmental scanning, involves discovering why a performance gap has occurred or existed. Root cause analysis is an environmental scanning method for problem-solving to find deficiencies or the cause of poor performance (Schildkamp, 2019). The findings showed that some of the sampled plans made little effort to utilise appropriate varied data points as proof to ascertain, substantiate and communicate the leading cause of the performance gap. However, most of the root cause analyses that were incorporated substantially lacked vigour and specificity. Most of the sample plans did not contain any connection to each priority's justification and or the reason why it is a priority. Notwithstanding, some plans hinted at an association between each priority's justification and its leading causes. However, they were not clearly expressed for easy understanding.

The above findings partially contradict the findings of scholars such as Acton (2021) and Duke et al. (2013), who argue that comprehensive performance appraisals utilise varied sources of data and statistics to detect and resolve the leading causes of the performance gaps between the improvement vision and current performance status of the school. The empirical finding is also partially inconsistent with Schildkamp's (2019) assertion that during root cause analysis, a planning team should use a range of suitable data sources and evidence to communicate, in unambiguous terms, details of the root causes for all priorities identified with comprehensive descriptions of the associations with each target's justification and its leading causes. Similarly, Acton (2021), Duke et al. (2013), and Schildkamp (2019) further argue that when planning, it is vital that planners provide a comprehensive, sound, and concise description of the root causes of all improvement priorities.

The literature review indicated that three things should be included in organising improvement plans. These are sequencing, schedule/timeline, and alignment. Sequencing involves the organisation of priorities, expected outcomes, and actionable steps in that particular order (VanGronigen, Meyers & Hitt, 2017). The findings indicated that while most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans included performance targets, expected outcomes, and actionable stages that suggest some level of sequence, no reason for such sequencing was offered to help understand whether the plans' contents are correctly arranged. This finding further revealed that the included sequencing seemed unsound, inadvertent, and not logically arranged to aid in achieving the expected outcome.

The above findings do not fully concur with the quality planning approach recommended by many scholars. For example, Duke et al. (2013) and Duke (2015) argue that to ensure proper sequencing, a planning team should ensure that a plan comprises a logical arrangement of the contents of the plan with actionable steps with the person responsible for each target to help in the achievement of all targets. VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017) also assert that the plan should contain a convincing sequencing justification. Duke et al. (2013) and Duke (2015) suggest in their rubric for assessing the quality of school improvement planning that the plan should be organised in such a way as to ensure that priorities come before process outcomes followed by action steps.

From the above discussions, the researcher supports the claim that ECCD directors need to ensure that a performance improvement plan comprises elements arranged in a logical order to help achieve the intended purpose of the plan. Furthermore, the researcher supports the assertion that an improvement plan should contain a convincing justification for the sequencing, and the plan should be organised to ensure that priorities precede expected outcomes followed by actionable steps. The preceding discussions imply that the quality of organising a performance improvement plan, specifically the sequencing of targets, expected outcomes, and actionable steps, appeared to be in its infancy or development state at the sampled ECCD centres. This means that ECCD directors and planning team members need to improve their knowledge and skills in this regard.

In the literature review, VanGronigen, Meyers and Hitt (2017) argue that planning teams should ensure that the improvement plan encompasses a comprehensive, detailed time frame of actions and processes to be undertaken within the plan's defined time frame. The study indicated that most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans involved an outline of a time frame of activities and events to be achieved during the stipulated period. However, the stated time frame of activities lacked details. The empirical findings further showed that a few of the analysed sample improvement plans contained a general but ambiguous time frame of events and processes to be undertaken during the improvement plan's stipulated period. In these sample plans, it was also observed that some specific times were provided to indicate how the ECCD centre achieves performance indicators and improvement targets and, eventually, assist in achieving the improvement vision.

The above findings are partially similar to those of VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017), who claim that planning teams must ensure that the improvement plan contains a comprehensive, detailed time frame of actions and processes to be undertaken within the plan's defined time frame. However, the findings do not fully concur with Duke's (2015) assertion that a planning team must ensure that the plan offers a thorough and clear indication of a specific time frame and performance indicators to achieve the improvement vision. The researcher believes that the quality level of practice of planned events and activities to be undertaken within the ECCD improvement plan's assigned time frame appeared to be in its infancy or at the development level.

In the literature review, Meyers and VanGronigen (2019) and Strunk et al. (2016) argue that one of the quality characteristics of an improvement plan is that the planners ensure that the plan shows a complete internal alignment of all important aspects of the plan. Alignment entails that an improvement plan's different constituents are appropriately linked, such as improvement targets aligning with the improvement vision. The study showed that most of the analysed sample plans showed poor internal alignment of performance improvement targets, ECCD centre context, expected outcomes, and actionable steps with the centre's main improvement vision. It was also observed that no justifications for alignment were given and no mention of the metropolitan/municipal/ district's improvement vision.

The above findings contradict those of Meyers and VanGronigen (2019), who argue that the planning team should ensure that the plan fully connects important aspects of the improvement plan to the school's main improvement vision. Strunk et al. (2016) further claim that planners should provide complete justification for alignment, the details of the school's improvement vision, and how it is connected with the district's improvement vision. Thus, the focus of this planning domain is on ensuring that there is coherence in all elements of the improvement plan.

With regard to this finding, the researcher argues that the quality of the practice of the planning domain of alignment at most of the ECCD centres seems to be in its infancy, implying the need to improve the directors' and planning team members' skills and knowledge to ensure sound and quality ECCD programme planning. Similarly, the researcher argues that during improvement planning, ECCD directors can ensure alignment by ensuring that the plan shows a complete internal alignment of all the important aspects of the plan and provide a complete justification for how the centre's improvement vision is connected with the district's improvement vision. The forgoing discussions seem to imply that ECCD directors appeared to lack technical knowledge and skills in sound and quality planning, which calls for training in this regard. In addition to ensuring that elements of the plan are appropriately aligned, the literature review indicated the relevance of resources in ECCD programme management. Prior research acknowledges that certain people responsible for the planning and managing ECCD centre programmes and the general support provided by the ECCD community are vital resources. The empirical findings in this study revealed that directly responsible people were indicated for implementation actions. However, allocating specific activities to specific stakeholders was concentrated around the chairperson of the ECCD management committee, the chairperson of parents' association, and the ECCD director. Furthermore, the findings showed that ECCD directors appeared to be responsible for most of the priorities.

The above findings do not entirely align with those of Domingo et al. (2020), Strunk et al. (2016), and VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017), who claim that an improvement planning team should ensure that accountable people are indicated against each action step and this should be done in a manner that responsibilities are evenly distributed among key responsible people but not concentrated around only a few people or parties. Similarly, the researcher argues that

assigning the ECCD directors as the responsible people for a priority contradicts Duke (2015), who strongly asserts that directors should not be directly responsible for any priority but should instead play the role of facilitator to reinforce and ensure others are held responsible or accountable for progress on action steps.

Based on the previous discussions, the researcher suggests that assigning responsibilities to key implementers of the ECCD centre's improvement plan can be an accountability mechanism by openly identifying the responsible person or people. Consequently, it can make it possible for the plan's action steps to be implemented effectively when key stakeholders are made to own the plan and its implementation. Implementation gaps can occur once action steps lack a directly responsible person or group, which may reduce stakeholder support, demoralise the governance and leadership team, and weaken the broader ECCD turnaround efforts.

Regarding this finding, the researcher proposes that effective improvement planning can be achieved if ECCD directors are aware of the significant role resources play in planning. These resources may include individuals responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and internal and external support for planning and implementation. The preceding discussions further imply that for effective planning to be achieved, ECCD directors should ensure that accountable people are indicated against each action step, and this should be done so that responsibilities are evenly distributed among key responsible people but not concentrated around only a few people or parties. The researcher, therefore, agrees with prior research on the need to assign responsibilities to key implementers of ECCD centres' programme improvement plans because they serve as accountability mechanisms by openly identifying the responsible person or people. Doing so will enable the plan's action steps to be implemented effectively when key stakeholders are made to own the plan and its implementation.

The researcher believes that once action steps lack directly responsible people or groups, implementation gaps could happen, which may reduce stakeholder support, demoralise the governance and leadership team, and weaken the broader ECCD programme's improvement efforts. It is, therefore, essential that ECCD directors should not be directly responsible person for any priority but should instead act as reinforcers and ensure others are held responsible or accountable for progress on action steps.

In addition to ensuring that responsible people are identified, prior research revealed that planners should ensure that the final improvement plan purposely indicates available support that associates with and aids in carrying out the improvement efforts and provides a complete description of how the support can be unified to help achieve the improvement vision (VanGronigen, Meyers & Hitt, 2017). This study's findings showed that most of the analysed performance improvement plans contained limited information about available support within and outside the ECCD centres that align with and help implement the performance improvement vision. The findings revealed that the two main funding sources identified by all the sampled plans were the government of Ghana Capitation Grant and financial support from the parents' association. It was observed that neither additional sources of available support from the community nor other sources, such as non-governmental organisations were provided. Furthermore, details about how ECCD centres will be involved in continuous ECCD environmental scanning to find potential available support in the future to supplement available resources were not provided.

The findings partially concur with those of VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017), who claim that planners should ensure that the final plan purposefully indicates available support associated with and aiding in the improvement effort. VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017) further argue that the description should be concise and defend the utilisation of available support. The finding contradicts Duke's (2015) contention that if there is no available support to implement the improvement vision, the plan should precisely indicate why and how the school will involve continuous school-community environmental scanning to find potential available support.

Similarly, the researcher argues that ECCD directors can achieve effective improvement planning and implementation by ensuring that the final plan purposely indicates available support that associates with and aids in carrying out the improvement effort and provides a complete detailed description of supports and how they will be unified to aid in achieving the improvement vision. This means that it is essential that ECCD directors provide a concise description that justifies the utilisation of available support. Furthermore, it is advisable to ensure that if there is no available support to implement an improvement vision, the plan should precisely indicate how



the ECCD centre will involve continuous comprehensive context scanning of the ECCD centre-community to find potential available support.

The previous discussions imply that to achieve effective planning, ECCD directors should ensure that ECCD programme improvement plans intentionally use all resources and support available within the centre, community, and district to help achieve the improvement vision. In this finding, the researcher suggests that resource mobilisation efforts by ECCD directors appeared to be limited to government and parents' association funding, and this suggests that the quality of planning practice in this domain is still at the beginning stage. The preceding discussions suggest that since ECCD programme management is resource intensive, directors need to improve their skills and knowledge to intentionally identify available resources within the ECCD centre, district, and community serving as ECCD programme management input suppliers that help in effective and efficient ECCD programme management.

In summary, the findings discussed under the theme of planning practices of ECCD directors generally suggest that planning is an important managerial function that enables ECCD directors to prescribe ECCD activities in an actionable plan. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the outcome of the director's planning function is coherent with ECCD improvement goals and their implementation timelines. The empirical findings discussed partially concur with planning practices revealed in the literature. Specifically, the theme of planning is consistent with Fayol's management principle of unity of direction, which emphasises attention and unison, and its effective utilisation ensures that all staff direct their efforts towards the same ECCD activities as a team and the activities are associated with the same ECCD goals. This study's findings appear to align with the administrative management theory, which is the theoretical framework of this study.

The researcher proposes that comprehensive ECCD management planning can be achieved using a planning inputs-process and outputs approach. In addition, the effective utilisation of the above-discussed twelve planning steps with the management principle of unity of direction proved to be an effective and efficient planning practice used by ECCD directors. The researcher, therefore, included the twelve planning steps in the process stage of the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres.

### **5.3.2 Theme 2: Organising practices of ECCD directors**

*Research question 2: How do the directors organise ECCD centre activities?*

In addressing the second research question, the researcher explored how ECCD centre directors apply the organisation principles in their centres. The findings revealed that some directors succeeded in establishing governance structures and mobilising parents and committee members as critical resources to support their ECCD programmes. On the other hand, it also appears that some centres were yet to develop a mechanism to tap into available community resources for effective and efficient ECCD services delivery. The finding revealed that while only a few ECCD centres appeared to have advanced a sufficient system for mobilising resources to augment the government's Capitation Grant, most centres seemed overly dependent on that grant, implying an insufficient resource mobilisation approach. Maintaining positive ECCD centre-community ties seemed to be a general problem facing some ECCD centres.

The above finding is consistent with the literature where Kwashabawa and Oduwaiye (2016) and Mustafa and Pranoto (2019) argue that establishing management structures can serve as an organising mechanism and, when applied effectively, can guarantee optimal use of community resources to achieve managerial effectiveness and efficiency. However, this view is only partly representative of the empirical findings from this study.

Based on the findings, the researcher argues that ECCD programme management is a resource-intensive venture and mobilisation of resources from the community is significant in complementing funding from the government. The researcher, therefore, contends that ECCD centre communities can serve as a source of ECCD management inputs in the form of social resources. ECCD directors must acquire the requisite skills and knowledge in resource mobilisation to tap into the community's resources to achieve organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, the researcher believes that mobilising critical ECCD centre management resources on time can be key enablers in implementing the ECCD improvement plan. The above findings correspond well with the study's theoretical framework elements. Accordingly, the organisation of resources has been incorporated into the proposed contextual

framework of the management of ECCD centres at the management inputs and process stages of the framework.

In addition to mobilising resources, the study's empirical findings indicated that one of the ECCD director's organising functions includes providing distributed, instructional and administrative leadership. The following organising activities were reported to be practiced explicitly by the majority of ECCD directors: ECCD curriculum planning, organising in-service training for caregivers and teachers, procuring teaching and learning resources, allocating teachers to their various classes, vetting teachers' learner plans, and delegating responsibilities by appointing ECCD programme level coordinators. Other organising activities involved monitoring teaching and learning, motivating staff, mentoring inexperienced teachers, and sharing the centre's vision with staff and parents. The empirical findings further revealed that the most used organising activities were establishing administrative and management structures through parents' associations, school management committees, and other internal committees.

The above findings align with those of Kabiru, Theuri, and Misiko (2018), who noted that the management function of organising is determining activities, dividing and grouping organisational activities, allocating duties, delegating authority and establishing responsibility, and harmonising authority and task relationships. The above findings also concur with those of Liberman (2014), who explains that organising is the process of utilising the planning function by putting together and allocating necessary human, financial, physical, and information resources to accomplish the organisation's mission and vision.

The previous findings imply that successful ECCD programme management organisation requires the effective use of Fayol's administrative management principle of authority and responsibility, which ECCD directors can achieve by establishing ECCD centre governance structures. This corresponds with Kongnyuy (2020), who argues that when managers effectively use the management principle of authority and responsibility, they have the legal right to exercise authority by issuing orders, commands, and instructions that force personnel to execute a given task. In this case, both the superior and subordinate's responsibilities become the outcome of authority.

The empirical findings further indicated that Fayol's management principle of the degree of centralisation had been utilised by some of the directors through the practice of distributed leadership, making it possible for the principle of decentralisation to fit into ECCD centre management practices properly. The findings showed that some ECCD directors usually identify leadership qualities in particular staff members and delegate control to them in various departments and sections. This finding corresponds with those of Cornito (2021) and Rini, Sukanto, Ridwan, and Hariri (2019), who argue that the distribution of authority promotes the decentralisation of the decision-making process at middle and lower levels of management as a way of striking a good balance in the organisation. The above findings are compatible with the elements of the theoretical framework of this study. Hence, Fayol's management principle of the degree of centralisation has been integrated into the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres.

In addition, the empirical findings showed that most ECCD directors made good use of the management principle of division of work. This was evident in ECCD directors assigning roles and responsibilities to different categories of ECCD centre personnel, such as caregivers, teachers, and non-teaching staff, such as kitchen staff, and the school nurse, based on their specialisation. This means the division of labour helps to maximise ECCD service delivery. The finding concurs with that of Cornito (2021), who indicated that the management principle requires that employees specialise in different areas with different skills and expertise. The researcher, therefore, suggests that in addition to ensuring management efficiency, applying the management principle of division of labour can help ECCD directors support the personal and professional developments of staff and promote the efficiency of staff to increase improved ECCD service delivery. The empirical findings corresponded well with the elements of the theoretical framework of this study. Accordingly, the management principle of division of labour has been integrated into the proposed contextual framework. This implies that in implementing the proposed contextual framework for ECCD centre management, applying the principle of division of labour is necessary to achieve management effectiveness and efficiency.

Furthermore, the empirical findings suggest that most ECCD directors used the unity of command management principle by giving instructions and command to caregivers, teachers, and non-teaching staff. It was evident that ECCD directors' job descriptions give them authority

to assign duties and responsibilities to staff and ensure such orders emanate from one source to avoid conflicting orders. In addition, it came to light that an organisational chart at some ECCD centres ensures unity of command and prevents disorder and conflicting directives. The finding seemed to suggest that the effective application of the management principle of unity of command in ECCD settings ensures that the ECCD centre runs under the supervision of the director. Furthermore, it ensures that children, caregivers, teachers, and non-teaching staff follow the director's direction to achieve quality ECCD outcomes.

Another management principle presented in the finding was the principle of unity of direction. Directors' use of this principle was evident when the centre's programmes were grouped into departments such as crèche, nursery, kindergarten, kitchen unit, finance, and administration. The findings seemed to suggest that ECCD directors create these departments with the sole aim of effective management to achieve the overall mission and vision of the ECCD programme effectively and efficiently. The above empirical findings are consistent with those of Bacud (2020), who argues that the management principle of unity of command requires that to avoid confusion as a result of conflicting orders from more than one superior, staff must be answerable to one superior, and the application of this principle helps to trace sources of mistakes easily. The above findings also align with Tanzeh's (2019) claim that the management principle of unity of command ensures employees' attention and unison.

The researcher proposes that the effective utilisation of the principle of unity of command is necessary when implementing the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres for efficient and effective management. This is because its application can ensure that all ECCD personnel direct their efforts towards the planned ECCD goals and activities as a team. The findings seemed to imply that ECCD directors are required to be responsible for planning and monitoring the progress of implementing the ECCD's improvement plan and coordinating personnel's activities.

In addition, the empirical findings revealed evidence to suggest that directors effectively utilised the management principle of order in the organising function of mobilising human, instructional material, and financial resources. This was evident when some directors acquired teaching and learning materials such as markers, curriculum materials, and syllabi. Furthermore, the

management principle of order was effectively used by some directors through recruiting qualified ECCD personnel for the effective implementation of the ECCD curriculum. This finding aligns with Gupta (2014) and Lussier (2021), who argue that the principle of order emphasised that it is the responsibility of managers to provide required resources to staff and ensure that the work environment is not only safe but tidy and clean so that staff can perform at their optimal level. The finding seemed to imply that directors' effective use of the management principle of order can facilitate achieving ECCD outcomes.

Furthermore, the empirical finding showed that Fayol's management principle of discipline was recognised as a significant ECCD centre organising element, and it was effectively utilised through the development and use of codes of conduct for ECCD centre personnel and rules and regulations for children to regulate behaviour, as well as train children. The above finding concurs with that of Shakir (2014), who claimed that Fayol's administrative management principle of discipline is about compliance with the organisation's core values, mission and vision statements, rules and regulations, and code of conduct, which encourage good conduct and respectful interactions of staff as necessary for the smooth running of organisations. Based on the findings, the researcher argues that the management principle of discipline is a key component of ECCD directors organising activities. Therefore, directors need to ensure that discipline prevails at all times to enable the smooth implementation of the ECCD curriculum.

Furthermore, it was revealed in the literature review that collaboration with family and community members ensures continued support for ECCD programme planning and implementation (Ololube, Ingiabuna & Agbor, 2014). However, the findings indicated that in most ECCD centres, social and personal connections with families and communities appeared to be tenuous. The findings implied that implementing ECCD improvement programmes may be harder to sustain in some community contexts. It also suggested that many ECCD centres' needs remain high and pressing. The above finding is inconsistent with Ali's (2019), who argues that stakeholder involvement in managing educational institutions, such as involving local community members in management, is a source of organisational strength.

Similarly, the researcher believes that the social capital of a neighbourhood can be a significant resource for improving ECCD outcomes. From the preceding discussions, the researcher proposes that the capacity of some centres to sustain developing the essential ECCD centre-

community support appeared to have fallen by the wayside. This may be attributed to the lack of knowledge and skills in applying Fayol's management principle of initiative effectively. Furthermore, encouraging employees' initiative can help ECCD stakeholders express new ideas that can encourage their interest and involvement.

The empirical findings also suggest that providing an appropriate temporal environment to facilitate personal care routines, such as meals/snacks, toileting/diapering, and safety practices that promote children's personal care practices, appeared insufficiently organised by most ECCD centres. The findings seemed to indicate that the application of Fayol's management principle of order appeared not to be in effective use. Fayol argued that managers are responsible for providing the required resources to staff and ensuring that the work environment is safe, tidy, and clean so that staff can perform optimally (Mezieobi, Nzokurum & Mezieobi, 2014). The findings seemed to imply that the management principle of order is relevant because in ECCD settings, recruiting qualified ECCD personnel and making available sufficient instructional resources are key management responsibilities of directors for the effective implementation of the ECCD curriculum. However, the above view is only partly representative of the empirical findings from this study.

In summary, the findings proved that the management function of organising is one of the elements of administrative management theory that ECCD directors carry out once an improvement plan of action is designed. The empirical findings discussed in this section revealed that the findings broadly agree with findings in the existing literature and correspond with the elements of the classical management theory, specifically, the administrative theory, which is the theoretical framework of this study. The findings suggest that the organising function of the ECCD director helps implement the centre's improvement plan through resource mobilisation and making them available in the correct quantity at the right time. Furthermore, the findings showed that in order to perform the organising function effectively, directors need to focus on providing everything necessary to carry out the ECCD improvement plan, identify and establish responsibilities for each stakeholder and departments, and specify the ECCD centre's organisational structure to guide the chain of command and governance structure. Furthermore, the study brought to light the fact that the majority of ECCD directors appeared to lack adequate knowledge and skills in applying Fayol's administrative management principles of authority and

responsibility, degree of centralisation, division of work, unity of command, and unity of direction when organising their ECCD activities. This means that the above management principles should serve as guiding principles for directors to perform their management function of organising. Accordingly, the aforementioned management principles have become prerequisites for achieving effective and efficient ECCD programme management when using the proposed contextual framework for managing ECCD centres.

### **5.3.2 Theme 3: Coordination practices of ECCD centre directors**

*Research question 3: How do the directors coordinate management activities with the ECCD internal and external stakeholders?*

In addressing the third research question, the researcher explored how ECCD centre directors apply the management principle of coordination with their internal and external stakeholders. The empirical findings are analysed in connection with literature in the management field in the following paragraphs.

In the literature review, Lussier (2021) revealed that in organising work, managers coordinate the entire organisational process by dividing it into smaller operations, using job instructions, schedules, procedures specifications, and other documents. The empirical findings revealed that ECCD directors coordinate ECCD activities through ECCD centre routines to ensure standardisation and formalisation, planning and schedules, performance improvement plans, and schedules. Other coordination mechanisms revealed in the findings include the use of rules and regulations, codes of ethics for behavioural control and performance appraisals, use of reward systems, communication networks, and a committee system of management. The empirical findings further indicated that ECCD directors used administrative leadership, clearly defined aims and objectives of ECCD programmes, simplified organisation and effective chain of command, meetings and in-service training workshops, and harmonised ECCD programmes and policies, respectively, as coordination mechanisms.

The empirical findings mentioned above concurred with those of Aristidou and Barrett (2018), who maintain that organisational coordination can be achieved through the use of routines, planning and schedules, rules and regulations, codes of ethics, and performance appraisals,



reward systems, communication networks, committee systems of management, leadership, chains of command, meetings and training workshops, and harmonised policies. Similarly, the researcher found the above coordination mechanisms effective and accordingly incorporated them into the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres.

Furthermore, the empirical findings suggest that a simplified organisational structure helps ECCD directors coordinate their centres' programmes by delegating roles and responsibilities to unit heads. This finding is consistent with the literature where Claggett and Karahanna (2018), Demirel (2020), and Dolechek, Lippert, Vengrouskie, and Lloyd (2019) all argue that organisational coordination can be achieved by departmentalisation where heads of departments wield delegated authority and coordinate on behalf of the manager. The discussions appeared to imply that coordination by a simple organisational structure where the lines of authority and responsibility from top to bottom are demarcated can help ECCD directors reduce relational conflicts and provide the opportunity for integrated action.

The researcher proposes that the effective management function of coordination can be achieved by utilising Fayol's management principles of unity of purpose and chain of command. For example, ECCD directors can use committees, establish communication systems, organise conferences/meetings to discuss and solve problems, use curriculum leaders as special coordinators, use reward systems and mechanisms, and use observation checklists to assist ECCD directors in coordinating, thereby achieving distributed leadership. The researcher would like to argue that effective ECCD programme coordination can also be achieved through the director's supervision and the establishment of informal contacts with ECCD personnel, and this can help create a climate of cooperation, which is the footing of efficient and effective management coordination. Furthermore, outcome or behavioural control and performance appraisal can also be an effective coordination mechanism but appeared to be missing in the literature reviewed; this despite the advantages that the behavioural control and performance appraisal coordination mechanism offers. Accordingly, the behavioural control and performance appraisal coordination mechanism has been integrated into the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres.

The empirical findings also indicated that some ECCD directors considered establishing a communication system an effective coordination mechanism. However, this coordination mechanism appeared not well established nor effectively used at some centres. This finding partially aligns with the literature where Blakeney, Lavallee, Baik, Pambianco, O'Brien, and Zierler (2019) argue that effective management coordination can be achieved through establishing a communication system and clear management structure of the organisation. Based on the empirical findings, the researcher proposes that ECCD directors could use Fayol's administrative management principle of a scalar chain as it can facilitate establishing a chain of command to ensure a clear line of authority and effective communication across the ECCD centre.

Similarly, the researcher argues that ECCD directors' utilisation of teams and committee systems for managing affairs of their ECCD centres can promote the management principle of esprit de corps. This finding is consistent with Bacud's (2020) argument that the management principle of esprit de corps represents unity among staff and their involvement in all organisational activities as a team. The preceding discussion seemed to imply that applying the management principle of esprit de corps can promote morale in the workplace through communication as well as organisational culture, fellow feeling, understanding, and mutual trust within the ECCD centre's personnel. The researcher believes that teams and a committee system appeared to promote team spirit among ECCD personnel effectively. Therefore, the principle of esprit de corps has been integrated into the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres.

In summary, the previous discussions of the findings under the theme of organising revealed that for effective management, an ECCD director requires management, exceptional interpersonal skills, and the ability to motivate and inspire staff. The theme of coordination corresponded well with the elements of the administrative management theory, which is the theoretical framework of this study. The discussions further revealed that ECCD centres are interdependent systems and need coordination among different departments to stay in sync and on target with the ECCD improvement plan. The discussions suggest that the ECCD director's most significant obligation is to synchronise all required activities across different functions to facilitate and ensure the ECCD programme's success as per the agreed improvement plan. This means that for efficient

and effective coordination of the ECCD programme, directors need effective communication skills to synchronise the centre's activities and consider the delegation of authority and responsibility and span of control within various departments.

#### **5.3.4 Theme 4: Controlling practices of ECCD centre directors**

*Research question 4: How do the directors maintain control in the ECCD centre?*

In addressing the fourth research question, the researcher explored the management control practices of ECCD directors. The empirical findings are analysed and discussed in relation to the literature review in the subsequent paragraphs.

The empirical findings showed that ECCD directors effectively used behaviour and action control mechanism. It was evident that most ECCD directors perceived the ECCD centre's rules and regulations, supervision, monitoring, rewards and punishment as tools for maintaining control at their centres. In addition, the use of rules and regulations from internal and external sources such as the Ghana Education Service's code of conduct for teachers, code of ethical conduct, staff handbook, parents' handbook, rules and regulations for children, and others, provided mechanisms for ECCD directors to control the behaviour of the staff, parents and children. Similarly, the findings revealed that the rules and regulations of external ECCD supervisory bodies such as the Ghana Education Service, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Children, National Inspectorate Authority, National Fire Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana Health Service and Local Government Authority all serve as mechanisms to maintain control of ECCD centres through periodic inspections, licensing and annual renewal of centre's licenses. The researcher argues that vetting teachers' learner plans by directors, monitoring and supervising ECCD personnel, and taking corrective action can be used effectively as action control mechanisms by ECCD directors. In addition, using staff attendance books, marking class registers, and using teacher's movement books by some of the ECCD centres can serve as behaviour control mechanisms.

The empirical findings further proposed that ECCD directors use establishing governance and administrative structures such as parents' associations and ECCD centre management

committees as administrative control mechanisms. Subsequently, the researcher proposes that establishing administrative and governance structures, such as ECCD centre management committees, parents' associations, and adopting committee systems can help in directing the behaviour of ECCD stakeholders and organising ECCD personnel. Accordingly, it can serve as both a formal line of authority and an accountability measure and can be used by directors as an administrative control mechanism to help reduce ECCD stakeholders' changeable behaviours and increase their behavioural predictability.

These findings are consistent with those of Lussier (2021) and Shermerhorn (2013), who assert that boundary systems of management control mechanisms involve using a code of conduct and a code of ethics to guide the behaviour and actions of employees. Furthermore, the above findings also agree with Chiedozie and Victor (2017), Merchant and Van der Stede (2017), Ombonga and Ongaga (2017), and Onuna, 2016), who found from their studies that the provision of instructional leadership through supervision, vetting of learner plans, and mentorship serve as effective action controlling mechanisms. The above finding also confirms Osiri, Piliyeesi, and Ateka (2019)'s finding, which revealed that school directors could achieve the action control function by establishing monitoring standards of educational services provision, visits to classrooms, and observation of curriculum implementation activities such as teaching and learning, vetting of termly, and weekly forecast and daily learner plans prepared by teachers.

From the above discussions, the researcher contends that administratively, the development of ECCD centre policies, rules and regulations, and their application can enable the enactment of behavioural constraints and pre-action reviews of teachers and caregivers by ECCD directors to ensure action accountability and action control in the ECCD centres. In addition, the enforcement of ECCD policies, rules, and regulations by directors to control behaviour of staff, children, and parents, as well as pre-action reviews of staff's actions through reviews of learner plans before implementation and supervision, can be used to achieve action and behaviour control at ECCD centres.

The discussion implied that action controls help ECCD directors to ensure that ECCD stakeholders perform and act in line with the centre's desired direction. However, the researcher would like to propose that ECCD directors need to acquire requisite management control skills

and knowledge for action control to be useful and effective. In addition, ECCD directors must know which action fits the ECCD programme, and its desired objectives, in the best way. Furthermore, effective action control by ECCD directors can make it almost impossible for ECCD stakeholders to take action or do things they are not supposed to do. It also helps directors to hold ECCD personnel responsible for their actions. The above controlling practices appeared to be appropriate as far as the administrative management principle is concerned. Accordingly, the action control mechanism has been integrated into the proposed contextual framework for ECCD centre management.

The researcher posits that the effectiveness of the behaviour and action control mechanism mainly depends on the availability of ECCD centre policies, rules, and regulations, and their effective and efficient use. One of the ECCD directors' management responsibilities is developing policies, rules, regulations, and standards. However, the empirical findings showed that most of the sampled ECCD centres lacked relevant ECCD policies, rules and regulations that would enable them to enact behaviour and action control at their centres effectively. Furthermore, it was established that external regulatory bodies help maintain professional regulatory control. However, it was evident that there has been a lack of inspection feedback from the external ECCD supervisory bodies to help centres take corrective action before the subsequent supervision is due, hence the need for improvement in this regard. The above management control challenges must be resolved to ensure effective and efficient ECCD centre management control.

In addition to the action and behaviour control mechanism, the empirical findings revealed that ECCD directors could achieve management control through strategic ECCD staff recruitment and placement and continuing professional development. The findings revealed that ECCD directors perceived recruitment of appropriate ECCD experts, placing them at the appropriate level of the ECCD programme and providing continuous professional development as part of their management control function. The above findings partially correspond with those of Lunenburg (2016) and Musingafi et al. (2014), who contended that the controlling function of directors of educational set-ups could be achieved by ensuring that essential teaching and learning resources such as toys, play materials, as well as human and financial resources are provided in sufficient quantity. Along similar lines, Dolechek, Lippert, Vengrouskie, and Lloyd

(2019), and Faeni, Faeni, Septiyanti, and Yuliansyah (2020) also maintained that management control could be achieved through interactive control systems where school directors directly pay regular attention to staff in the interactive control systems through interaction and personal involvement in staff activities.

The preceding discussion seemed to imply that for effective control to be achieved, directors must provide adequate ECCD teaching and learning resources, and human and financial resources to facilitate the effective enactment of this specific control mechanism. The empirical findings do not entirely correspond with what the literature indicated, as it was found that most directors complained about a lack of qualified ECCD personnel, inappropriate ECCD learning environments, and inadequate play materials and equipment at their centres. The researcher suggests that a continued lack of qualified ECCD personnel, inappropriate ECCD equipment and playgrounds, and inadequate funding, which affects the staff's continuous professional development, can make it difficult for ECCD directors to enact effective and efficient management practices to achieve desired ECCD outcomes. The above discussion implies that effective and efficient ECCD centre management largely depends on the availability of appropriate resources and their effective application by centre directors. The above resources challenge needs to be resolved to facilitate the effectiveness of strategic staffing, placement, and professional development control mechanism to achieve ECCD programme control at the input and process level of the ECCD system.

The literature review revealed that Talab and Flayyih (2018) assert that cultural controls inspire personnel to oversee and guide each other through a particular cultural context that is put into operation in the institutions. The empirical findings discovered that ECCD directors could effectively achieve management control of their centres by sharing their centres' vision, mission, core values, and philosophy. The findings are consistent with the literature where many management researchers have acknowledged cultural control as an effective management tool. For example, Merchant and Stede (2017) argued that the cultural control mechanism is effective when an individual employee's personal interest aligns with the interest of the organisation, and this is attainable when institutional culture is well embedded in the organisation to help motivate staff towards the accomplishment of a common objective. Malmi (2013) also indicated that communicating or stating and sharing the organisation's mission and vision with the employees

help in embedding a belief system. Consequently, the researcher argues that the above assertions agree with Fayol's administrative management principle of subordination of individual interest, which states that for educational institutions to perform well, individual interests should be subordinated to the institution's interests. Regarding these findings, the researcher proposes that the adoption of the cultural control mechanism by ECCD directors can help them to provide a sense of community with shared values, traditions, and obligations that can contribute to normative patterns and the norms of social interaction as substitutes for other control mechanisms in the ECCD centre. Furthermore, the researcher contends that using the cultural control mechanism in ECCD centres can help directors ensure that all centre members have an implicit understanding of the values and beliefs that define the limits of appropriate behaviour within the centre.

The findings implied that ECCD centre values reflect how directors understand the centres' overall strategic mission and vision of an ideal future, as values and attitudes seem deeply rooted in the ECCD centre culture. This means that to achieve effective and efficient application of cultural control at ECCD centres, directors must ensure that the ECCD's mission and vision are written, displayed visibly in offices and on walls, and well communicated to all stakeholders. Furthermore, the researcher argues that physical and social arrangements in the form of dress codes, habits, and behaviours, such as ECCD directors acting as role models, can be used by ECCD directors to create and shape the ECCD centre's culture.

From the findings of this study, the outcomes/results control mechanism was acknowledged by ECCD directors as an effective control mechanism. The empirical findings showed that ECCD directors achieve ECCD outcome control through performance improvement planning. The findings revealed that the identification of ECCD centre performance targets, performance dimensions, and a system of measuring performance in their performance improvement plans are mechanisms for controlling the activities of the ECCD centre.

The abovementioned finding corresponds to that of Sihag and Rijdsdijk (2019), who argued that the results control mechanism is implemented through planning where specific performance targets are identified and shared with all stakeholders.

The empirical findings further revealed that preparing a performance improvement plan implementation budget by ECCD directors is a financial control mechanism. However, although the preparation of improvement planning appears to provide a control mechanism at ECCD centres, this practice seems limited to public centres receiving the governmental Capitation Grant. In addition, the findings showed that in Ghana, the performance of ECCD centres is evaluated at centre, circuit, and district levels against four national ECCD indicators: access and participation, quality, management efficiency, and pupils' learning tools. This finding aligns with those of Elliott (2015), and Ndungu, Allan, and Bomett (2015), who claim that performance appraisal increases the quality of organisational performance.

The researcher believes that performance improvement planning can also serve as cybernetic controls at ECCD centres because performance improvement planning and its implementation process present a feedback loop by using ECCD performance indicators and the annual performance appraisal system to compare ECCD outcomes to national ECCD performance indicators, to receive feedback on reasons for poor ECCD outcomes in the systems, and to devise improvement strategies. The researcher believes using ECCD performance indicators can provide ECCD directors with current indicators of the ECCD targets to be reached and improvements required. Furthermore, the researcher argues that a performance improvement plan implementation budget helps to regulate an acceptable level of stakeholder behaviour, and evaluate ECCD centre performance against the improvement plan.

The researcher would like to highlight that the scope of the practice of outcome control mechanisms through performance improvement planning was limited to public centres receiving the governmental Capitation Grant. In addition, the researcher proposes that most of the ECCD directors appeared to lack knowledge and skills in the management function of quality planning, as it was evident that key ECCD stakeholders are usually not actively involved in the planning process. The above finding confirmed VanGronigen and Meyers' (2017) findings of a study conducted on school improvement planning, which found that most of the analysed plans lacked technical soundness and that the planning process lacked rigor and the involvement of key stakeholders. Strunk et al. (2016) emphasised that quality improvement plans should incorporate key stakeholders' views and involvement in implementation action steps. Furthermore, the use of the planning control mechanism by ECCD directors is consistent with Pešalj, Pavlov, and



Micheli (2018), who argued that effective controlling needs plans since planning stipulates the needed performance benchmarks. Additionally, the empirical findings align with the literature where Bedford and Malmi (2015), Massaro, Moro, Aschauer, and Fink (2019), and Merchant and Van Der Stede (2017) all claim that management controlling involves the activity of comparing, monitoring, and rectifying work performance in order to ascertain the achievement of desired organisational goals through instituting performance benchmarks through which performance outcomes will be assessed, including the measurement of actual work performance by managers, performance evaluation and taking corrective action to regulate and improve work performance and results.

Along similar lines, the researcher argues that preparing a performance improvement plan and its implementation budget serves as a financial and ECCD outcome control mechanism. Furthermore, the annual performance appraisal of ECCD centres appeared to encourage and control behaviours of ECCD centre's role players towards achieving better ECCD outcomes in Ghana. In addition, defining the ECCD centre's performance is explicative since the established performance targets provide ECCD role players with ideas on which targets are most important to focus on in the Ghanaian context.

The researcher in this study believes that when ECCD directors adopt performance improvement planning as a control mechanism and use it effectively, it can help direct stakeholders' efforts and behaviours through ECCD goal setting. Furthermore, performance improvement planning can help ECCD directors set out the stakeholders' desired behaviours by using ECCD performance indicators. In addition, ECCD performance improvement planning can help ECCD directors to coordinate and control stakeholders' activities and actions in line with the centres' vision and core values. Accordingly, planning as a management control mechanism has been added to the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres.

The previous discussion implies that ECCD directors must have knowledge and skills in quality planning processes and ensure that all ECCD stakeholders are engaged in ECCD centre programme planning and implementation to achieve desired ECCD outcomes. The above discussion further implies that for ECCD directors to maintain effective ECCD outcome control

through the planning mechanism, directors and planning team members must have adequate knowledge and skills in quality planning processes.

In the literature review, Gschwantner and Hiebl (2016) stated that the reward and compensation control mechanism help inspire employees and improve productivity when implemented effectively. The empirical findings revealed that ECCD directors used the reward and compensation control mechanism. The findings revealed that some ECCD directors provide incentives and fringe benefits to staff to motivate them to perform optimally. This finding partially corresponds with the literature where Řehoř and Vrchota (2018) and Virgana (2018) argue that rewarding employees' efforts using both non-monetary remunerations such as compliments, credits, praises, and monetary remuneration, such as fair financial compensation and bonuses, improve performance.

The researcher argues that the empirical findings align with the principle of remuneration as one of the elements of Administrative Management Theory. Fayol noted that for an organisation to run smoothly, staff must be motivated through sufficient remuneration, ensuring improved productivity. However, the findings suggest that the lack of adequate funding expressed by most of the private ECCD directors may affect the effectiveness and efficiency of using reward and compensation as management control mechanisms. The researcher proposes that an inadequate reward control mechanism can affect the efficiency and efforts of ECCD directors in accomplishing ECCD goals, especially in the Ghanaian ECCD context, where caregivers and teachers are not appropriately compensated.

The researcher in this study believes that using reward and compensation as a management control mechanism by ECCD directors is appropriate because it can help increase ECCD personnel's performance through motivation using incentives to improve the duration, direction, and focus of teachers' and caregivers' activities on ECCD improvement targets. By adopting reward and compensation management control techniques, ECCD directors can motivate ECCD stakeholders, thereby increasing performance by comparing ECCD goals to programme implementation activities. The preceding discussion implies that for ECCD directors to effectively achieve rewards and compensation management control, they must implement

Fayol's administrative management principle of remuneration by ensuring that ECCD personnel are adequately rewarded for their services.

#### **5.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

This sub-section discusses the contribution of the study by presenting an appropriate contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres. This study's last specific objective was to use the data to develop a framework for managing ECCD centres in Ghana. Accordingly, the researcher used the themes that emerged from the data and the elements of the classical management theories that underpinned this study to construct a contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres.

There has previously been a lack of research regarding the effective and efficient application of management principles and functions at ECCD centres, focussing on how different management theories can be used and the interdependency between ECCD systems. The findings of this study have generally contributed to ongoing research on the application of business management theories in ECCD settings. More importantly, prior school-based management studies were mainly focused on the management functions of principals at secondary schools. For example, school management studies by Pešalj, Pavlov, and Micheli (2018), Strunk et al. (2016), and VanGronigen, Meyers, and Hitt (2017), focused on the quality of school improvement planning at secondary school level. In addition, studies on the management functions of school principals by Ali and Abdalla (2017), Mustafa and Pranoto (2019), Strehmel (2016), and Thornton and Cherrington (2014), focused on the quality of organising functions of secondary school principals. Studies on the management function of coordination by school principals by Aristidou and Barrett (2018), Blakeney, Lavalley, Baik, Pambianco, O'Brien and Zierler (2019), and Reagans, Miron-Spektor and Argote (2016) focused on coordination mechanisms utilised by secondary school principals. Furthermore, Chiedozie and Victor (2017), Lunenburg (2016), Musingafi et al. (2014), Ombonga and Ongaga (2017), and Onuna (2016)'s studies on management practices of principals primarily focused on the planning, organising, directing, and controlling functions of secondary school principals.

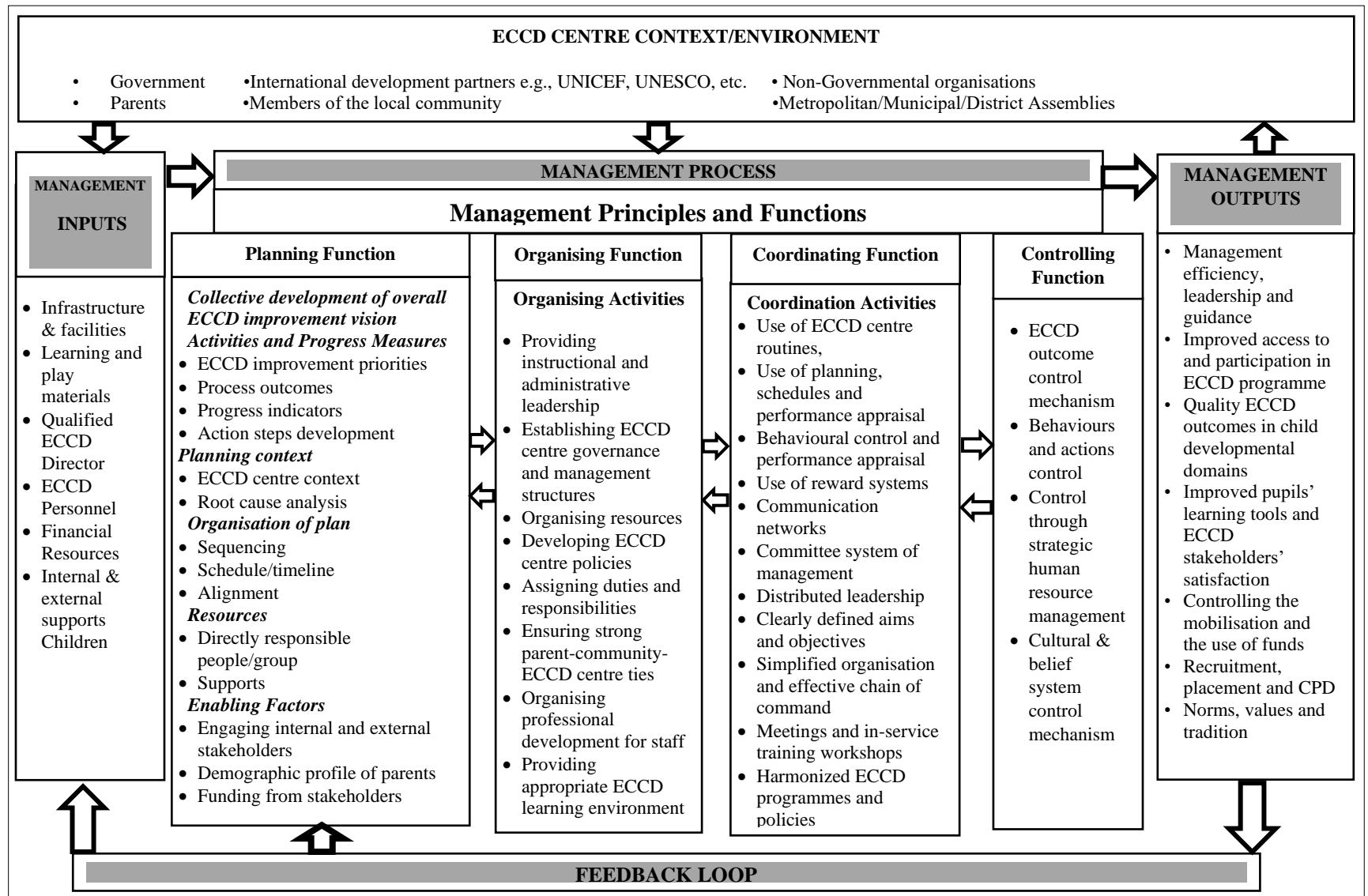
As the abovementioned studies mainly focused on management functions and quality of practice by principals at secondary school level, the researcher argues that management principles that enable the effective and efficient application of management functions were not adequately addressed from a broad ECCD systems perspective. Furthermore, the above studies were conducted in secondary schools outside Ghana without referencing the ECCD director's management practices in Ghana.

The empirical findings of this study contribute to the existing literature by exploring the application of business management principles and functions by ECCD directors at their centres. Furthermore, the proposed contextual framework can be used by ECCD directors to understand how elements of management theories can be utilised to achieve management efficiency. In addition, the empirical findings of this study can contribute practically by helping ECCD directors to understand how and in what way they should manage their centres and the ECCD personnel. More so, the findings in this study contribute to ECCD directors' knowledge about management principles and functions of planning, organising, coordination, and controlling. Therefore, this study's findings contribute in a practical manner since it creates knowledge and awareness among ECCD directors and key ECCD stakeholders in their management responsibilities. Lastly, this study will contribute to the existing stream of research regarding the context of ECCD. Prior studies regarding school-based management practices have been conducted on secondary schools and universities, and the findings may not apply to the ECCD context. By conducting this research, the empirical findings can contribute to the existing literature by providing insights into how ECCD programmes can be planned and managed effectively and efficiently. In general, this study contributes to knowledge development within several research fields, which may also have implications on an international scale.

The researcher maintains that the previous studies did not adequately address contextual factors influencing ECCD directors' management practices. In addressing the gaps in previous studies, this study presents a contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres by considering ECCD contextual factors, administrative management principles that enable the effectiveness and efficiency of management functions, elements of administrative management, and systems theories as points of departure from previous studies.

In developing the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres, the researcher contextualised classical management theories in ECCD centres. These include the management functions of planning, organising, coordination, and controlling taken from Fayol's Administrative Management Theory.

In addition, this contextual framework was designed upon the input-process-output systems model that stresses that effective and efficient management determines the quality of the organisational output. The proposed contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1 below fulfils the fifth objective of this study.



**Figure 5.1: A contextual framework for the management of early childhood centres in Ghana: Adaptation of Fayol's management process**

The main contribution of this study is this contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres, as presented in Figure 5.1 above. The framework is made up of four interrelated blocks: context/environment, management inputs, management processes and management outputs that interact to achieve a common ECCD goal, making it comprehensive but easy to implement. The framework presented in Figure 5.1 is described systematically in the following paragraphs starting from ECCD stakeholders in the environment, management inputs, management process activities, enablers, and outputs.

#### **5.4.1 ECCD stakeholders**

The proposed contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1 recognised the important roles played by ECCD stakeholders in the ECCD environment, which covers the government, international development partners, non-governmental organisations, the ECCD local community, parents, and the metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies. The above stakeholders play crucial roles, such as supplying ECCD inputs that enable the planning and management of ECCD programme. To ensure the supply of adequate ECCD inputs that can create enabling conditions for quality ECCD service delivery, ECCD directors and planning teams are required to use appropriate techniques to scan the entire ECCD environment to identify the stakeholders mentioned above who are major sources of ECCD resources and supports.

#### **5.4.2 Management inputs**

The proposed contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1 has a management inputs component. The inputs are the resources supplied by the ECCD stakeholders from the environment. Examples of inputs that enable planning and management of the ECCD programme, include infrastructure and facilities, human resources including qualified ECCD personnel, financial resources, children, parents, ECCD play equipment, and teaching and learning resources. This model shows that ECCD directors should be able to mobilise the above management inputs from the various stakeholders in the ECCD environment. It is also essential that ECCD directors are aware that the nature of the ECCD output will depend on the quality and

quantity of the input resources from the environment and, more importantly, the quality of the ECCD management teams that manage the resources provided in the ECCD centre.

### **5.4.3 Management process**

As presented in Figure 5.1, the proposed contextual framework has a management process component where ECCD directors are required to carry out Fayol's managerial activities of planning, organising, coordination, and controlling that would lead to the expected management outputs. The aforementioned managerial activities and their enablers are briefly explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### *5.4.3.1 ECCD management planning activities*

To achieve effective ECCD programme management planning using the proposed contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors are expected to undertake the following planning activities:

- *Root cause analysis:* To achieve effective planning using the proposed contextual framework, ECCD directors should conduct root cause analysis or environmental scanning to discover why performance gaps have occurred between the ECCD's improvement vision and the current performance status of its programme.
- *ECCD centre context:* To ensure that the ECCD centre's improvement plan is technically sound, the proposed framework requires ECCD directors to establish a deep comprehension of the centre's environment, involving the internal community such as school personnel, the target learner population, and external community sub-groups such as parents, local community members and officers from the education district.
- *Development of overall ECCD centre improvement vision:* To achieve a quality ECCD programme improvement plan, ECCD directors should facilitate the development and communication of a bold vision that distinctively reveals how the ECCD centre will be substantially improved from previous poor performance.



- *Identification of improvement priorities:* From the proposed contextual framework, ECCD directors are required to identify two to four specific and clear, highly influential improvement priorities as the plan's focus for a specified implementation time. In addition, directors must provide a fair and convincing justification for selecting each improvement priority that communicates why the priority requires immediate consideration to achieve the ECCD centre's improvement vision.
  
- *Identification of process outcomes with priorities:* The proposed contextual framework required ECCD directors to ensure that the plan contains specific, realistic, justified and elaborate process outcomes that align with each priority to aid in achieving the ECCD programme's improvement vision. This will help increase stakeholders' commitment and the possibility of successfully implementing the improvement plan.
  
- *Progress indicators:* The proposed framework presented in Figure 5.1 requires ECCD directors to ensure that for each process outcome in the performance improvement plan, there must be a range of progress indicators to gauge the ECCD centre's improvement in meeting the stated process outcomes. Furthermore, it is required that all performance indicators implicitly and purposefully align with each process outcome.
  
- *Action steps development:* Another planning activity required of ECCD directors is the development of detailed, specific, and elaborate action steps based on the root cause analysis for each process outcome, which should not be routine but properly present elaborate tactics for realising process outcomes.
  
- *Organisation of the plan:* The proposed framework in Figure 5.1 stipulates three aspects that should be included in the organisation of an improvement plan. These are sequencing, schedule/timeline, and alignment. ECCD directors must ensure that a plan comprises a sequencing of targets, expected outcomes, and actionable steps that are reasonable and deliberate. In addition, the plan contains a comprehensive, detailed schedule/timeline of actions and processes to be undertaken within the plan's defined time frame. Furthermore, ECCD directors should ensure that the plan shows how all the important aspects of the improvement plan are

linked and adequately justify how the centre's improvement vision is connected with the district's improvement vision.

- *Resources:* According to the proposed framework, the final planning activity is identifying resources for implementing the plan. These include responsible people for implementing action steps and general support for planning and management implementation. In this framework, ECCD directors are not supposed to be directly responsible for any priority but instead should play the role of facilitator to reinforce and ensure others are held responsible or accountable for progress on action steps.

This study established that certain factors enable an effective planning phase. The factors are listed below.

#### *5.4.3.2 Planning activities enabling factors*

In order to achieve effective and efficient planning, ECCD directors are expected to take into consideration the following enabling factors:

- i. Active engagement of internal and external ECCD stakeholders.
- ii. Adequate funding and support from stakeholders.
- iii. Use of demographic data of children and parents.
- iv. Availability of internal and external planning supports and their effective utilisation.
- v. ECCD directors and planning team members' knowledge and skills in planning principles.

The next sub-section briefly explains the organising activities and enabling factors of the proposed contextual framework.

#### *5.4.3.3 Organising activities*

The following paragraphs briefly explain the various organising activities ECCD directors must perform according to the contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1.

- *Provision of instructional and administrative leadership:* According to the proposed contextual framework, ECCD directors can provide instructional and administrative

leadership through ECCD curriculum planning, organising in-service training for caregivers and teachers, procuring instructional resources, and allocating ECCD personnel to their various classes. In addition, directors can provide leadership by vetting teachers' learner plans, delegating responsibilities by appointing ECCD programme-level coordinators, monitoring teaching and learning, motivating staff, mentoring inexperienced teachers, and sharing the centre's vision with staff and parents through engagements with community members.

- *Establishing ECCD centre governance and management structures:* According to the proposed framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD centres can be effectively organised by ECCD directors by establishing authority structures, such as governance, management, and administrative structures. These structures can include a functional ECCD centre management committee, parents' association, and an organisational structure to aid in job descriptions and reporting lines.
- *Organising resources:* According to the framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors' organising activities should include organising human, material, and financial resources in the required quantity and at the correct time to enable the implementation of the ECCD programme.
- *Developing ECCD centre policies:* According to the proposed framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors can achieve the organising function by developing ECCD policies and procedures such as codes of ethics, guidelines, and internal policies, including teachers' handbooks, health and safety protocols, and parents' handbooks, which serve as a blueprint for managing ECCD activities. ECCD policies can help provide direction when implementing ECCD goals and priorities.
- *Assigning duties and responsibilities:* According to the proposed framework, ECCD directors can also achieve programme organisation by assigning roles and delegating responsibilities. Assigning roles and responsibilities and delegating authority duties to ECCD personnel can, for example, be based on specialisation. Furthermore, establishing parents' associations and committees can facilitate management efficiency and effectiveness.

- *Ensuring strong parent-community-ECCD centre ties:* Based on the proposed framework, ECCD directors can benefit from the social capital of a neighbourhood when there is synergy between ECCD centre personnel, parents, and community members. ECCD directors must maintain cordial ECCD-community relations as the proposed framework recognises support from the community and their presence as a multifaceted resource for ECCD programme improvement.
- *Organising professional development for staff:* According to the proposed framework presented in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors can use effective human resource management practices such as ECCD staff recruitment, retention, and professional development as effective organising strategies to advance instructional improvement and enhance a sense of community and shared commitments among caregivers and teachers. The proposed framework recognised that high-quality ECCD continuing professional development (CPD) helps to improve professional practices, keep up-to-date with new research on effective practices, build networks, share good practices, and support staff retention.
- *Providing appropriate ECCD learning environment:* According to the proposed framework, ECCD directors can achieve effective organisation through the provision of an appropriate ECCD environment, which helps in promoting language and literacy development in children by encouraging children to use language, books, and becoming familiar with print. Furthermore, ECCD directors can organise their centres by providing an appropriate physical environment that enables children to think for themselves as learners. A safe and orderly environment is the most fundamental prerequisite for holistic child development. Providing an appropriate temporal environment to facilitate personal care routines, such as meals/snacks, toileting/diapering, and safety, promotes children's personal care practices.

Enablers that condition the effective and efficient organising functions of ECCD directors are presented below.

#### 5.4.3.4 Organising enablers

According to the proposed contextual framework, the following organising enablers must be taken into consideration for ECCD directors to achieve effective and efficient ECCD programme management organisation:

- i. Positive attitude and commitment of staff members.
- ii. Delegation of power and authority to other stakeholders.
- iii. Involvement of all stakeholders.
- iv. Seeking funding to support infrastructure.
- v. Participative management practices.
- vi. Ensuring unity of objectives.
- vii. Applying the principle of unity of command.
- viii. Applying the principle of span of control.
- ix. Distributed leadership

#### 5.4.3.5 Coordination activities

This sub-section explains the management coordination activities ECCD directors must perform according to the proposed contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1.

- *Use of ECCD centre routines:* According to the proposed framework, ECCD directors can achieve effective coordination through ECCD centre routines, and this can help decrease the need for interaction between staff, thereby transforming caregivers' and teachers' competencies into ECCD programme capabilities.
- *Use of plan and schedules:* Another effective coordination mechanism ECCD directors can use according to the proposed framework is the use of schedules to guide the work of teachers, caregivers, parents' associations, and school management committee members. In addition, directors can use the ECCD centre improvement plan as an integrative device because this can help ECCD centres reduce the need for excessive inter-stakeholder communication if the stakeholders can operate within the planned targets. Furthermore, plans establish timelines as milestones to guide each role player's work, making coordination easier for directors.

- *Behavioural control and performance appraisal:* Based on the proposed framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors can effectively achieve coordination by controlling the activities of their staff. For example, ECCD directors can use vetting of teachers' work schemes, weekly forecasts, daily learner plans, and visits to classrooms to observe how lessons are being delivered as effective coordination mechanisms. In addition, ECCD programme implementation can be coordinated through conducting weekly self-appraisal with the teachers to identify the level of achievement of agreed targets. The framework established that the coordination mechanism of behavioural control involves direct personal surveillance of ECCD centre directors. The output control mechanism involves the director's measurement of ECCD outputs and is closely related to and partly overlaps with coordination through standardisation, formalisation, and planning.
- *Use of reward systems:* Another effective way ECCD directors can achieve coordination according to the proposed framework is through reward systems, which ensures the achievement of common ECCD goals. Some reward strategies include sharing gifts, giving praise, and financial incentives. Using reward systems through performance evaluations can help ECCD directors increase the collaboration between ECCD centre staff, which will likely decrease the barriers in ECCD services provisions.
- *Communication networks:* Another effective coordination mechanism ECCD directors can use according to the proposed framework presented in Figure 5.1 is establishing an effective communication network in their centres. Through an effective communication system, ECCD centre role players can easily understand their scope of activity and the limits of their responsibilities.
- *Committee system of management:* According to the proposed contextual framework in Figure 5.1, the committee system of management can be an effective coordination mechanism. Accordingly, ECCD directors should ensure effective committees, such as ECCD centre management committees and parents' associations, to help solve common problems facing the centre. The committee management system is a valuable mechanism for coordinating activities within the ECCD centre, as meetings and teams allow for participative management that promotes team spirit among staff.

- *Coordination through distributed leadership:* ECCD directors can practice effective leadership at the ECCD programme planning, implementation, and evaluation stages to achieve effective ECCD programme coordination. Through supervision, directors can achieve the overall objectives of the ECCD centre. Also, effective distributed leadership can facilitate supervision. This means that effective and efficient ECCD centre directors can use their leadership skills to inspire their subordinates to coordinate at will, and this can promote participative management, professional staff development, and a strategy for succession planning.
- *Clearly defined aims and objectives:* Based on the proposed framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors can utilise defined ECCD aims and objectives in clear terms and communicate them to the stakeholders as an effective coordination mechanism. Directors can ensure that ECCD personnel adhere to ECCD curriculum aims and objectives by supervising and monitoring teachers' lesson delivery and assessment results. Therefore, every ECCD stakeholder should understand the centre's aims and objectives to ensure unity of purpose.
- *Simplified organisation and effective chain of command:* According to the proposed framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors can use an organisational chart and the simplification of the ECCD centre organisation to achieve coordination. By arranging ECCD programme levels into departments, better coordination could be achieved among departmental heads. This organisation can, for example, entail appointing coordinators in charge of crèche, nursery, kindergarten, and lower primary to help directors have proper control over their subordinates.
- *Meetings and in-service training workshops:* In addition to the coordination mechanisms mentioned above, ECCD directors can also use meetings and in-service training workshops as effective coordination mechanisms. Furthermore, in-service training workshops provide a meaningful platform for ECCD centre directors and curriculum leaders to exchange knowledge and experiences with their colleagues. Accordingly, ECCD directors are encouraged to hold periodic staff meetings and in-service training sessions.

- *Harmonised ECCD programmes and policies:* Finally, ECCD directors can also achieve effective coordination by using harmonised ECCD programmes and policies. Specifically, directors can use standardised ECCD curricula, codes of conduct for teachers, and some policies developed internally to provide a mechanism through which directors can coordinate their centre activities. Furthermore, ECCD centre policies can be used to bring uniformity and consistency in decision-making and address challenges faced by ECCD stakeholders. ECCD directors can also use harmonised programmes, policies, budgets, schedules, and observation checklists as resources for coordination because they indicate the predictable conduct required for coordinated action. Finally, rules, guidelines, curricula, and codes of conduct are perceived to serve as a reference point for problem-solving and decision-making within the ECCD setting.

#### *5.4.3.6 Coordinating enabling factors*

According to the proposed contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1, the following coordination-enabling factors must be taken into consideration for ECCD directors to achieve effective and efficient management coordination:

- i. Setting a routine used for standardising and familiarisation.
- ii. Setting a schedule for goal achievement.
- iii. Monitoring activities/self-monitoring.
- iv. Incentives and motivation.
- v. Electronic channels of communication.

#### *5.4.3.7 Management controlling activities*

This sub-section briefly explains how management control can be achieved using the proposed contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1. Four key control mechanisms are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

- *ECCD outcome control mechanism:* According to the proposed contextual framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors can use performance improvement planning to retain the ECCD centre activities, including using funds under control, and to ensure that it stays focused on



ECCD goals. For example, performance improvement plan implementation budgets in ECCD centres can be used by ECCD directors to keep ECCD programme improvement within national ECCD performance targets, stimulate effectiveness and efficiency, and increase performance. Improvement plan implementation budgets can be used to earmark limited ECCD resources and ensure that these are used effectively and efficiently, thereby setting limits for how many resources to use, and this can keep the ECCD centres under control to circumvent failure. Furthermore, performance improvement plan budgets can also be used diagnostically to set standards of performance that the ECCD centre can be evaluated against, which encourages management efficiency and effectiveness.

- *Behaviours and actions control:* According to the proposed contextual framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors can maintain management control by using the behaviours and actions of centre personnel. For example, ECCD directors can physically or administratively control the behaviour of staff, children, and parents by enforcing rules and regulations. Furthermore, management control can also be achieved by reviewing learner plans before implementation, monitoring, and supervising, and rewarding appropriate actions and punishments for inappropriate actions by staff or children.

In addition, directors can use rules and regulations from internal and external sources such as the Ghana Education Service's code of conduct for teachers, code of ethical conduct, staff handbooks, parents' handbooks, rules and regulations for children, and others to control the behaviour of staff, parents, and children. Furthermore, vetting teachers' learner plans, monitoring and supervising staff, and taking corrective action can serve as an effective control mechanism. Finally, using staff attendance books, teacher's movement books, and marking class registers can provide an effective control mechanism at ECCD centres.

- *Control through strategic human resource management:* According to the proposed framework in Figure 5.1, ECCD directors can achieve management control through strategic human resource management practices. For example, directors can achieve management control by using incentives such as non-monetary or monetary bonuses directed at retaining and rewarding high-performing ECCD staff. Retaining ECCD personnel can be achieved by providing ECCD

staff with a promising career path and the opportunity to develop themselves in their areas of interest.

- *Cultural and belief system control mechanism:* According to the proposed framework in Figure 5.1, in addition to the above control techniques, ECCD directors can use a cultural and belief system as a control mechanism to ensure a common belief in the ECCD centre and that everyone works towards the same ECCD vision. This control mechanism can ensure that delegating responsibilities to ECCD personnel in various departments can be less risky and resolve internal relations issues. Furthermore, ECCD directors can also achieve management control by sharing the ECCD centre's vision and core value statements that indicate its priorities and the direction the management wants the centre to take. Therefore, ECCD directors must ensure that printed vision and value statements are pasted on the ECCD centre's walls and in their offices. Also, non-physical symbols, such as ECCD activities and events, can promote a desired ECCD centre culture or behaviour.

In addition, effective control can be achieved through the ECCD centre's code of conduct, which indirectly communicate information on its services. The ECCD centre's control mechanism can be based on the ideas of shared and internalised cultural values, norms, and expectations that guide the work of ECCD staff. For example, through shared ideas and internalised cultural values, norms, and expectations, ECCD directors can guide the work of their staff. Therefore, using the cultural control mechanism aims to ensure that all ECCD centre members have an implicit understanding of the values and beliefs that define the limits of appropriate behaviour within the centre. In addition, ECCD centre values reflect how directors understand centres' overall strategic mission and vision of an ideal future as values and attitudes.

#### *5.4.3.8 Controlling enabling factors*

ECCD directors must take into consideration the factors listed below that enable the achievement of effective and efficient management control.

- i. Code of ethics for all stakeholders.
- ii. Rules and regulations, reward systems, and parents' handbooks.

- iii. Qualified staff members and self-development.
- iv. Shared values and common understanding.

The last component of the proposed contextual framework for the management of ECCD centres is management outputs, presented in the following sub-section.

#### **5.4.4 Management outputs**

The proposed contextual framework presented in Figure 5.1 has a management outputs sub-system. Therefore, the framework recognises the ECCD director as the custodian of resource management for effective and efficient ECCD outputs. The proposed contextual framework emphasises that ECCD directors' failure to manage this framework's process component will reflect in the centres' output levels. The researcher would like to emphasise that the competency of the ECCD director as a manager is a critical determinant of the quality of ECCD outputs. In this regard, this framework acknowledges that the effective and efficient performance of an ECCD director's management functions of planning, organising, coordinating, and controlling determine the quality of ECCD outputs.

ECCD management outputs acknowledged by the framework in the Ghanaian context include access and participation, quality, management efficiency, and pupil's learning tools. Access and participation outputs cover areas such as an improved gross enrolment rate, gross admission rate, net admission rate, gender parity index, pupil-teacher attendance rate, pupil completion rate, pupil dropout rate, and pupil transition rate. Quality ECCD outputs cover ECCD areas such as improved pupil-teacher ratio, pupil-textbook ratio, qualified-non-qualified teacher ratio, teacher and pupil time on task rate, coverage of syllabi, teacher lesson preparation, and presentation. Management efficiency covers areas such as the frequency of ECCD centre board and parents' association meetings, the rate of staff meetings, the rate of performance appraisal meetings, and the number of staff in decision-making meetings. The last management output dimension is pupil's learning tools, which cover improved centre-based assessment results, improved children's performance in national standardised tests, and general improvement in children's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development.

In summary, the researcher contends that if stakeholders supply all the necessary ECCD inputs and effective and efficient management processes of planning, organising, coordination, and controlling are well implemented by ECCD directors, the following management outputs can be achieved:

- i. Management efficiency, leadership, and guidance;
- ii. Improved access to and participation in the ECCD programme;
- iii. Quality ECCD outcomes in child developmental domains;
- iv. Improved pupils' learning tools and ECCD stakeholders' satisfaction;
- v. Control over the mobilisation and use of funds;
- vi. Recruitment, placement, and continuous professional development (CPD);
- vii. ECCD norms, values, and traditions.

#### **5.4.5 Closing the quality feedback loop**

The framework presented in Figure 5.1 recognises the use of a feedback loop by ECCD directors to close the ECCD improvement gap with key stakeholders through the use of children's performance test results, staff performance appraisals, and parents and community satisfaction survey results. The feedback component leads to the next planning cycle. The proposed framework emphasised the need for ECCD directors to use various data sources to obtain feedback from children, caregivers, teachers, parents, and community members for improvement planning.

### **5.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

In this chapter, the research findings were discussed according to the following themes that emerged from the data: planning practices, organising practices, coordination practices, and controlling practices of ECCD directors. The chapter also discussed the contribution of the study using the themes that emerged from the data. In designing and developing the contextual framework, specific references were made to elements of Administrative Management Theory, systems theory, and Fayol's management principles. In addition, enabling factors were identified and included in the management process phases.

The final chapter presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter Five discussed the empirical findings and connected them with the existing literature on the research topic. The chapter also presented the study's contribution to the existing literature and proposed a contextual framework based on the themes that emerged from the data to guide management practices of ECCD directors. This final chapter summarises the research findings, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations. The chapter is presented in seven sections. In the first section, I present a reflection on my research journey. The key findings are summarised in the second section according to the four main themes that emerged from the data. While the third section focuses on a retrospective evaluation of the study and discusses its limitations, section four focuses on a discussion of the study's limitations. The fifth section covers recommendations based on the study's findings. The sixth section presents the study's conclusions, gives an overview of the study's aims, and highlights the research's main findings. The seventh section focuses on areas for further research.

#### **6.2 MY RESEARCH JOURNEY**

In retrospect, my PhD research journey, which started in November 2019, was filled with challenges, frustrations, tragedy and joy. Firstly, I refined the original title of my thesis and the focus of the topic from “Management and Leadership Practices in Early Childhood Education in Ghana - A Social System Perspective” to “Exploring Management Practices at Early Childhood Centres in Ghana” to “Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana”. The final change the thesis title was: “Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana”. I found choosing a title and area of focus for my thesis both challenging and rewarding, and I greatly benefitted from discussions with my supervisor on its viability. I dealt with this challenge by being open to new ideas rather than taking an established position. I also encountered technical and organisational

difficulties during the literature review. I resolved these issues by reading articles on literature review strategies and accepting comments and direction from my supervisor. I developed writing skills that enabled me to summarise, synthesise and analyse my sources at different stages of the writing process and use sources to authorise my research position.

As a beginner qualitative researcher, I encountered problems of underestimation of time and workload in the fieldwork research regarding data collection, transcription, coding, and analysis. In addition, I underestimated combining undertaking a PhD study with the demands from my workplace as a university administrator. Clear directions and guidelines from my supervisor were what prepared me for the bigger task of analysing the qualitative data for my thesis. Another significant role of my supervisor during my analysis was helping me confront my biases as a qualitative researcher. My supervisor's directive and guidelines helped enhance my ideas, strengthen my arguments, and polish my writing. The comments my supervisor made on drafts of chapters addressed thematic areas that needed development, arguments that required further elaboration, as well as language issues, and I found this peer review process useful.

My research journey was also filled with episodes of tragedy and frustration. The first frustration I suffered was the three-month delay caused by the Ghana Education Service granting me permission to conduct my study in their schools. When I was preparing for fieldwork on March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was officially recorded in Ghana, and all schools were closed down. As a result, my supervisor directed that I change my interview mode from face-to-face to telephonic interview. In the same year, my mother passed away. I also recall several instances of hospitalisation due to ill health. The above circumstances made me feel uncertain, lost and nervous. However, with the motivation and encouragement from my supervisor, family, friends, and the grace of the Almighty God, I tried to be strong during these tragic times and suppressed my emotions to focus on my studies. The above experiences taught me to be patient, and I realised that the PhD journey is a long meandering road with unforeseen challenges, which can be resolved through support, patience, enthusiasm, curiosity and dedication. I have also realised that the PhD journey is not a quick process.

In trying to evaluate and make sense of my PhD research journey, I think the experience was also beneficial, despite my nervousness, frustrations, and lack of prior experience. I realised that,

in practice, the research process is a powerful learning experience. It made me engage with putting research theory into practice. I had to examine, refine and revisit the research title, aims and objectives, methodology, and data gathering tools regularly and I found my experience valuable as it allowed me much self-analysis. I have also enhanced my skills as a researcher by gaining insight into conducting research using a qualitative approach involving an interview and document review approach and case study design. I feel privileged to have been able to interview ECCD directors in Ghana. I have gained several insights about the management practices of ECCD directors, especially their management experiences in planning, organising, coordinating and controlling practices in the Ghanaian context, which I used to develop a framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana.

In general, I enjoyed the journey and I can also say that with the cumulative varied experiences during this four-year journey, I have grown as an academic and an individual, as I have developed skills and navigated the challenges of the PhD experience. Also, I have realised that patience, enthusiasm, curiosity and dedication helped me put things in perspective and calm me down when I was experiencing interpersonal and writing frustration. I know I am now at a critical moment on the journey to becoming a scholar. It is my wish to explore further the unanswered questions stemming from my research.

### **6.3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The summary of the study's key findings is presented in this section. The study aimed to explore ECCD directors' application of basic management principles. The main research questions the study sought to answer was "How do ECCD centre directors apply basic management principles in their management practices in Ghana?" The study's specific research questions were:

- i. How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?
- ii. How do the directors organise ECCD centre activities?
- iii. How do the directors coordinate management activities with the centres' internal and external stakeholders?
- iv. How do the directors maintain control in the ECCD centre?

Data was gathered through interviews with sixteen ECCD directors and four ECCD centre Board Chairpersons and an analysis of ECCD centre performance improvement plans and related

documents. Data obtained from the interviews and document analysis was qualitatively narrated and described. The key findings were summarised according to the following main themes that emerged from the data:

### **6.3.1 Theme 1: Planning practices of ECCD centre directors**

Based on the interviews and document review data, the study found that few ECCD centres exhibited effective quality planning practices by making sufficient use of external and internal supports, establishing formal structures for planning, and following a structured planning framework. Notwithstanding the evidence of a few centres' efficient quality planning process, most demonstrated ineffective planning practices. These centres seemed not to have made sufficient use of the planning inputs available to them, and formal planning frameworks and structures appeared not to exist.

With regard to stakeholder involvement in the planning process, the study also found that ECCD directors, parents' association chairpersons, school management committee chairpersons, school improvement support officers, and teachers seemed to be the main ECCD stakeholders involved in developing strategic goals and objectives. This finding suggests a limited degree of involvement of key local ECCD stakeholders.

The findings from this study also showed that the planning processes at most of the ECCD centres do not follow the structural format to enable them to establish connections between planning input, processes and outcomes, suggesting a weak or relaxed accountability planning system. In addition, the findings suggest that most ECCD centres do not have an established system of communicating ECCD outcomes to key stakeholders, such as ECCD centre management committees, members of parents' associations, and community members.

From the review of the samples of school improvement plans, the following key findings were arrived at:



#### *6.3.1.1 Vision statement*

The findings from this study revealed that most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans stated a vision that communicates how ECCD centres will be different once improvement targets are achieved. However, these improvement plans lacked depth. Furthermore, most of the vision statements did not address ECCD centres' obligations to their improvement efforts and seemed limited in scope, so there was no inclusivity policy to cater to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

#### *6.3.1.2 Indication of process outcome for improvement priorities*

The study revealed that most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans incorporated a few detailed process outcomes for each priority. A non-alignment between process outcome and improvement targets was also observed, with no rationale given for the stated priorities. In addition, most of the analysed sample plans did not indicate precisely how priorities will help achieve the ECCD centre's improvement vision.

#### *6.3.1.3 Indication of performance indicators*

The findings of this study revealed that for some of the process outcomes, most of the sampled analysed performance improvement plans contain some progress indicators to gauge the ECCD centres' present improvement on achieving those process outcomes within the improvement plans' time frame. The study further found that the incorporated performance indicators required detailed descriptions and did not seem to be aligned with the process outcomes. In addition, even though most of these analysed sample performance improvement plans referred to self-evaluation exercises, the plans did not explicitly communicate how that integrated into the ECCD centre's practices.

#### *6.3.1.4 Description of action steps*

This study's empirical findings revealed that most performance improvement plans contained few designated action steps for the process outcomes. The study found that all the action steps were routine in quality and did not show innovative procedures for achieving improvement process outcomes. Thus, the implementation action plans indicated little alignment with the process outcomes.

#### *6.3.1.5 Involvement of stakeholders*

The study indicated that most of the plans did not make much reference to the external community, specifically parents, local community members, metropolitan, municipal and district education authorities, as well as other regulatory bodies such as the Ministries of Health, Women, Children and Social Protection, Local Government and Rural Development and others. It was found that most of the sample plans contained little or no information on the ECCD centre needs of specific subgroups, such as children from disadvantaged backgrounds. In cases where disadvantaged children were identified, there was no evidence to suggest how the plan would purposely help those identified disadvantaged children.

#### *6.3.1.6 Use of varied data sources for root cause analysis*

The study showed that some of the sampled plans made little effort to use suitable varied data sources as evidence to identify, substantiate and communicate the true causes of all the priorities. Even though most of the plans mentioned comprehensive needs assessment exercises, they lacked vigour and specificity. Most of the sample plans did not contain any connection between the problems and targets identified to be achieved. Nevertheless, some plans identified linkages between problems and performance targets but were not clearly stated for easy understanding.

#### *6.3.1.7 Sequencing of priorities, process outcomes, and action steps*

The empirical findings in this study showed that most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans included targets, expected outcomes, and annual implementation action plans in some sequence, but no justification was offered. The findings revealed that the sequencing appeared unsound, inadvertent, and not logically arranged to help achieve the ECCD centre's improvement vision.

#### *6.3.1.8 Indication of schedule/timeline of activities and events*

The study showed that most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans involved an outline of activities and events to be achieved during the plan's stipulated implementation time frame. However, the stated timeline of activities lacked details. The empirical findings further showed that few of the analysed sample improvement plans contained a general but ambiguous timetable for events and processes to be undertaken during the improvement plan's

stipulated duration. In these sample plans, it was also observed that specific times were provided to show how the ECCD centre will achieve performance targets, aligned with process outcomes that meet priorities and, eventually, assist in achieving the improvement vision.

#### *6.3.1.9 Internal alignment of performance improvement targets*

The study indicated that most of the analysed sample performance improvement plans showed insufficient internal alignment of performance improvement targets, ECCD centre setting, problems, expected outcomes, and annual implementation action plan to the ECCD centre's main improvement vision. It was also observed that no justifications for alignment nor indications of the metropolitan/municipal/ district's improvement vision were given.

#### *6.3.1.10 Indication of responsible persons*

The empirical findings in this study revealed that directly responsible persons were indicated for improvement targets. However, the allocation of duties and responsibilities to the person in charge of implementing the action plan was concentrated around the chairperson of the ECCD management committee, the chairperson of the parents' association and the ECCD director. Furthermore, the findings showed that the ECCD directors appeared to be the responsible persons for more of the priorities.

#### *6.3.1.11 Identification of varied sources of support*

The study's findings showed that most of the analysed performance improvement plans contained limited information about available support within and outside the ECCD centres that align with and help implement the performance improvement vision. The findings revealed that the two main funding sources identified by all the sample plans were the governmental Capitation Grant and financial support from the parents' association. It was noticed that neither additional sources of available support from the community nor other sources, such as non-governmental organisations were provided. Furthermore, it was found that details about how ECCD centres will be involved in efforts to find potential available support in the future to supplement available resources were not provided.

### **6.3.2 Theme 2: Organising practices of ECCD centre directors**

The findings on organising practices of ECCD directors revealed that while some ECCD centres seemed to be successful in establishing governance structures and mobilisation of parents and community members as critical resources to support ECCD programmes, some centres were yet to develop a mechanism to tap into available community resources for effective and efficient ECCD service delivery.

The findings further revealed that while few of the ECCD centres appeared to have advanced a sufficient system for mobilising resources to augment government's Capitation Grant, most centres seemed to have been overly depending on the government's Capitation Grant, implying an insufficient resource mobilisation approach. The findings suggest that there seemed to be a general nettlesome problem facing some ECCD centres in maintaining positive ECCD centre-community ties. The findings also indicate that some centres appear overwhelmed with scarce social capital, depicting some characteristics of highly stressed organisations in challenging communities.

The findings revealed that appropriate temporal, social, and physical learning environments could promote quality ECCD outcomes when adequately utilised. However, it appears some ECCD practitioners' knowledge and level of importance attached to practices of quality ECCD learning environments seemed limited to most public centres, suggesting the existence of an organising knowledge gap.

### **6.3.3 Theme 3: Coordination practices of directors**

The findings on the coordination practices of ECCD directors revealed that some of the ECCD centre directors seemed to have adopted the use of routines as a coordination mechanism through standardisation and formalisation. The findings under this theme further indicated that the use of routines as a tool for coordination seemed to be more sufficiently and effectively used in private centres than public centres, due to the relative certainty and flexibility in which they operate. The

findings also indicated frequent changes in ECCD policies are a significant challenge affecting the effective use of routines to coordinate at most of the public ECCD centre.

The findings indicated that planning, schedules and performance appraisals appeared to have gained particular interest as a coordination mechanism in most ECCD centres. The findings further revealed that some directors use behavioural control as a coordination mechanism. However, the study found that despite the advantages of the coordination mechanisms of behavioural control and performance appraisal, all the sampled centres do not embrace the practice.

The findings revealed that some directors perceived a reward system as a coordination mechanism. However, the practice seems to be more effective at private centres than public centres, which are overly dependent on government funding sources, and this seems to be limiting the capacity of directors to implement a financial reward system.

The study found that ECCD directors also perceived establishing communication systems as an effective coordination mechanism. However, this coordination mechanism appeared not well established or effectively used at some centres.

The findings revealed that using a committee system of management and effective administrative and pedagogical leadership was perceived by some of the ECCD directors as an effective mechanism for ensuring the coordination of ECCD programmes at the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. However, this coordination mechanism appears insufficiently practiced at most centres.

The finding also revealed that some ECCD directors perceived formal planning and communicating their centres' aims and objectives as an effective coordination mechanism. In practice, it was evident that the preparation of learner plans appears to be widely embraced by most centres. The findings also revealed that only a few ECCD centres engaged in formal management planning of their centres where stakeholders are involved in defining the centre's aims and objectives.

The finding indicated that some ECCD directors achieve coordination through simplified organisation and effective chain of command. However, in terms of the level of practice among centres, it appears that even though some have adopted sound organisational charts, simplified organisation and a transparent chain of command as mechanisms for coordination, the practice is yet to be adopted by the majority of centres.

The findings further revealed that some participants perceived in-service training workshops as an important coordination device where ECCD instructional challenges are addressed through capacity building. However, inadequate financial resources were cited as a major challenge affecting the effective and sufficient use of this coordination mechanism.

Finally, the study found that the use of harmonised programmes, policies, budgets, schedules, and observation checklists were perceived by some ECCD directors as effective tools for coordination. This coordination mechanism indicates the predictable conduct needed for coordinated activities. However, it was evident that most ECCD centres were yet to develop relevant policies to facilitate their coordination activities, suggesting an area of deficiency that requires improvement.

#### **6.3.4 Theme 4: Controlling practices of ECCD centre directors**

The findings related to the controlling practices of ECCD directors revealed that some directors perceived cultural control as an effective control mechanism that communicates ECCD centres' missions and strategic visions throughout the ECCD setting to internalise it and guide members of their centres in their daily activities and decision-making situations. However, regarding the scope of practice, the findings indicated that most ECCD directors were unaware of this management control mechanism. The findings also revealed that ECCD directors' leadership was also perceived as an effective way to embed and advance core values inside ECCD centres because leadership provided by a charismatic director directs and motivates ECCD staff in their service provision. However, the findings showed that the overwhelming majority of ECCD directors appeared to lack requisite training and qualifications in the area of leadership and management.

This study also found that preparing performance improvement plan implementation budgets by some ECCD centres appears to serve as a financial control mechanism. In terms of the scope of practice, the findings revealed that this practice seems limited to public centres receiving the governmental Capitation Grant.

The study also found that some ECCD directors perceived behavioural constraints, pre-reviews of action, and action accountability as effective mechanisms for achieving action control of ECCD service provision processes toward achieving desired ECCD outcomes. However, lack of feedback from external regulators after inspection visits, and lack of compliance with some of the staff's rules and regulations were perceived to be significant challenges affecting the effective use of these control mechanisms at some of the centres.

The findings further revealed that some ECCD directors perceived outcome control as an effective mechanism of controlling ECCD centre activities at ECCD programme input and output levels and this appeared to be in line with administrative control practices. In terms of scope of practice, the outcome control mechanism was limited to ECCD centres receiving the governmental Capitation Grant.

Finally, the study found that ECCD directors perceived strategic staffing, placement and professional development as effective management control strategies used by some directors to achieve ECCD programme control at the input and process level of the ECCD system. However, a lack of adequate financial resources was reported to limit the effectiveness of professional development practice in private and public ECCD centres.

### **6.3.5 Appropriate framework for the management of ECCD centres**

In addressing the gaps in previous studies, this study used the themes that emerged from the data to propose an appropriate contextual framework for managing ECCD centres in Ghana. The proposed management framework integrated the following five elements that interact to achieve effective and efficient ECCD programme management. These include ECCD stakeholders in the environment responsible for the supply of ECCD inputs that enable the planning and

management of ECCD programmes; management inputs, which are the resources supplied by the ECCD stakeholders from the environment; and management processes where ECCD directors are required to carry out Fayol's managerial activities of planning, organising, coordination and controlling that would lead to the expected management outputs. Management outputs components include, for example, improved access to and participation by children, quality, management efficiency, and pupils' learning tools. The final element integrated into the proposed framework is the feedback loop through which ECCD directors can close ECCD improvement gaps with key ECCD stakeholders through the use of children's performance test results, staff performance appraisals, and parents and community satisfaction survey results.

#### **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The limitations of this study are fundamentally those associated with any qualitative research. First, it must be noted that the main aim of this study was to provide a better understanding of the management practices of ECCD directors in five municipalities limited to the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. However, because the case was typical, the outcomes can be transferred to individual contexts if commonalities are identified. Additionally, the findings of this study can be used in close association with others conducted in the Ghanaian educational context to enhance an understanding of the management practices of ECCD directors.

The second limitation of this study is that the sample size was limited to twenty semi-structured interviews involving sixteen ECCD directors and four board members due to time and resource constraints. By involving diverse ECCD stakeholders such as parents, teachers, community members, and officers from the district education office, with a larger sample size, richer and more in-depth data on directors' management practices could have been gathered to improve the findings. This weakness was strengthened by triangulating data from the interviews with the document review data.

In addition, one main limitation is that the study was conducted during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Ghana closed down all schools limiting the data collection approach to telephonic interviews. The inability to enter ECCD centres due to COVID-19 had impeded one of this study's data collection instruments. Using face-to-face interviews and observation methods, richer data could have been collected to strengthen the research findings



further. Analysing gestures and other body language through telephonic interviews was impossible.

The findings of a case study could be influenced by the personal opinions and beliefs of the researcher, leading to subjectivity. As a professional in educational leadership and management, who also studied and worked in higher education institutions as an administrator in the Ghanaian educational context, I had developed some understandings and biases about ECCD directors' management practices. Therefore, there could have been a temptation to allow the interpretation of the document review and interview data to fit these understandings and preconceptions rather than allowing the data or the participants to speak for themselves. Being aware of this, I intentionally avoided depending on initial instinctive interpretations rooted in my own personal experience. My supervisor also helped in identifying personal bias in the research process.

Furthermore, potential bias could occur in qualitative research when data collection, construction, and analysis are not rigorous. This study attempted to ensure that the data collection procedures were trustworthy. Firstly, the interviews were piloted before their execution, and secondly, two interviews and document analysis were used to collect data. These methods ensured that the data was triangulated, eliminating any potential bias.

Another limitation of this study was related to the sampling of the study population, which consisted only of the ECCD directors and board members in five municipalities due to time constraints and other practicalities. I recognise that other stakeholders of ECCD, such as parents, teachers, community members, and district education officers, also have opinions about ECCD centre management. The exclusion of these stakeholders was identified as a possible limitation, because their views could clarify some management issues. Despite these limitations, it could be said that the case study approach was appropriate for the study. It was suitable for answering the key research questions set out in the introductory chapter and allowed the exploration of ECCD directors' application of management principles at their centres.

## **6.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study was delimited by its focus on the management practices of ECCD centre directors within the theoretical framework of the Administrative Management Theory. Due to time and

resource factors, this study did not delve into other management practices such as leadership. Methodologically, this study was solely qualitative, conducted through constructivist-interpretivist lenses. The study sample excluded other ECCD centre employees such as caregivers, non-teaching staff, and other ECCD stakeholders such as parents and regulatory authorities for manageability. Furthermore, not all ECCD directors in Ghana participated in the study since the study required in-depth interviews, note-taking, and tape recording, which were cumbersome.

It is acknowledged that there are more than four management principles and functions that ECCD directors could utilise to attain management effectiveness and efficiency; however, the study was delimited to four of Henri Fayol's management functions, including planning, organising, coordination and controlling. This study was also carried out in one region of Ghana, limiting generalisability of the findings to the other fifteen regions with different contextual factors. The use of ECCD directors and board members as interview participants, as well as a document review in this study, serves as a triangulation aspect that can enable the researcher to realise better results.

## **6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Based on some unanswered questions that emerged from this study, several possible future research areas have been suggested and discussed below.

This study is exploratory in nature. It is suggested that the proposed framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana could be used to carry out a similar study in other regions or countries to validate the suitability of the proposed management framework.

As a result of time constraints, this study focused solely on the management practices of ECCD directors with an emphasis on four administrative functions: planning, organising, coordinating, and controlling, leaving out other main functions of ECCD directors. This study, therefore, suggests further study on other management functions and leadership practices of ECCD centre directors in Ghana.

Further studies should be carried out using quantitative methods to examine the impact of additional management qualifications on ECCD directors' management efficiency and effectiveness. A larger sample size in a quantitative study may allow for the generalisation of the research findings.

Another suggestion is to conduct a similar study with ECCD centres that embark on school improvement planning as a requirement to qualify for the governmental Capitation Grant in other regions of Ghana to find potential differences but also to include a bigger sample size of ECCD centres and key ECCD stakeholders such as parents, community members, teachers, district and circuit education officers.

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

The study aimed to explore ECCD directors' application of basic management principles at centres by directors in five municipalities of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that although the findings of the study showed that ECCD directors put much effort into managing their centres, the information gathered from the literature, interviews, and document reviews also suggested that ECCD directors are confronted with numerous challenges in their efforts to apply basic management principles at their centres.

The identified challenges that were brought about by ECCD contextual factors included but were not limited to ECCD directors' inadequate knowledge and skills in principles of management; lack of technical support from district education offices to support inexperienced directors during planning; lack of active engagement of key external and internal ECCD stakeholders in the management process; lack of utilisation of enablers of effective and efficient management functions at the inputs, process and outputs phases of management. Other challenges included inadequate utilisation of external planning inputs, lack of use of varied data sources for planning, inadequate mobilisation of resources, and support from the ECCD community/environment. The researcher proposed a framework for managing ECCD centres in Ghana to guide ECCD directors in their efforts to apply basic management principles at their centres. The researcher also made some recommendations on improving ECCD centre management effectiveness and efficiency.

## **6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are suggested for practitioners, policymakers, and future research.

### **6.8.1 Recommendations for practitioners**

- i. ECCD directors should consider using the proposed contextual framework for managing their ECCD centres to guide their management practice.
- ii. ECCD directors are expected to acquire in-depth knowledge and skills of management principles through continuous professional development and enrolment for further studies on leadership and management.
- iii. ECCD directors should use varied data sources such as children's and parents' demographic data, children's test results, and parents' satisfaction survey results to diagnose the actual root cause of the poor performance of their centres.
- iv. ECCD directors should actively engage internal and external ECCD stakeholders in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating ECCD programmes.
- v. ECCD directors should consider mobilising adequate funding and support from ECCD stakeholders in the community to supplement the governmental Capitation Grant.
- vi. ECCD centres should develop and implement a parental and family involvement policy to promote ECCD both in the centre and home settings.

### **6.8.2 Recommendations for policymakers**

- i. The Ministry of Educational should consider piloting the proposed framework for the management of ECCD centres in Ghana.
- ii. The Ministry of Educational should consider introducing mandatory ECCD centre management courses and regular training workshops to equip directors with management skills.

- iii. The Ministry of Educational should consider qualifications in management studies as requirements for appointments to the position of ECCD director.
- iv. The Ghana Education Service should designate a unit responsible for assessing quality improvement plans prepared by ECCD directors.
- v. The Ghana Education Service should consider developing a checklist for quality improvement planning to guide ECCD directors.
- vi. The Ghana Education Service should make available planning experts to offer technical support to inexperienced ECCD directors.

### **6.8.3 Recommendations for future research**

This study focused on applying ECCD directors' basic management principles at their centres. Even though this study generated adequate data points, which answered all the research questions, the researcher further recommends that more information can be obtained by including other ECCD management stakeholders such as teachers/caregivers, parents, community members, parents' association members, in research using quantitative methods with a larger sample size, which may allow for the generalisation of the research findings.

### **6.8.4 Dissemination of the findings of the study**

To substantiate the implications of the findings of the study, the researcher will disseminate the findings through seminars with ECCD directors and publication in research journals.

## REFERENCES

- Abreh, M. K. (2017). Involvement of school management committees in school base management: experience from two districts in Ghana. *Educational Planning*, 24(3), 61-75.
- Achinivu, G., Handsome, O.E., Ayomide, W.A., Enobong, A. E. & Johnson, F. O. (2017). Application of the Henri Fayol principles of management in startup organizations. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 19(10), 78-85.
- Acton, K. S. (2021). School leaders as change agents: Do principals have the tools they need? *Management in Education*, 35(1), 43-51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020620927415>.
- Adu-Agyem, J., & Osei-Poku, P. (2012). Quality education in Ghana: the way forward. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 1(9), 164-177.
- Adu-Gyamfi, S., Donkoh, W. J., & Addo, A. A. (2016). Educational reforms in Ghana: past and present. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 5(3), 158-172.
- Agi, U. (2017). School development planning: A strategic tool for secondary school improvement in Rivers State, Nigeria. *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education*, 21(1), 88-99.
- Agih, A. A. (2015). Effective school management and supervision: imperative for quality education service delivery. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*, 9(3), 62-74.
- Ali, I. (2019). Personality traits, individual innovativeness and satisfaction with life. *Journal of Innovation Knowledge*, 4(2019), 38-46.
- Ali, I. A., & Abdalla, M. S. (2017). Educational management, educational administration and educational leadership: definitions and general concepts. *SAS Journal of Medicine*, 3(12), 326-329.
- Allais, S. (2017). Towards measuring the economic value of higher education: lessons from South Africa. *Comparative Education*, 52(1), 147-163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2017.1254985>.
- Al-Zu'bi, Z. H. (2013). Classroom management problems among teacher students training at Hashemite University. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 140-149.

- Amoah, S. A. (2015). Managing school discipline: the students' and teachers' perception on disciplinary strategies. *British Journal of Psychology Research*, 3(2), 1-11.
- Amponsah, J., & Brankem, M. (2019). Challenges of Early Grade Reading and Mathematics in Ghana: An analysis of Education Indicators. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(2), 89-106.
- Andriany, D., Soefijanto, T. A., & Wahyudi, M. (2019). Strategic planning for students in Little Koala Montessori Kindergarten. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 178(2352), 613- 617.
- Ang, L. (2012), Leading and managing in the early years: a study of the impact of a NCSL programme on children's centre leaders' perceptions of leadership and practice. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 40(3), 289-304. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/174114321243696>.
- Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5(2), 272-281.
- Antwi, S. K., & Hamza, K. (2015). Qualitative and quantitative research paradigms in business research: a philosophical reflection. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 7(3), 217-226.
- Apusigah, A.A., Osae, V.O., & Boamah, A.B. (2018). Leadership Styles and Employee Performance in the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Sector in the Keta Municipality, Ghana. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 10(22), 142-150.
- Araújo, D. R., Sampaio, F. M. C., Castro, M. C., Pinheiro, S. A. V., & Macedo, A. P. (2014). Testing in time: from the classical management theory to the current organization of Nursing work. *Revista de Enfermagem Referência Série*, 4(2), 111-119.
- Aristidou, A., & Barrett, M. (2018). Coordinating service provision in dynamic service settings: A position-practice relations perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(2), 685-714. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2015.0310>.
- Arnold, R.D. and Wade, J.P. (2015). A definition of systems thinking: A systems approach. *Procedia Computer Science*, 44, 669-678. DOI: [10.1016/j.procs.2015.03.050](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2015.03.050)

- Asante, E.A. (2017). Management Practices in Enhancing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs in Ghana. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 11(1), 1-13.
- Asare-Danso, S. (2014). Effects of educational policies on teacher education in Ghana: A historical study of the Presbyterian College of Education. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(6), 57-65.
- Aubrey, C., Godfrey, R., & Harris, A. (2012). How do they manage? An investigation of early childhood leadership. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 41(1), 5-29. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1741143212462702>
- Babatunde, M. M. (2014). Principals' managerial skills and administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: Administration and Management*, 14(3), 50-57.
- Bacud, S. (2020). Henri Fayol's Principles of Management and its effect to organizational leadership and governance. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(11), 162-167.
- Bateman, T., & Snell, S. (2013). *Management* (3rd ed). McGraw Hill.
- Bedford, D. S. (2015). Management control systems across different modes of innovation: Implications for firm performance. *Management Accounting Research*, 28, 12-30. doi:10.1016/j.mar.2015.04.003.
- Bedford, D. S., & Malmi, T. (2015). Configurations of control: An exploratory analysis. *Management Accounting Research*, 27, 2-26. doi: 10.1016/j.mar.2015.04.002.
- Belle, L. J. (2018). Student discipline management: an examination of the State Secondary School Principal's leadership in Mauritius. *International Research in Education*, 6(1), 30-49.
- Bertalanffy, L. V. (1972). The history and status of general systems theory. *Academy of Management Journal*, 15, 407-426.
- Bickmore, D., Roberts, M., & Gonzales, M. (2020). How aspiring principals applied course-based learning to develop school improvement plans. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 59(2), 199-214. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JEA-06-2020-0139>.
- Blakeney, A. E., Lavalley, D. C., Baik, D., Pambianco, S., O'Brien, K. D. & Zierler, B. K. (2019). Purposeful interprofessional team intervention improves relational coordination among advanced heart failure care teams. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 33(5), 481-489. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2018.1560248>.



- Bligh, M. C., Kohles, J. C., & Yan, Q. (2018). Leading and learning to change: the role of leadership style and mindset in error learning and organizational change. *Journal of Change Management*, 18(2), 116-141.
- Bozkus, K. (2014). School as a social system. *Sakarya University Journal of Education*, 4(1), 49-61.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- California Department of Education. (2017). Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) Preschool Program Assessment Video Series: Administration overview—Role of the administrator. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/dradminsrole.pdf> on 15th June, 2021.
- Callanan, M., Anderson M., Haywood, S., Hudson, R., & Speight, S. N. (2017). Study of early education and development: good practice in early education research report. Retrieved 28 June 2021, from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/586242/SEED\\_\\_Good\\_Practice\\_in\\_Early\\_Education\\_-\\_RR553.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586242/SEED__Good_Practice_in_Early_Education_-_RR553.pdf) [accessed 28 June 2021].
- Carenys, J. (2012). Management control systems: a historical perspective. *International Journal of Economy, Management and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 1-18.
- Carnochan, S. B., McBeath, E. C., & Austin, M. (2019). Perspectives of public and non-profit managers on communications in human services contracting. *Public Performance and Management Review*, 42(65), 7-84.
- Carroll-Meehan, C. P. B., & Hadfield, E. (2017). New leaders in Early Years: making a difference for children in England. *Early Child Development and Care*, 189(3), 416-429. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1324436>.
- Carvalho, M., Cabral, I., Verdasca, J., & Alves, J. (2021b). What about us? Teachers' participation in schools' strategic action plans. *Participatory Educational Research*, 8(3), 156-175. <https://doi.org/10.17275/per.21.59.8.3>.
- Casquejo, J. L. M. (2016). Examining Montessori middle school through a self-determination theory lens: A study of the lived experiences of adolescents. *Journal of Montessori Research*, 2(1), 27–42. <https://doi.org/10.17161/jomr.v2i1.4994>
- World Bank (2013)

- Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: the interview protocol refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(5), 811-831.
- Chan, T. C., Chandler, M., Morris, R., Rebisz, S., Turan, S., Shu, Z., & Kpeglo, S. (2019). School principals' self-perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in six countries. *New Waves Educational Research & Development*, 22(2), 37-61.
- Chandra, R. (2017). Quality early childhood care and education in India: initiatives, practice, challenges and enablers. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*, 11(1), 41-46.
- Chiedozie, O. L., & Victor, A. A. (2017). Principals' application of instructional leadership practices for secondary school effectiveness in Oyo State. *Journal of the Nigerian Academy of Education*, 13(1), 32-44.
- Chukwumah, F. O. (2015). Developing quality strategic plan in secondary schools for successful school improvement. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(21), 136-144.
- Claggett, J. L., & Karahanna, E. (2018). Unpacking the structure of coordination mechanisms and the role of relational coordination in an era of digitally mediated work processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 43(4), 704-722.  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2016.0325>
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2018). Using thematic analysis in counselling and psychotherapy research: A critical reflection. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Journal*, 18(2), 107-110.
- Clarke, V., Braun, V., Terry, G., & Hayfield, N. (2019). Thematic analysis. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in health and social sciences* (pp. 843-860). Springer.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). Routledge.
- Cole, G. A., & Kelly, P. (2015). *Management - Theory and Practice* (8th edition). Cengage Learning EMEA.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage.
- Cornito, C. M. (2021). Striking a balance between centralized and decentralized decision making: A school-based management practice for optimum performance. *International*

- Journal on Social and Education Sciences* 3(4), 656-669.  
<https://doi.org/10.46328/ijonses.217>.
- Council of the European Union. (2019). Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on high quality early childhood education and care systems (2019/C 189/02).
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Cruz, C. D. P., Villena, D. K., Navarro, E. V., Belecina, R. R. & Garvida, M. D. (2016). Towards enhancing the managerial performance of school heads. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 5(2), 705-714.
- Currid, J. (2017). *Community involvement: a guide for early years educators*. Barnardos.
- Daft, R. L. (2018). *Management*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.
- Daft, R. L. (2016). *Organization theory and design*. Cengage Learning.
- Daft, R. L. (2013). *Management*. Cengage Learning.
- Dehnad, A., Afsharian, F., Hosseini, F., Arabshahi, S. K. S., & Bigdeli, S. (2014). Pursuing a definition of self-directed learning in literature from 2000–2012. *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116 (2014) 5184 – 5187.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1097>
- Demirel, D. (2020). How can the coordination of the processes be achieved in virtual teams? Implications for virtual organisations. *International Journal of Networking and Virtual Organisations*, 22(3), 301-322.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Department of Justice Canada. (2017). In Loco Parentis (Latin: In Place of a Parent). Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/yj-jj/inadj-papf.html> on June 23, 2021.
- Desta, S. T. (2019). Strategic planning process to company performance. *European Scientific Journal*, 15(22), 165-204.

- Dolechek, R., Lippert, T., Vengrouskie, E. F., & Lloyd, R. A. (2019). Solving a whale of a problem: introducing the four functions of management in a management principles course. *International Forum of Teaching Studies*, 15(2), 29-35.
- Domingo, J., Domingo, I., & Marces, I. (2020). Impact assessment of continuous improvement projects (CIP) on schools' performance in the Division of Antipolo city. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 3(2), 1-10.  
<https://asianjournal.org/online/index.php/ajms/article/view/273>.
- Dos, I., & Savas, A. C. (2015). Elementary school administrators and their roles in the context of effective schools. *SAGE Open Publishers*, 5(1), 1-11.
- Duffy, M. (2014). *Quality adult-child interactions in early years services*. Barnardos
- Duke, D. L. (2015). *Leadership for low-performing schools: a step-by-step guide to the school turnaround process*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Duke, D. L., Carr, M., & Sterrett, W. (2012). *The school improvement planning handbook: Getting focused for turnaround and transition*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Dunaway, D., Kim, D., & Szad, E. (2012). Perceptions of the purpose and value of the school improvement plan process. *The Educational Forum*, 76(2), 158-173.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2011.652490>.
- Education International. (2010) Early Childhood Education: A Global Scenario. A report on a study conducted by the Education International ECE Task Force.
- Edwards, A. K., & Aboagye, S. K. (2015). Assessing school leadership challenges in Ghana using leadership practice inventory. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(4), 168-181.
- Elfer, P. S., Greenfield, S., Robson, D. W., & Zachariou, A. (2018). Love, satisfaction and exhaustion in the nursery: methodological issues in evaluating the impact of work discussion groups in the nursery. *Early Child Development and Care*, 188(7), 892-904.
- Elliott, K. (2015). Teacher performance appraisal: more about performance or development? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(9), 102-116.
- Esmaili, Z., Mohamadrezai, H., & Mohamadrezai, A. (2015). The role of teacher's authority in students' learning. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(19):1-15.

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, (2019). *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe - 2019 Edition*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat. (2014). *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe - 2014 Edition*. Eurydice and Eurostat Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Faeni, D. P., Faeni, R. P., Septiyanti, R., & Yuliansyah, Y. (2020). The role of management control system on firm performance. *Talent Development & Excellence, 12*(3), 1629-1639.
- Fayol, H. (1949). *General and industrial management*. Pitman.
- Ferdous, J. (2016). Organization theories: from classical perspective. *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law, 9*(2), 1-6.
- Frimpong, K.Y. (2019). Management Challenges in Early Childhood Care and Development Centers in Ghana: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Management Sciences, 6*(2), 132-145.
- Froebel Trust (2018). Froebelian Principles. Accessed July 2, 2021. Retrieved March 1, 2020, from <https://www.froebel.org.uk/innovations/>
- Gananathan, R. (2011). Implications of full day Kindergarten program policy on early childhood pedagogy and practice. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy, 5*(2), 33-45.
- Garba, M. A. (2017). Application of Henri Fayol's managerial principles in Nigerian secondary schools: Stakeholders' perceptions. *International Journal for Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Field, 3*(10), 114-124.
- Garcia, M., & Cerado, E. (2020). Developing an evidence-based evaluation tool for continuous improvement program of the Department of Education. *American Journal of Educational Research, 8*(7), 502–507. <https://doi.org/10.12691/education-8-7-8>.
- Ghiara, V. (2019). Disambiguating the role of paradigms in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689818819928*.
- Giardiello, P. (2013). *Pioneers in Early Childhood Education: the roots and legacies of Rachel and Margaret McMillan, Maria Montessori and Susan Isaacs*. Routledge.
- Glesne, C. (2015). *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction* (5th ed.). Longman.

- Global Partnership for Education. (2020). Early Childhood Education in Ghana. Retrieved from <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/ghana/early-childhood-education> on 23rd June, 2021.
- Gray, D. E. (2014). *Doing research in the real world*. Sage
- Gschwantner, S., & Hiebl, M. (2016). Management control systems and organizational ambidexterity. *Journal of Management Control*, 27(4), 371-404. doi:10.1007/s00187-016-0236-3.
- Gulati, R., Mayo A. J., & Nohrian, N. (2017). *Management - an integrated approach*. Cengage Learning.
- Gupta, C. B. (2014). *Management: theory and practice*. Sultan Chand & Sons.
- Gulshan, S. (2016). *Principles of Management*. Pearson Education, India.
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (2012). Running on empty? Finding the time and capacity to lead learning. *NASSP Bulletin*, 97(1), 5-21.
- Heikka, J., Waniganayake, M., & Hujala, E. (2013). Contextualising distributed leadership within early childhood education: current understandings, research evidence and future challenges. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 41(4), 30-44.
- Hoy, W., & Adams, C. (2015). *Quantitative research in education*. Sage.
- Huber, D. J., & Conway, J. M. (2015). The effect of school improvement planning on student achievement. *Planning & Changing*, 46, 56-70.
- Hultman, L. A., & Margrain, V. (2019). Challenging the challenges: democratic spaces and opportunities in ECE. In V. Margrain & A. Löfdahl Hultman (Eds.), *Challenging democracy in early childhood education: Engagement in changing global contexts* (pp. 265–274). Springer.
- Ifeyinwe, F. M. (2019). Assessment of planning practices of principals for effective school administration in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Education, Humanities and Management Sciences*, 1(1), 8-15.
- Immordino, K. M., Gigliotti, R. A., Ruben, B. D., & Tromp, S. (2016). Evaluating the impact of strategic planning in higher education. *Educational Planning*, 23(1), 35-47.
- Innovations for Poverty Action. (2016). Public and private Kindergarten school quality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Retrieved May 1, 2020, from

[http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/mhm327/baseline\\_findings\\_public\\_priv ate\\_updated\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/mhm327/baseline_findings_public_priv ate_updated_June_2016.pdf).

- International Step by Step Association (ISSA). (n.d.). Role of Early Childhood Centres in Loco Parentis. Retrieved from <https://www.issa.nl/content/role-early-childhood-centres-loco-parentis> o June 23, 2021.
- Jackline, T. N., & John, A. O. (2014). School management and students' academic performance: how effective are strategies being employed by school managers in secondary schools in Embu North District, Embu County, Kenya? *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(9), 86-99.
- Jamil, C. Z. M., & Mohamed, R. (2013). The effect of management control system on performance measurement system at small medium hotels in Malaysia. *International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance*, 4(4), 202.
- Jensen, J.J. (2017). Denmark – ECEC Workforce Profile. In *Workforce Profiles in Systems of Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, P. Oberhuemer & I. Schreyer. (Eds.). Retrieved May 9, 2020, from [www.seepro.eu/English/Country\\_Reports.htm](http://www.seepro.eu/English/Country_Reports.htm).
- Johnson, A. R., & Thompson, M. T. (2015). The Importance of Organizing: A Review of Organizational Principles. *Journal of Management*, 25(3), 45-62.
- Jones, G. R., & George, J. M. (2018). *Contemporary Management* (10th edition). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Jones, S.R., Torres, V. and Arminio, J. (2014) *Negotiating the Complexities of Qualitative Research in Higher Education: Fundamental Elements and Issues*. Routledge.
- Kabay, S., Wolf, S., & Yoshikawa, H. (2017). "So that his mind will open": Parental perceptions of early childhood education in urbanizing Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 57, 44-53. Doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.08.013.
- Kabeyi, M. J. B. (2019). Organizational strategic planning, implementation and evaluation with analysis of challenges and benefits for profit and non-profit organizations. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 5(6), 27-32.
- Kabiru, F. C., Theuri, M., & Misiko, A. (2018). Influence of organising as a management function on organizational performance among agricultural state-owned corporations in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 3(1), 100-125.

- Kelly, B., & Loïc, W. (2014). Exploring Early Education Programs in Peri-urban Settings in Africa: Accra, Ghana. Innovations for Poverty Action. Final Report, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2014. Retrieved May 9, 2020, from [https://poverty-action.org/sites/default/files/publications/final\\_eed\\_report\\_full.pdf](https://poverty-action.org/sites/default/files/publications/final_eed_report_full.pdf).
- Kenny, C., Enrico, F., & Evan, R., (2021) Extemporaneous Coordination in Specialist Teams: The Familiarity Complementarity. *Organization Science*, 32(1),1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2020.1376>.
- Kieleko, M. D., Kanori, E., & Mugambi, M. M. (2017). Secondary school principals' workload and instructional supervision practices in Kenya: A case of Lower Nyatta Sub County, Kitui County. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Science, and Education*, 4(2), 68-80.
- King, G. (2017). How the relationship theory of love language can help your workplace relationships, too. Quartz. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/1053563/love-languages-in-the-workplace-how-the-relationship-theory-can-help-your-office-relationships-too/>.
- Kinicki, A., & Williams, B.K. (2018). *Management - a practical introduction* (8th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A.B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(5), 26-41. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26>.
- Kongnyuy, P. (2020). Delegation of authority as a tool for effective secondary school management in the North West Region of Cameroon. *International Journal of Education and Social Science Research*, 3(6), 271-281.
- Kools, M., & George, B. (2020). Debate: The learning organization—a key construct linking strategic planning and strategic management. *Public Money & Management*, DOI: 10.1080/09540962.2020.1727112.
- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 120-124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>.
- Kotirde, I. Y., Yunos, J. M., & Anaf, S. Y. (2014). The role of principals in sustaining/management of quality secondary school education in Nigeria. *GSEe-journal of education*, 1(2), 1-8.



- Krippendorff, K. (2013). *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Kwashabawa, B. B., & Oduwaiye, R. O. (2016). Community participation and financing of infrastructural development of basic school in North-west Zone. *Journal of Educational Administration and Planning*, 16(1), 1-14.
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2010). *Leading school turnaround: how successful leaders transform low-performing schools*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Li, P. H., Forbes, A., & Yang, W. (2019). Developing culturally and developmentally appropriate early STEM learning experiences. *Early Education and Development*, 30(2), 294-295.
- Liberman, L. (2014). The impact of a paternalistic style of management and delegation of authority on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Chile and the US. *Innovar*, 24(53), 187-196.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E.G. (2013). *The Constructivist credo*. Left Coast Press.
- Lindon, J., & Lindon, L. (2012). *Leadership and early years professionalism: linking theory and practice*. Hodder Education.
- Loh, J. (2013). Inquiry into Issues of Trustworthiness and Quality in Narrative Studies: A Perspective. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(33), 1-15.
- Lopez-Valeiras, E., Gonzalez-Sanchez, M. B., & Gomez-Conde, J. (2015). The effects of the interactive use of management control systems on process and organizational innovation. *Review of Managerial Science*, 10(3), 487-510.
- Lukaš M. & Munjiza, E. (2014). Education System of John Amos Comenius and its Implications in Modern Didactics. *Život i škola: časopis za teoriju i praksu odgoja i obrazovanja*, 60(31), 32-42.
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2016). The principal and the school: what do principals do? *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*, 27(4), 1-3.
- Lussier, R. (2021). *Management fundamentals: concepts, applications, skill development*. (9th ed). Sage.
- Madukwe, E. C., Owan, V. J., & Nwannunu, B. I. (2019). Administrative networking strategies and supervisory effectiveness in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

- European Center for Research Training and Development UK. *British Journal of Education*, 7(4), 39-48.
- Malmi, T. (2013). Management control as a package: the need for international research. *Journal of Management Control*, 23(4), 229. doi:10.1007/s00187-013-0169-z.
- Mariam, A., & Julian, E. (2017) Becoming a reflexive researcher: a developmental approach to research methodology. *Open Review of Educational Research*, 4(1),33-45. DOI: 10.1080/23265507.2017.1300068
- Marope, P. T. M., & Kaga, Y. (2017). Investing against Evidence: The Global State of Early Childhood Care and Education. UNESCO.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Sage.
- Massaro, M., Moro, A., Aschauer, E., & Fink, M. (2019). Trust, control and knowledge transfer in small business networks. *Review of Managerial Science*, 13(2), 267-301. doi:10.1007/s11846-017-0247-y.
- Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. (2017). Early Childhood Program Director's Handbook. Retrieved from <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/12/28/director-handbook.pdf> on 15th June, 2021.
- Maxwell C.C. M., Shupikai, Z., Kwaedza, E. K., & Lilian, C. (2014). Applying Management Theory into Practice at Secondary School in Zimbabwe: Teachers Impressions of Classical Management Functions at Mapakomhere Day Secondary School in Masvingo. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(39), 99-103.
- Maxwell, J. (2013). *Qualitative research design: an interactive approach*. Sage.
- Mbalamula, Y., Suru, M., & Seni, M. (2017). Utility of Henri Fayol's fourteen principles in the administration process of secondary schools in Tanzania. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 5(6), 103-116.
- Mehta, A., & Yadav, V. (2014). Henry Fayol and Frederick W. Taylor's contribution to management: an overview. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology*, 1(5), 807-810.
- Mensah, A. (2014). Early Childhood Education in Ghana [YouTube clip]. Retrieved June 4, 2020, from

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhpUyFzGq\\_k&index=1&list=PL6Ouw5PgHPgrwPn1xaa38mkR7j243fAK&t=23s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhpUyFzGq_k&index=1&list=PL6Ouw5PgHPgrwPn1xaa38mkR7j243fAK&t=23s).

- Merchant, K. A., & Van der Stede, W. A., (2012). *Management control systems: performance measurement, evaluation and incentives*. (3rd ed). Pearson Education Limited.
- Merriam, S., & Tisdell, E. (2015). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, F., Bendikson, L., & Le Fevre, D. M. (2020). Leading school improvement through goalsetting: Evidence from New Zealand schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 20(10), 1–19.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220979711>
- Meyers, C. V., & Hitt, D. (2018). Planning for school turnaround in the United States: An analysis of the quality of principal-developed quick wins. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 29(3), 362–382.
- Meyers, C. V., & VanGronigen, B. A. (2019). A lack of authentic school improvement plan development: Evidence of principal satisficing behavior. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 57(3), 261-278.
- Mezieobi, D. I., Nzokurum, J. C., & Mezieobi, S.A. (2014). Classroom management and teaching of social studies. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(16), 62-68.
- Milotay, N. (2016). From research to policy: The case of early childhood and care. In M. Vandebroek, M. Urban, & J. Peeters (Eds.), *Pathways to professionalism in early childhood education and care* (pp. 119–131). Routledge.
- Ministry of Education. (2012). Programme to scale-up quality Kindergarten education in Ghana. Retrieved June 12, 2021, from [https://issuu.com/sabretom/docs/10\\_12\\_12\\_final\\_version\\_of\\_narrative\\_op](https://issuu.com/sabretom/docs/10_12_12_final_version_of_narrative_op).
- Ministry of Education. (2018). National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework: National Pre-tertiary Education Curriculum Framework for developing subject curricula. Retrieved July, 14, 2021, from [http://nacca.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ministry of Education, Ghana. \(2015\). National Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Framework](http://nacca.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ministry_of_Education_Ghana_(2015)_National_Early_Childhood_Care_and_Development_Policy_Framework). Accra: Ministry of Education, Ghana.

- Ministry of Education, Ghana. (2017). Early Childhood Care and Development Policy. Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education, Ghana, (2019). Early Childhood Care and Development Policy. Retrieved from <http://educationghana.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Early-Childhood-Care-and-Development-Policy.pdf> on 16th May, 2021.
- Ministry of Education, Ghana, (2020). Early Childhood Education Policy Framework. Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education. Retrieved from <https://www.ece-accelerator.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/1.%20ECE%20Policy%20Framework.pdf> on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2020.
- Ministry of Education (Ghana). (2020). Early Childhood Education Curriculum. Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.gh/> on 27th June, 2021.
- Mohammed, M. O. B., Edu. A. O., & Etoh, L. C. (2020). Principals' administrative skills: a predictor of students' academic performance in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Journal of Research in Educational and Business Studies*, 5(1), 186-203.
- Mohd, S. (2014). Using Henry Fayol's principles for better classroom management. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 4(11), 72-77. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org).
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9-18. DOI:10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091.
- Müller-Stewens, B., Widener, S. K., Moller, K., & Steinmann, J.-C. (2020). The role of diagnostic and interactive control uses in innovation. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 80(1), 1-21.
- Murray, J. (2018). Value/s in early childhood education. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 26(3), 215-219. DOI: 10.1080/09669760.2018.1490849.
- Musingafi, M. C. C. (2012). Integrated resource management of potable water in Zimbabwe and South Africa: A comparative study in four local authorities. PhD thesis. Vanderbijlpark. North-West University.

- Musingafi, M. C. C., Zebron, S., Kaseke K. E., & Chaminuka, L. (2014). Applying management theory into practice at secondary school in Zimbabwe: teachers impressions of classical management functions at Mapakomhere Day Secondary School in Masvingo. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(39), 102-103.
- Mustafa, L. M., & Pranoto, Y. K. S. (2019). The experience of Kindergarten principals to provide the real similarities and differences of managerial roles in Yogyakarta City. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(2), 1078-1086.
- Nadelson, L. S., Albritton, S., Valerie G., Couture, V. G., Green, C., Loyless, S. D., & Shaw, E. O. (2020). Principals' perceptions of education equity: a mindset for practice. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 9(1), 1-15.
- Nafsika, A., & Ulrike, S. A. (2020). Early childhood education research in Europe: contexts, policies, and ideas, *Education Inquiry*, 11(2), 89-93. DOI: 10.1080/20004508.2020.1736795.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/> on 28th June, 2021.
- Naudeau, S., Kataoka, N., Valerio, A., Neuman, M. J., & Elder, L. K. (2011). *Investing in young children: An early childhood development guide for policy dialogue and project preparation*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Nazari, M. (2014). The relation between teachers' authority styles with sense of security in students of secondary school of Bojnourd county. *International conference of development and promotion of business*. Harran.
- Ndungu, W. B., Allan, G., & Bomett, J. E. (2015). Influence of monitoring and evaluation by principals on effective teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Githunguri District. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(9), 10-17.
- Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. Evidence-Based Nursing, *ebnurs-2015*. Retrieved June, 20, 2021, from <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/22163/1/EBNBiasFINALJuly2014.pdf>.
- Norlin, B. (2020). Comenius, moral and pious education, and the why, when and how of school discipline, *History of Education*, 49(3), 287-312. DOI: 10.1080/0046760X.2020.1739759.

- Ntumi, S. (2016). Challenges pre-school teachers face in the implementation of the Early Childhood Curriculum in the Cape Coast Metropolis. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(1), 1-9. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1089727.pdf>.
- Nyarko, N. Y. A., & Mate-Kole, C. C. (2016). Proposing a contextual approach to pre-school teacher education in Ghana. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1-10. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2016.1164020.
- OECD (2012). Quality matters in Early Childhood Education and care: United Kingdom (England) 2012, OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2014). Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en>.
- OECD (2015). Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264233515-en>. [5]
- OECD (2016). Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2016-en>. [20].
- OECD (2017). Starting Strong V: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276253-en>.
- OECD (2017). Starting Strong V: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276253-en>.
- OECD (2017). Starting Strong V: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276253-en>.
- OECD (2017). Starting Strong V: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276253-en>.
- Okoro, J. I. (2019). Esprit De Corps principle and leadership effectiveness in higher education institutions. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 1(1), 106-124.
- Ololube, N. P., Ingiabuna, E. T., & Agbor, C. N. (2014). Universal concepts, nature, and basic principles of educational management: implication for present day school management.

- International Journal of Educational Foundations and Management*, 2(1), 43-62.  
Retrieved March, 6, 2021 from <http://www.ijefm.com>.
- Ombonga, M., & Ongaga, K. (2017). Instructional leadership: a contextual analysis of principals in Kenya and Southeast North Carolina. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(17), 169-179.
- Onuma, N. (2016). Principals' performance of supervision of instruction in secondary schools in Nigeria. *British Journal of Education*, 4(3), 40-52.
- Opoku-Amankwa, K., Edu-Buandoh, D. F., & Brewa-Hammond, A. (2014). Publishing for mother tongue-based bilingual education in Ghana: politics and consequences. *Language and Education*, 29(1), 1-14. DOI: 10.1080/09500782.2014.921194.
- Osifo, C. (2013). The effects of coordination on organizational performance: an intra and inter perspective. *Asian Journal of Business and Management*, 1(4) 149-162.
- Osiri, F. K., Piliyeesi, E., & Ateka, F. (2019). School administration and students' KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Kamukunji Sub County, Nairobi County, Kenya. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 6(3), 636-647.
- Owen, G. T. (2014). Qualitative methods in higher education policy analysis: Using interviews and document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(26), 1-19. Retrieved March 8, 2020, from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol19/iss26/2>.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Pešalj, B., Pavlov, A., & Micheli, P. (2018). The use of management control and performance measurement systems in SMEs: A levers of control perspective. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 38(21), 69–91.
- Pesando, L. M., Wolf, S., Behrman, J. R., Tsinigo, E., & Aber, J. L. (2018). Public versus Private? Examining Kindergarten School Choice, Parental Resources, and Children's School Readiness in Ghana. Retrieved March 9, 2020, from [https://paa.confex.com/paa/2018/mediafile/.../LMP\\_Ghana\\_PAA2018.pdf](https://paa.confex.com/paa/2018/mediafile/.../LMP_Ghana_PAA2018.pdf).
- Pilny, A., Proulx, J. D., Dinh, L., & Bryan, A. L. (2017). An adapted structurational framework for the emergence of communication networks. *Communication Studies*, 68, 72-94. Doi: 10.1080/10510974.2016.1262886.
- Pitney, W. A., Parker, J. (2009). *Qualitative research in physical activity and the health professions*. Human Kinetics.

- Ponelis, S. (2015). Using interpretive qualitative case studies for exploratory research in doctoral studies: a case of information systems research in small and medium enterprises. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 10, 535-550.
- Poudyal, C. S. (2013). Private schooling and Fayol's Principles of Management: A Case from Nepal. *Journal of Education and Research*, 3(1), 6-23. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3126/jer.v3i0.7849>
- Powell, D., & Lambert, R. (2019). The Leadership Challenge: Leading an Early Childhood Program. *Young Children*, 74(3), 14-19.
- Punch, K. F. (2014). *Introduction to social research: quantitative & qualitative* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Sage.
- Puyana, J. M. (2013). *Overview of early childhood development services in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington, DC, Inter-American Development Bank.
- Raman, B. S., & Chandrashekar, K. (2019). *Principles of management* (First ed.). New United Publishers Mangalore.
- Ramaswamy, C. D. S. (2014). Self-performance appraisal and its effectiveness in performance management: an empirical study in Saudi Arabia. Retrieved March 10, 2021, from <http://www.inflibnet.ac.in/ojs/index.php/MC/article/viewFile/3168/2452>.
- Reagans, R., Miron-Spektor, E., & Argote, L. (2016). Knowledge utilization, coordination, and team performance. *Organization Science*, 27(5), 1108–1124. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2016.1078>.
- Řehoř, P., & Vrchota, J. (2018). Remuneration in small and middle-sized enterprises with project management. *Procedia Computer Science*, 138, 829-834.
- Rini, R., Sukamto, I., Ridwan, R., & Hariri, H. (2019). School-based management in Indonesia: decision-making, problems, and problem-solving strategy. *Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 422(1), 229-234.
- Robbins, S. P., Coulter, M. K., & DeCenzo, D. A. (2020). *Fundamentals of Management*. Pearson.
- Robbins, S.P., Coulter, M., DeCenzo, D.A., & Woods, M. (2019). *Principles of management*. Pearson Education.
- Robbins, S. P., Coulter, M., & DeCenzo, D. A. (2017). *Fundamentals of management*. Pearson.



- Rouse, E., & Spradbury, G. (2016), The role of the educational leader in long day care – how do they perceive their role? *Early Child Development and Care*, 186(3), 497-508. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2015.1036419>.
- Sadik, M. (2018). Educational planning: approaches, trends, and learnings: a case study of the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI). *International Journal of Economics Management Studies*, 5(6), 1-9.
- Sarantakos, S. (2013). *Social Research*. (4th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan Publications.
- Schildkamp, K. (2019). Data-based decision-making for school improvement: Research insights and gaps. *Educational Research*, 61(3), 257-273. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2019.1625716>.
- Schlebusch, G., & Mokhatle, M. (2016). Strategic planning as a management tool for school principals in rural schools in the Motheo district. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 13(3), 342-348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09751122.2016.11890470>.
- Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 9-16. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n9p9>.
- Scott, S. (2013). Informed consent of 16–18-year-old participants in evaluations. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 28(2), 65-84.
- Shakir, M. (2014). Using Henry Fayol’s principles for better classroom management. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 4(11), 72-77.
- Shenton, A. K. (2014). Just why do we need school libraries? Some ideas from students. *New Library World*, 115(3-4), 140-159.
- Shermerhorn, J. (2013). *Management* (12th ed.). Wiley and Sons.
- Shohan, S., Azizifar, A., & Kamalvand, A. (2014). The relationship between novice and experienced teachers’ self-efficacy for classroom management and students’ perceptions of their teachers’ classroom management. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(16), 134-148.
- Sihag, V., & Rijdsdijk, S. A. (2019). Organizational controls and performance outcomes: a meta-analytic assessment and extension. *Journal of Management Studies*, 56(1), 91-133.

- Silverman, D. (2016). *Qualitative research*. Sage.
- Simons, R. (2013). *Performance measurement & control systems for implementing strategy*. Prentice-Hall.
- Sims, M. M. W., & Hadley, D. (2017). Educational leadership: An evolving role in Australian early childhood settings. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(6), 960-979. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1741143217714254>.
- Sinek, S. (2017). *Leaders Eat Last*. Brilliance Audio.
- Sirisookslip, S., Ariratana, W., & Ngang, T. K. (2015). The impact of leadership styles of school administrators on affecting teacher effectiveness. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 186, 1031-1037.
- Slot, P. (2018). Structural characteristics and process quality in early childhood education and care: A literature review. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 176, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/edaf3793-en>
- Smith, J. (2018). Effective Leadership in Early Childhood Centers. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 25(2), 112-125.
- Smith, J. (2021). The Important Role of Early Childhood Centre Directors. *Early Childhood Education Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.earlychildhoodeducationtoday.com/important-role-early-childhood-centre-directors> on 13th June, 2021.
- Smith, J. (2022). The role of Early Childhood Centre directors. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 10(3), 45-56. Retrieved from <https://www.journaldatabase.com/article/role-of-early-childhood-centre-directors>
- Stewart, H., Gapp, R., & Harwood, I. (2017). Exploring the alchemy of qualitative management research: Seeking trustworthiness, credibility and rigor through crystallization. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(1), 1-19.
- Stoner, J. A. F & Freeman, E. R. (1989). *Management*. Prentice Hall of India.
- Strehmel, P. (2016). Leadership in early childhood education – Theoretical and empirical approaches. *Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*, 5(2), 344-355.
- Strunk, K. O., Marsh, J. A., Bush-Mecenas, S. C., & Duque, M. R. (2016). The best laid plans: An examination of school plan quality and implementation in a school improvement initiative. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(2), 259-309.

- Tadle-Zaragosa, J. R., & Sonsona, R. P. J. V. (2021). Linking administrative performance of principals vis-à-vis public relations and community involvement. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(4), 857-872. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14449a>.
- Talab, H. R., & Flayyih, H. F. (2018). The impact of management control systems (MCS) on organizations performance a literature review. *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 24(105), 1-16. DOI: 10.33095/jeas. v24i105.67.
- Tandoh, E. A., & Amankwa, M. (2018). Early childhood care and education in Ghana: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Early Childhood Care and Education*, 15(1), 39-54.
- Tanzeh, A. (2019). The correlation between the effectiveness of school quality planning, capacity of organising personnel, and teacher's work motivation. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management*, 7(4), 82-105.
- Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Harper and Brothers.
- Theisohn, T., & Lopes, C. (2013). *Ownership Leadership and Transformation: Can We Do Better for Capacity Development*. Routledge.
- Thibault, L., A., Forest, J., Zigarmi, D., Houson, D., & Boucher, É. (2018). The carrot or the stick? Investigating the functional meaning of cash rewards and their motivational power according to self-determination theory. *Compensation & Benefits Review*, 49(1), 9-25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886368717750904>.
- Thibault, L. A., & Whillans, A. (2018). The power of workplace rewards: using self-determination theory to understand why reward satisfaction matters for workers around the world. *Compensation & Benefits Review*, 50(3), 123-148.
- Thornton, K., & Cherrington, S. (2014). Leadership in professional learning communities. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(3), 94-102. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/183693911403900312>.
- Tikly, L. P. (2017). The Future of education for all as a global regime of educational governance. *Comparative Education Review*, 61(1). <https://doi.org/10.1086/689700>
- Tong, A., Flemming, K., McInnes, E., Oliver, S., & Craig, J. (2012) Enhancing transparency in reporting the synthesis of qualitative research: ENTREQ. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 12(181), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-12-181>.

- Torrance, H. (2013). *Qualitative research, science, and government: Evidence, criteria, policy, and politics*. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (4th ed., pp. 355-380). Sage.
- Tuli, F. (2010). The basis of distinction between Qualitative and Quantitative Research in Social Science: Reflection on Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Perspectives. *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Science*, 6, 1-12.  
<https://doi.org/10.4314/ejesc.v6i1.65384>.
- Tumilaar, B. R. (2015). The Effect of Discipline, Leadership, and Motivation on Employee Performance at BPJS Ketenagakerjaan Sulut. *Journal EMBA*, 3(2), 787-797.
- UNESCO. (2012). Expanding Equitable Early Childhood Care and Education is an Urgent Need: Policy Paper, 03. Paris, France: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2015). EFA global monitoring report 2015, Education for all 2000-2015: Achievements and challenges. Paris, France: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2018). Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, displacement and education - Building bridges, not walls.
- UNESCO. (2019). Countdown to 2030: Country profiles on early childhood development. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from  
<https://data.unicef.org/resources/countdown-to-2030-ecd-countryprofiles>.
- UNESCO-IBE. (2010). *World Data on Education*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Geneva: UNESCO, International Bureau of Education, 2010. Retrieved May 9, 2020, from  
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/services/online-materials/world-data-on-education/seventh-edition-2010-11.htm>.
- UNESCO-International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA). (2010). Country case studies on early childhood care and education (ECCE) in selected Sub-Saharan Africa countries 2007/2008: Some key teacher issues and policy recommendations. A summary report. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2006). Early Childhood Care and Education: A Global Scenario. Retrieved from  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001474/147476E.pdf> on June 23, 2021.
- UNESCO, (n.d.). Early Childhood Care and Education. Retrieved from  
<https://en.unesco.org/themes/early-childhood-care-and-education> on 28th June, 2021.

- UNICEF. (2011). Ghana: Evaluation of UNICEF's Early Childhood Development Programme with Focus on Government of Netherlands Funding (2008-2010) - Ghana Country Case Study Report. Retrieved May 9, 2020, from [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index\\_60106.html](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_60106.html).
- UNICEF. (2017). UNICEF's Programme Guidance for Early Childhood Development: UNICEF Program Division 2017. Retrieved on May 9, 2020, from <https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/UNICEF%20Programme%20Guidance%20for%20Early%20Childhood%20Development%202017.pdf>.
- UNICEF Gambia. (2018) Early Learning Assessment of Primary Education Entrants in the Gambia: Adeline Seurat - IREDU / University of Burgundy.
- U.S. Department of Education (n.d.). FERPA and the Rights of Noncustodial Parents. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/hottopics/ht-ptr-noncustodial-parents.html> on 20th June, 2021.
- Vanagas, R., & Stankevič, J. (2014). Impact of coordination for organization process. *Intellectual Economics*, 8(2), 112–125. doi:10.13165/IE-14-8-2-08.
- VanGronigen, B. A., & Meyers, C. V. (2017). Topics and trends in short-cycle planning: Are principals leading school turnaround efforts identifying the right priorities? *Planning and Changing*, 48(1/2), 26-42. <https://education.illinoisstate.edu/planning/articles/vol48.php>.
- VanGronigen, B. A., & Meyers, C. V. (2020). Short-cycle school improvement planning as a lever to launch school turnaround: a descriptive analysis of plans. *Teachers College Record*, 122(5), 1-40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812012200501>.
- VanGronigen, B. A., Meyers, C. V., & Hitt, D. H. (2017). *A rubric for assessing schools' plans for rapid improvement*. Retrieved May 10, 2020, from [https://www.darden.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/CST\\_Rubrics-for-school-improvement.pdf](https://www.darden.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/CST_Rubrics-for-school-improvement.pdf).
- Vélez, S. C., Lorenzo, M. C. A., & Garrido, J. M. M. (2017). Leadership: its importance in the management of school coexistence. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 237, 169-174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.059>.

- Virgana, V. (2018). The increasing performance of school principal through remuneration, personality, and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Human Capital Management*, 2(2), 45-58.
- Von Bertalanffy, L. (1972). The history and status of general systems theory. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 15(4), 407-426.
- Wach, E., Ward, R., & Jacimovic, R. (2013). Learning about qualitative document analysis. *IDS Practice Paper In Brief 13*. Retrieved, May 11, 2020, from <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/2989/PP%20InBrief%2013%20QDA%20FINAL2.pdf?sequence=4>
- Walkington, C., & Bernacki, M. L. (2020). Appraising research on personalized learning: Definitions, theoretical alignment, advancements, and future directions. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 52(3), 235-252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2020.1747757>.
- Waniganayake, S. M. M., & Hadley, D. (2017). Educational leadership: An evolving role in Australian early childhood settings. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(6), 960-979. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1741143217714254>.
- Wanjala, C. N., & Rarieya, J. F. (2014). Strategic planning in schools in Kenya: Possibilities and challenges. *ISEA*, 42(1), 17-30.
- Williams, C. (2015). *Principles of Management*. Cengage Learning.
- Williams, C. (2018). *Principles of Management* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Wolf, S., Aber, J. L., Behrman, J. R., & Tsinigo, E. (2018). Experimental Impacts of the “Quality Preschool for Ghana” Interventions on Teacher Professional Well-being, Classroom Quality, and Children’s School Readiness. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 12(1), 10-37. Doi:10.1080/19345747.2018.1517199.
- Wood, L. M., Sebar, B., & Vecchio, N. (2020). Application of rigour and credibility in qualitative document analysis: lessons learnt from a case study. *The Qualitative Report*, 25(2), 456-470. Retrieved May 11, 2020, from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol25/iss2/11>.
- World Bank. (2013). “What Matters Most for Early Childhood Development: A Framework Paper.” SABER Working Paper 5, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2013.

- World Bank. (2016). Measuring the Quality of Early Learning Programs. Guidance note, Early Learning Partnership, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2016.
- Yazidu, S. M., Majiyd, H. S., & Abdallah, J. S. (2017). Utility of Henri Fayol's fourteen principles in the administration process of secondary schools in Tanzania. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 5(6), 103-116.
- Yemina, Y. (2016). Analysis of the influence of compensation and motivation on performance clerk with the behavior of the intervening as variables serve. *JSM Jurnal Sains Manajemen*, 5(1), 49-66.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6th ed.). Sage.
- Yoshikawa, H., & Kabay, S. (2015). The Evidence Base on Early Childhood Care and Education in Global Contexts, UNESCO, Paris. Retrieved on May 11, 2020, from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002324/232456e.pdf>. [9].
- Zegwaard, K. E. (2015). Building an excellent foundation for research: Challenges and current research needs. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 16(2), 8999.
- Zilma, D. M., & Ramos, D. O. (2018). Early Childhood Education in Brazil. In Roopnarine, J.L., Johnson, J.E., Quinn, S.F. & Michael, M. Patte, M.M. (Ed.), *Handbook of International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education* (pp. 31-40). Retrieved on May 11, 2020, from <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315562193-3>.

# ANNEXURES

## ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/06/09

Ref: **2021/06/09/60902426/03/AM**

Name: Mr ED Anyidoho

Student No.: 60902426

Dear Mr ED Anyidoho

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2021/06/09 to 2026/06/09

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mr ED Anyidoho  
E-mail address: dodid2021@yahoo.com  
Telephone: +233249253503

**Supervisor(s):** Name: DR T.A. OGINA  
E-mail address: Oginateresa8@gmail.com  
Telephone: 0823749618

**Title of research:**

**Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres  
in Ghana**

**Qualification:** PhD Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/06/09 to 2026/06/09.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/06/09 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.





3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2026/06/09**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

**Note:**

*The reference number **2021/06/09/60902426/03/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



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



**Prof PM Sebate**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

**ANNEXURE B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN GREATER ACCRA REGION**

C/O Box DK 951  
Darkuman  
Accra

July 7, 2021

The Director General  
Ghana Education Service  
Accra

**Attention:**

The Director/Head  
Division of Early Childhood Education  
Ghana Education Service  
Headquarters, Accra

Dear Sir/Madam,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN  
GREATER ACCRA REGION**

I write to seek permission to conduct a study on early childhood education centres within Greater Accra Region.

I am Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho doing a study on the topic: “**Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana**”, under the supervision of Dr. TA Ogina, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education and Leadership towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the University of South Africa. This study aims to explore the application of the basic principles of management at the ECCD centres by directors. It is hoped that the results of this study shall help ECCD centre directors to effectively play their challenging roles as linchpins in the ECCD service delivery system effectively and efficiently.

The study will entail the collection of director’s job description statements and personal individual semi-structured interviews with the ECCD centre director to help the researcher gain insight into directors’ specific application of basic management principles. The benefits of this study are that the research findings will be used to develop ECCD centre management model based on the Ghanaian context, thereby making a creditable contribution to literature on the application of management models in early child education management.

I will observe the following COVID-19 safety guidelines: keep a distance of at least 1 meter during interviews, wear a face mask, use hand sanitizer, and avoid physical contact. I will follow all COVID-19 protocols outlined by the centres.

Yours faithfully,



Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho  
PhD Candidate  
Contact: 0242264761/0249253503

ANNEXURE C: RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN  
ECCD CENTRES IN GREATER ACCRA REGION

# GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

*In case of reply the number and  
date of this letter should be quoted*

My Ref: GES/HQTS/PA/21/0089  
Accra



Republic of Ghana

HEADQUARTERS  
Ministry Branch Post Office  
P. O. Box M.45

4<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.

**MR. Anyidoho  
PhD Candidate  
Accra.**

Dear Sir,

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN SELECTED SCHOOLS**

Your letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> July on the above subject refers.

This is to confirm that approval has been granted for the proposed study in the Kindergarten Schools the Greater Accra Region.

Please liaise with the Regional Director of Education for further directives on the selection of the districts and schools.

This consent is provided on the assurance that the research will fully comply with all Ghana Education Service requirements and the protection of the rights of the interviewees who will be selected for the study and ensure that agreed procedures are followed accordingly.

Thank you.

**BIRIKORANG FREDERICK  
DIRECTOR, PARTNERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS  
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

cc: Director-General, GES, Accra

**ANNEXURE D: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR DIRECTORS**

C/O Box DK 951  
Darkuman  
Accra

July 7, 2021

The Director/Head  
Early Childhood Department

.....  
.....

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN AN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW**

I hereby wish to request your consent to take part in an individual interview. I am Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho doing a study under the supervision of Dr. TA Ogina, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education and Leadership towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the University of South Africa. As a researcher, I invite you to participate in a study entitled “**Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana**”.

The purpose of this study is to explore the application of the basic principles of management at the ECCD centres by directors. The study comprises the following objectives:

- Explore how ECCD centre directors apply management principles of planning in their centres;
- Identify how ECCD centre directors apply organisation principles in their centres;
- Explore how ECCD centre directors apply management principle of coordination with their internal and external stakeholders
- Find out what the directors do in maintaining control in the ECCD centre.
- Use the data to develop a theoretical model of directors’ management practices in early childhood centres in Ghana.

I would like to know whether you would be willing to share your perception, experiences and knowledge through individual telephone interviews on your ECCD centre management role. The interview process will take 45 to 60 minutes of your time. With your consent, I will tape-record the interview session since it will enable me to capture all the information forwarded by participants. Your responses will only be used for research purposes only, and the research will be treated anonymously and confidentially. Your participation in the study is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any reprisal. The audio-recorded and transcribed data will be kept safe for five years from the approval and publication of the study results and then discarded thereafter. Please confirm your agreement to participate in this study by signing the attached consent form and sending it back to me by e-mail: [dodi2021@yahoo.com](mailto:dodi2021@yahoo.com).

Yours faithfully,

Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho  
PhD Candidate  
Contact: 0242264761/0249253503

**ANNEXURE E: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR BOARD MEMBERS**

C/O Box DK 951  
Darkuman  
Accra

July 7, 2021

Board Member

.....  
.....

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN AN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW**

I hereby wish to request your consent to take part in an individual interview. I am Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho doing research under the supervision of Dr. TA Ogina, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education and Leadership towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the University of South Africa. As a researcher, I invite you to participate in a study entitled “**Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana**”.

The purpose of this study is to explore the application of the basic principles of management at the ECCD centres by directors. The study comprises the following objectives:

- Explore how ECCD centre directors apply management principles of planning in their centres;
- Identify how ECCD centre directors apply organisation principles in their centres;
- Explore how ECCD centre directors apply management principle of coordination with their internal and external stakeholders
- Find out what the directors do in maintaining control in the ECCD centre.
- Use the data to develop a theoretical model of directors’ management practices in early childhood centres in Ghana.

I would like to know whether you would be willing to share your perception, experiences and knowledge through individual telephone interviews on your ECCD centre management role as a board member. The interview process will take 45 to 60 minutes of your time. With your consent, I will tape-record the interview session since it will enable me to capture all the information forwarded by participants. Your responses will only be used for research purposes only, and the research will be treated anonymously and confidentially. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any reprisal. The audio-recorded and transcribed data will be kept safe for five years from the approval and publication of the study results and then discarded thereafter. Please confirm your agreement to participate in this study by signing the attached consent form and sending it back to me by e-mail: [dodi2021@yahoo.com](mailto:dodi2021@yahoo.com).

Yours faithfully,



Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho  
PhD Candidate  
Contact: 0242264761/0249253503

**ANNEXURE F: CONSENT FORM**



**CONSENT FORM**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)**

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

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

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

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

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

I agree to the recording of the interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ANNEXURE G: REQUEST FOR A LIST OF REGISTERED EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION CENTRES IN GREATER ACCRA REGION**

C/O Box DK 951  
Darkuman  
Accra

July 7, 2021

**The Director  
National School Inspectorate Authority  
Ghana Education Service  
Accra**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**REQUEST FOR A LIST OF REGISTERED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN GREATER  
ACCRA REGION**

I write to kindly request a list of registered Early Childhood Education Centres in Greater Accra Region.

I am Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho doing a study on the topic: “**Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana**”, under the supervision of Dr. TA Ogina, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education and Leadership towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the University of South Africa. This study aims to explore the application of the basic principles of management at the ECCD centres by directors. It is hoped that the results of this study shall help ECCD centre directors to effectively play their challenging roles as linchpins in the ECCD service delivery system effectively and efficiently.

The purpose of this request is to enable me to easily locate the Early Childhood Centres within Greater Accra Region for data collection. It will be much appreciated if a soft copy of the list could be sent to my e-mail: dodidi2021@yahoo.com.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho  
PhD Candidate  
Contact: 0242264761/0249253503  
E-mail: e-mail: dodidi2021@yahoo.com

**ANNEXURE H: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION (EDUCATION MANAGEMENT)  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Title: Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana.**

**Interview Protocol for Early Childhood Centre Directors**

Centre Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction and assurance to participants**

My name is Emmanuel Anyidoho, a PhD student of University of South Africa, pursuing a PhD in Education Management. As part of the requirements for graduation, I am conducting a study on the management practices of directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana. The purpose of this study is to explore the application of the basic principles of management at the ECCD centres by directors. It is hoped that the results of this study shall help ECCD centre directors to effectively play their challenging roles as linchpins in the ECCD service delivery system effectively and efficiently. This interview is going to take the form of a one-on-one interview and it will last for about 45 to 60 minutes. You have already signed the consent form and agreed to be interviewed. If you feel you are not comfortable with any question, you are not obliged. You are free to respond to any question according to your perspective. This interview will be tape-recorded. I will like you to say yes if you agree. Your responses will be used for the sole purpose of this study. Thank you.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS/IDEAS FOR INTERVIEWS**

The following guide will be used by the researcher to provide conversational ideas as a reminder to the researcher if the participant did not volunteer the topics. The guiding questions will not be asked in any particular order, and may not necessarily be worded as they appear below.

Research questions	Interview questions
	Biographical questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell me about yourself and your experience in ECCD. What is your highest educational qualification?</li><li>• What positions did you hold previously?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do ECCD centre directors apply the basic management principles in their management practices in Ghana?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is your opinion on the management of ECCD centres?</li><li>• Please tell me about the management principles that you are aware of.</li></ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the directors plan management activities at ECCD centres?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you plan for the activities in your centre?</li> <li>• How often do you plan in the centre?</li> <li>• What structures do you use for planning?</li> <li>• What challenges do you usually face when planning for the centre?</li> <li>• Are you satisfied with how planning is done in the centre?</li> <li>• If you are not satisfied with how planning is done, how will you like it to be done?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the directors organise ECCD centre activities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you organise your centre for quality ECCD service delivery?</li> <li>• Please describe the organisation structure of the centre.</li> <li>• What are the organising activities that you usually engage in at the centre?</li> <li>• Are you satisfied with how the centre activities are being organised?</li> <li>• How would you prefer organisation of ECCD centre activities to be done?</li> <li>• What challenges do you face when organising activities in the centre?</li> <li>• What do you think should be done to overcome the challenges?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the directors coordinate management activities with the centre's internal and external stakeholders?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is coordination of ECCD activities with internal and external stakeholders practised in the centre?</li> <li>• What are the coordination activities that you usually practised to ensure the goals of the centre is achieved?</li> <li>• What are the challenges you encounter when coordinating activities in the centre?</li> <li>• How else do you think coordination in the centre can be improved?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the directors maintain control in the ECCD centre?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your own way how do you maintain control in the centre?</li> <li>• What specific control mechanisms do you practised at the centre?</li> <li>• What challenges do you face as a director in maintaining control at the centre?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways do you think maintenance of control can be improved at the centre?</li> </ul>
Ending questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything else you can think of that would help me understand how this centre works?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?</li> </ul>
<p><b>INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE BOARD CHAIRPERSON/MEMBER</b></p> <p><b>Title: Exploring Management Practices of Directors at Early Childhood Education Centres in Ghana.</b></p>	
<b>GUIDING QUESTIONS/IDEAS FOR INTERVIEWS</b>	
	Please tell me about your role as a Board Chair/Member
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What criteria do you use in the selection and recruitment of centre directors?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the Board's expectations from the centre director in terms of management of the centre?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you perceive management practices of the directors in the following functions: Planning, organising, coordinating and controlling?</li> <li>• What management challenges have you identified with the director in his centre management responsibilities?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways do you think management practices at the centre can be improved?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?</li> </ul>

**ANNEXURE I: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST**

	Documents	Available		Comments
		Yes	No	
1	Director’s job description statement			
2	Head Teachers/Directors Handbook			
3	Parents’ Handbook			
4	Staff Handbook			
5	Minutes of staff meeting			
6	Minutes of Board/School Management Committee Meeting			
7	Minutes of Parents’ Association Meeting			
8	Minutes of Improvement planning Meetings			
9	Performance Improvement Plans			
10	Code of Ethics/Conduct for Staff and Children			
11	ECCD Centre Annual Performance Appraisal Reports			
12	Child Abuse Policy			
13	Policy on Inclusivity			
14	Maintenance Policy			
15	Financial Management Policy			
16	Inspection Visit Reports			
17	Early Childhood Care and Development Policy			
18	Early Childhood Education Policy Framework			
19	Early Childhood Education Curriculum			

## **ANNEXURE J: EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH THE ECCD DIRECTOR**

### **Transcription Code**

Facilitator- F

Participant- P

### **OPENING AND BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS**

F: Good afternoon once again.

P: Afternoon.

F: My name is Emmanuel Anyidoho PhD student with University of South Africa, I earlier on booked an appointment with you for us to do the interview.

P: Okay. We can start.

F: Thank you.

F: Tell me about yourself and your experience in ECCD?

P: Beatrice Kpor is my name. I hold B ED in Basic Education. I have been teaching for 31 years now. My last station was Tsito old JSS so I came here in 2011 so I have been heading this school for 10 years now. About Early Childhood, I am a trained teacher and when we were in college, we all did something about early childhood but at the University level, I do not have a specialization in it.

F: Previously what positions did you hold before you became the Head?

P: I was a subject Teacher at the JSS that time Agric was in session so I was teaching Agricultural Science so the Headship position I am 13 years now.

F: Do you have any qualification in management studies?

P: No

F: What is the total staff of your school?

P: Total staff I have 3 categories of teachers, we have the HTU teachers and they are 23 in number, then I have 4 Ghana Education Service Teachers and then service personnel also they are about 7 they were more than that but some have completed their service and left so now currently am left with 7.

F: What is the total number of students at your school?

P: The KG they are 84, the primary 700 and JHS 300 but as for the JSS they are 135, then the KG 84 so when deduct it from this thing you will get that of the primary.

F: Okay how many teachers do you have at KG?

P: 4

## **MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE**

F: What is your opinion on the management of ECCD centres?

P: I see to the Teachers that they come to centre, they are punctual, they are regular, they teach, they give exercises, they mark; I also see to the financial management of the school this time at first, I will say we have been receiving Capitation Grant and input from teachers and other stakeholders. We have IGF, and toll from canteen so I manage those ones too. So, I will say I oversee to financial management of the centre, I see to the financial management of the school and I will say time too. I make sure the teachers work on time, they go to classes on time, they teach, break period I monitor and break over too I make sure they go in at the right time they stay till the normal closing time so I manage time too. I manage human resources, I manage the facilities of the centre; the facilities I will make sure that when we close everything is set into the various places and the doors are locked and I keep the key, luckily my house is not far from the centre so I normally take the keys home, in the morning the children those in-charge will come for them and open the place these are some of the things I do.

F: Tell me about the management principles that you are aware of?

P: We Plan for the school and implement the plan and do evaluation.

## **PLANNING EXPERIENCES**

F: How do you plan for the activities in your centre?

P: I will say when the year begins like this, we have staff meeting, then at the staff meeting I try to what all of us try to deliberate on how to run the term if there is the need to change classes for any teacher I do it and then I put teachers on the various places or the classes. I also have committees that are in-charge of other things like an academic committee, the welfare committee, those who see to how do you call it, discipline and so on and so forth so we have various committees and I try to put people there.

F: Do you prepare a budget?

P: Yes, we prepare it. Even right now, we prepare one so we will be going for a budgetary meeting next week so we prepare budget.

F: Is it possible I get a copy of some the previous budget document?

P: Yes, then it will be after the interview.

F: Yes, after the interview okay thank you. Apart of the budget, do you have any other documents as part of plans for the term or for the year?

P: Yes, we draw academic calendar, we have it on the notice board and the classes also have them so without it you will not know when they will have to give CAT, we call something CAT, Class Assessment Test every month ending we've been doing it and then the exam too we write exams and now that we are centre, we go for mid-terms so without the calendar you cannot do all those things, we draw academic calendar it serves management purpose.

F: Do you have a strategic plan for the school?

P: Yes, we have the SMC drew something like that.

F: Can I get a copy of the strategic plan?

P: That one I cannot tell because it is done by SMC so everything remains at the SMC level so I can't get you a copy, they took over just a year now so things are still in preparatory stage.

F: Do you involve SMC in your planning process?

P: When am planning?

F: Yes.

P: Yes, I take input from them.

F: What about the parents?

F: Yes, we take input from parents during Parents Association meetings.

P: Yes, we have a representative on the Board, the PTA representative so I will say we take it from them.

P: We normally deal with SMC.

F: Do you have any other policy documents as part of your plans?

P: We have Head Teachers Handbook that contains information on how to management the school.

F: Can I have a copy of this handbook?

P: Yes, after the interview, I can get a copy for.

P: Policy document then can we say that disciplinary committee also have a policy, we have a tool for various categories, now that we are no longer using canes, we have different ways of disciplining students.

F: So, it means there is a policy on discipline?

P: Exactly.

F: For both staff and students?

P: Which we call disciplinary tool something like that.

F: I will be happy if I get a copy of this.

P: You will get I have that one.

F: Okay.

P: We have policies also for the teachers, we ourselves have developed some policy in the school for example; when you are a teacher here female teacher you should not wear trousers to school is a norm we have adopted so when you come to the school, you will not see any female teacher wearing trousers and maybe your hair, the female teachers using colours and other things in the hair you will not see anything like that. The men also dress decently, you will not see any man with round -neck coming to teach, you will dress very nicely, you tack in because you are a role -model so those are the internal policy we ourselves have developed, then I will say this COVID too we have some policy document for the safety protocols.

F: Please, I need all these policies after the interview.

F: Do you prepare food for the students?

P: We have the school feeding.

F: School feeding? Is there any policy document on this school feeding especially guiding nutrition?

P: Nutrition?

F: Yeah.

P: We ourselves have dedicated the caterer and then the cooks that they must make sure that the food they bring is a balanced one so normally I have the SHEP Coordinator who in my absence or together we monitor what is being brought. We make sure that always the food is a balanced one, there is a green vegetable added to any food that they bring there is a vegetable included in the meal, we have educated them so what they are doing is sustainable.

F: How do you plan ECCD curriculum?

P: We don't plan the curriculum; it is planned at the top. We plan for the lessons, the teachers plan for the lessons, we draw weekly scheme of work and then the daily one. I mean termly scheme of work and then the weekly scheme of work.

F: Who supervises these activities?

P: The Head.

F: As the director of the centre, what are your main responsibilities?

P: I vet teachers note as I told you earlier, I supervise their punctuality and regularity, the teaching process I go to observe lessons and then where there are some flaws, I try to correct it but before I will go, I will inform you that today am coming to observe your lesson. So, when I inform them, they also prepare, I sit at the back, I listen and when they are done, I call the teacher, I asked, "what do you think you have done well", the teacher will say it, then what do you think you have not done well. At times, they tell you they feel they cannot say that thing so I will tell you maybe when you were teaching you face the chalkboard, you blocked the view of the children or you were not calling, you were not taking gender balance into consideration before calling them or when your voice was not loud, etcetera. The way I am doing the teachers are not offended, they take it in good faith and then we move so I observe the lesson too as I said other resources too, I plan together with the teachers, I don't take decisions alone, I plan with the teachers like IGF what will we use it for and they all say and the various committees too they work and at the end of the year, they go for staff meeting and they give report on some of the things that they do. So, I supervise all these things and also the facilities as I have earlier said, I make sure that if there is something wrong there is a window which is not which is spoilt I make sure that it is repaired, if the compound is weedy, we try to weed and do all those things and the students too once a while I take their notebooks, I have a look at what teachers give them, the note they give them, the exercises they give them I will check and see if it matches with the lessons for that week. Then when is done fine but if it doesn't match at times teachers teach nicely but the exercise, they say they will give to the students they don't give because they are they want to avoid much marking, keep the exercise but they will write it there that they will do this so I once a while take exercise book to see if what they are teaching and the exercise the children are doing it is in line with the topics they have taught.

F: What challenges do you usually face when planning for the centre?

P: I think we are doing our best, we are doing our best but if we can get textbooks especially English readers, we don't have readers I will say we are blessed an NGO called Pencils of Promise has come to help us with some tablets and readers as you saw them those boxes contained readers, we got a lot of stories about 103 stories in them and then some of the textbooks but that one is only done at the primary school, it doesn't extend to the JSS.

F: Does it cover the Early Childhood Programme?

P: Yes, they've given us library books this very NGO when you enter into the office you will see some boxes over there, the KG1- up to P2 they are having library books but the library books are in a box but for P3 to P6 they are using the tablets and they've taught them how to operate it. Normally they give it to them even to take home and go and do it on Fridays then Mondays they bring it back, we charge them and when it is time for English and they want to do English comprehension they use it if not because of this tablet they will find it difficult to do English comprehension.

## **ORGANISING EXPERIENCES**

F: How do you organise your centre for quality ECCD service delivery??

P: With the organisation I will say that I delegate work to the various teachers am the Head, I have Assistant, we have the Teachers, we have the Senior Prefects, we have Classroom Prefect etcetera so normally receive reports from them.

When school resumes, the SMC meet to plan how the work is going to go on throughout the year so they plan like with admission how do we do admission, how many people do we admit and if there is a need to do advertisement, they write to their local FM station to make announcement. They finance it. They plan for the development, the SMC plan all these things, then when school resumes teachers also meet and then we plan when do we have our various CAT as I said, when do we write exams, when do we go for mid-term, when do we have in-service training, when you came you overheard me telling the Primary Assistant that they should prepare there is going to be an in-service training on Wednesday and we have a programme called we GHALO.

F: What is GHALO?

P: Ghana Accountability of learning outcome so that programme see to it that the children none of them is left out so with the English Language you see that some pupils cannot even identify the sound of some of the letters, some too they are average they can do even two letter words, three letters' words, some can also read fluently even answer questions when you ask them. So, we put them into these 3 categories though they are in upper primary, some in Class 6 cannot identify some so those ones we put them in such group and we do mid assessment, then we identify those people, then we pick a day in a week to organise special class for those who cannot identify sound then the teacher identifies them. I put a teacher in-charge of that. Teachers will observe them so that by the end of the year those who cannot read can be helped so they will be able to read more fluently than before and those who miss out too, we don't leave them. I will also help them so that they will be able to do more, they will be able to answer examination questions that are English. But with mathematics, too, the same they assess them those who can add, those who can subtract, those who can multiply, if they are able to do all these things then you are in your group 3. Some can do addition but they cannot do subtraction, some can do subtraction so we have the various levels and we group them also those who cannot do multiplication, we try to teach them to also be able to do



multiplication, then come out. So, the way your child is before you bring your child by the end of the year you see there is a great improvement because we don't just though we teach in various classes, we have this special programme which we do every week once in a week for English, once in a week for mathematics so by the end of the year you see that the child that is not able to read is can read.

F: Please describe the structure of organisation of the centre.

P: So, from the SMC then you come to the school, then the school in the school we said the Head is the overall boss, if the Head is not around then the Assistant takes over and we have staff and then students.

F: How many assistants do you have?

P: I have 2, 1 for JSS and 1 for primary so they also have and the 3 of us also meet to take vital decisions on the school after that the teachers too will have the I have various committees and they have their chairman so and so on and so forth to do that. Then we have the prefectorial system the prefects, we have the school prefect, the compound overseer, the compound overseer, the house, the house prefect in case somebody is not feeling fine they will report to us or if there is the need to give first aid to somebody, we have someone who is in-charge and then the classroom if you go to various classrooms too, we have the class prefects that take control over the class. If there is anything, the class meets maybe I couldn't identify it, at times I go to them and even they have monitoring in the various classrooms that is for the JSS since they do subjects teacher. So, the time that the teacher comes in, the teacher will sign, the time that he leaves, the teacher signs if the teacher couldn't come at all they will note it, then even if am away and I come back I will know this teacher was not in class so that is for the JSS, now with the other classes I interview them that is about the work of the pupils also the prefects, the class prefects help teachers in the various classes.

F: So, where does PTA fall? Because you have SMC, then you have the Head, you have the Assistant Heads, you have the class teachers and then the prefects following where do we locate PTA?

P: Now we don't have PTA but we have Parents Association (PA). Only parents will meet and take their decision. Teachers are not part if anything we are only lend them a teacher to write minutes for them then they will take their own decision.

F: Do you write report?

P: Yes, I write a termly report.

F: On the whole school?

P: Exactly.

F: Is it possible to give me a copy of your reports?

P: Yes.

P: I also have the curriculum leader.

F: For the KG programme?

P: I have it for primary school.

F: So, Primary 1 to 3?

P: The whole of Primary.

P: So, that in case somebody is having a challenge in a topic since they are class teachers then they will inform me, when they inform me then I will find means of helping in teaching that topic if I cannot teach it, I will look for a resource person to come and help us because like last year we did something on electronics and the upper primary teachers teaching science or they are saying when is time for science they are able to teach only the theory and they couldn't teach the practical so am also not very good in the practical so I have to call somebody to help us so I have a curriculum leader at the primary school but the JSS I don't have.

F: What are the duties of the curriculum leader?

P: The duties of the curriculum leader?

F: Yes.

P: That is what am saying that it is her duty to go and find out areas that teachers lack some experiences. So that we organize training in that subject for them so the curriculum leader has been doing that if she also knows the topic, she will teach but if she doesn't know she will tell me and I look for a resource person to do that.

F: Are you satisfied with how the centre activities are being organised?

P: No exactly, because with my KGs especially I have a challenge over there. 1. Their structure is not good enough or is not befitting KG structure because as a KG we need to have a very big room where they can carry out playing and other things but the room when you go is not good enough and we don't have their what washroom also closer to them. They normally come so before you know them before they reach there, they spoil themselves but if they were to have everything at their place or is not far from their place, I don't think such a thing will be happening. So, two teachers: one leaving the classroom to go and see to it before she comes back maybe another one too you know them one person when he complains, before you know the second person so I have problem with their structure.

In addition, we don't have enough Teaching and Learning resources for the KG and the teachers too they hardly give them in-service training so if you are a Head and you don't have enough insight of the place you will see that it will be lacking and that is the foundation of the school. So, if the foundation is not strong just imagine what happens. So, I think the KG they need more TL apps and they need teachers, they must be trained by the government often so that they be on top of their work over there.

F: How often do you do in-service training?

P: In a term?

F: Yes.

P: As for the primary school I do it 3 times but with the JSS once because I have seen that we don't have much problem with them.

F: Do you do it within or outside the school?

P: Oh, within the school.

## **COORDINATION EXPERIENCES**

F: How is coordination of ECCD activities with internal and external stakeholders practised in the centre?

P: So, with the coordination I have a leader over there who see to all the activities they do, if they have any challenge the leader comes to report to me that they tried to solve it together so we have KG how. I have a leader for KG and I have Assistant for primary 1-6 and then Assistant for JSS.

F: Do you give them specific job descriptions as leaders apart from the teaching?

P: Yes, when it is time for admission, I normally send the people to the in-charge over there, she will take their weighing card have a look at it to see whether the children or the child that we want to admit has gone through the various immunizations processes and also you know we don't have nursery, we have only KG so the admission, the year the appropriate year group that you will be admitted is 4 years. So, she will take their how do you call it birth cert or with the weighing card you will know whether the child has attained that year for us to admit so she sees to those things and when she is satisfied, she will send it to me before I write the child's name in the admission register. But she also takes some of the particulars of the parents the name of the parents the name of the child and then the phone numbers because when you bring your child and maybe you couldn't come and we close and you need to be called or if there is something happening to the child, we need to call you so they take these particulars before I do admission.

F: How do you involve parents in the running of the school?

P: Through the Parents Association. They come to meetings but we have WhatsApp page for every class every class from KG right to JSS 3 this time that we are in technology age. So, any information like when we are going for mid -terms we put it there we are going for mid-terms we will come back this day and so day we normally also observe Fruit's Day, Egg Day to encourage parents to stop giving these foreign drinks coke, fanta, kalyipo to their kids instead of things they should bring fruits. They should encourage them to take banana, oranges uh huh because some of these kids you see that they like ice cream and so on these ice cream contains only sugar you know the danger of taking too much sugar and then the cold things. So, when it is Fruit Day, we normally put it on the platform for them and also these children some of them in the house they don't take much protein so we also institute egg day every Thursday. So, we remind the parents they will cook and put one egg in their food or even give them cooked egg when they come, we take picture and we put it on the platform just to encourage or remind them and the children when they eat, they are so happy and also it keeps them healthy so that they can be coming to school every day.

F: What other channel of communication do you use?

P: We use notice board, even you can see one over there and the various classrooms too we have it.

F: How often do you hold staff meetings?

P: As for staff meetings, the official one is only twice but every week we normally meet in the morning, Monday morning if I have something for them in the evening then I give it to them because of this COVID we don't meet often but the officials before school resumes on Monday or Tuesday that Friday we normally have 1<sup>st</sup> staff meeting.

F: What do you discuss mostly at the meetings?

P: That meeting is when we plan for the year or for term that is the time we plan.

F: Do you take minutes of that meeting?

P: Yes.

F: When do you hold the second meeting?

P: When the term is about to end maybe a day before we close for the vacation normally assess the term how was the term, what are some of the things we've done well, what are some of the things we didn't do because in the beginning we plan that we will do so, so and so are we able to achieve it what ,if we are not able to achieve it why didn't we achieve it so if we are able to achieve some and then we couldn't why and then next time we plan another way we think of another strategy to be able to complete that task that we have set.

F: How do you ensure that staff keep to the plans?

P: Sometimes am saying that once a while I enter the classrooms, take the children's exercise book and then have a look at it compare it with the lesson notes they have been writing.

F: Who are the external ECCD stakeholders that you work with?

P: We have SISO, School Improvement Support Officer formerly known as Circuit Supervisors. They use to come even the Municipal Director at times come to visit they pay impromptu visit to us. Now we also deal with the National School Inspectorate Authority. You know they were here 3 years back.

F: What other external stakeholders do you have?

P: Because of this COVID we've been attached to one of the clinics' here but since the University has taken over the school, we don't go to those clinics again but we go to the University's clinic.

F: What are some of the health and safety measures you plan for your centre?

P: We don't have any policy plan but fire service and civic education people use to come and educate the children on health and safety practices.

F: Do you have fire extinguisher at the centre?

P: No?

F: Are there any other external stakeholders?

P: Yes, Department of Social Welfare. Some time ago a child I don't know it seems she has been maltreated in the house and then they have a Social Officer also living around that place so the man came to me and then reported the issue to me so he told me he is going to take up the issue.

F: Do you have any policies on child abuse?

P: No but then at the Municipal Education office we have a Girl Child Desk so that if there is something happening, it can be a boy but that is how they termed it when there is something there is any sign of such a thing, we go to report they come. I was having a case over here whereby a house-help was being abused by the man that she is staying with the thing has been worrying the girls so she came to reported to me since am the Head, I don't want to involve myself so I went and reported they took the case and came and investigated they went to the house of the girl and continue with this thing.

F: What are the challenges you encounter when coordinating activities in the centre?

P: That is what I earlier said that am not satisfied especially with the KG department because the structure over there is not standardized one so I think if they can if it can get 3 good structures whereby their place of convenience is closer to them and they will have a very big room whiles teaching them the teacher can

move, play because the enrolment this thing has shoot up. All the classes are over 70, the KG room more people are coming but because the place is choked, I can't do any admission again so is not only the KG structure I need another structure for second stream because people are still looking for vacancy because of our performance by his grace every year we've been clocking 100% in BECE. So, because of that and now that the University has taken over and they know that the supervision role is going to be keener, more people want to enrol their children. But the structure is not enough I think our enrolment is calling for second stream which if we get, I will be very happy because when we get about 35 that is the standardised this thing and because of the COVID at first, we've been running shift that is why I have admitted more people so we were running shift but now that we want to increase the contact hours, we can no longer run the shift that is why we have about 72, 70 in class.

F: For the KG?

P: Oh, for the KG 44 and then 40.

F: Do you have outdoor playing equipment for the KG?

P: We bought it the PTA they bought it sometime ago but it is not of good quality so they've all spoiled except one we have that see-saw that is the only one they were having spinning, see-saw the one they will hold the rope and sit on we were having but all those are spoilt so you see we need all those things for the KGs

## **CONTROLLING EXPERIENCES**

F: In your own way, how do you maintain control in the centre?

P: Controlling I think we will make sure the teachers come to school on time, we make sure they do their work very well if there is anybody that is not trying to cooperate, I build dossier and when it is about 3, I give written query to the teacher. So, with those steps I think there is discipline among the teachers and the pupils too I make sure since I am trying to discipline you the teacher to come or making sure that you the teacher don't come in late, we also make sure that the children don't come in late and they are always regular, you too I will make sure you are regular so you too see to it that the children are regular. If there is any child who is not regular you report to me, we find out what happening and even asking some teachers to go to the house to find out especially if maybe the person is not feeling well, we visit and see what is happening so I control the teachers and the teachers in turn control the pupils.

F: What time do they report to school?

P: The primary pupils report at 7:45 am.

F: And the teachers?

P: The teachers 7:30.

F: How do you control their attendance?

P: We have an attendance book. Yes, so you sign the time you come, the time you leave and then the number of times you have reported in the term; we have the accumulated number there is a space and they will write it.

F: How do you measure performance of the teachers?

P: I have a checklist I have a check book appraisal form which I use.

F: Can I have access to a copy of the appraisal form?

P: Yes.

F: How do you assess overall performance of the ECCD centre?

P: Overall performance of the school I think we are doing good, it is good, we are not excellent because the grade I want us to start from the BECE we have not reached there that place so I will not say we are excellent but we are good we are striving to get excellent.

F: Let's focus on the Early Childhood Programme. How do you measure quality of the Early Childhood Programme?

P: The Early Childhood Programme as I said there is more things to be done over there in terms of structure and training of the teachers too, we've left them because some of them they have not done Early Childhood you know the Programme we've been doing everybody attending training the college we do general so most of them don't have that specialization. So, I feel they should be giving them in-service training regularly so that those who don't have that skills can sharpen their skills for them and also I said some of them like in my case too throughout my teaching profession, I have been at the JSS teaching, teaching and where I started Heading too I started Heading JSS before transfer to this place and when I came here the same as a Basic school you have to Head all so you see as a novice I don't know anything about the Early so how do provide quality service? So, I have to read a lot before grooming the teachers also and if there is any in-service training for them. I think we can perform more than what we are doing so the place must be looked at because according to the policy even Master's holders they are supposed to handle the KG, the KG or Degree holders which one the Degree holders they are supposed to have some training in early childhood education. Early Childhood they are supposed to handle by early childhood specialist with bachelor's degree but over here I have one person is still Cert A, another person is Diploma is only in Basic Education not in Early Childhood so you see so how will they be able to deliver effectively so until they give them training, they will not be able to perform to expectation.

F: Who do you report to?

P: GES system I report to the Director the Municipal Director through the SISO.

F: What do you think the perception of the community is about quality of ECCD services that you provide?

P: Oh, I think they appreciate what I am doing they appreciate it so much because when I came here the enrolment was less than 200, it was less than 200 so and even the place there was no face-lift, the school was not painted even plastering no but by his grace I wrote to Ghacem, Ghacem donated some cement and we used it to plaster and painted the school too and even when I came the KG1&2 there was no classroom for them. So, both KG1&2 were using this very classroom so it was through the help of the PTA that they put another structure for us and I was able to split the KG to have KG1 and KG2 so at first, they were all in the same classroom so I think the PTA too need to be commended. They have helped me so much so the community they are happy about the school so they are bringing more of their kids and anybody that comes to the town newly and they ask which school is the best school for me to send they will recommend this school.

F: Share with me the type of administrative leadership style that you practised?

P: For me I use both autocratic and democratic style because at times some of the things if you don't do as I told you if I don't do give query, things will not move well so at times when I give it like that you know not everybody will be happy, they will oh no I have gone too far. But if I don't do it like that too some people too will take me for granted and so this is the laissez-faire so let me also do whatever like and if we are doing the laissez-faire one then you see that things will not augur well so I use both.

F: How do you motivate them?

P: Oh, the motivation when they do something very good at a standing meeting, I praise them especially the weekly teachers if you've done well during your week, I commend you at the standing meeting and as the best those who will pick up the good performance will also emulate and also at the end of the year if the IGF we gather something, we I do party for them at least malt and pie I give them malt and pie.

F: What other specific control mechanisms do you practised at the centre to ensure quality?

P: They have appraisal form they have a form they build portfolio for them so every child is having a card and we have assessment tool that they use to assess them every child and the areas too we have the areas if the person has done well, they will mark it, you have done well, if there is the need for improvement, they will mark there is the need for improvement. If the person failed for the third time there is this thing there if the person has not done well at all they will indicate it so is like a report card at the end of the year the pupils take it home so through that then they will know whether the person will be promoted to KG2 or primary 1.

F: Can I get a copy of the assessment report?

P: Yes, you will get a copy.

F: How do you assess the KG 1 & K2 pupils?

P: Is only through observation, the teachers observe what they've given them to do in the class, then they will be assessing them they assess them 1<sup>st</sup> term, 2<sup>nd</sup> term, 3<sup>rd</sup> term.

F: How do you control expenditure at the centre?

P: I will say auditors have been coming or once a while they will call a cluster of schools to come with the ledger and the cashbook so that they will audit when we were at GES, but now that am under this people and they manage everything I don't know if they have their own auditors.

F: What challenges do you face as a director in maintaining control at the centre?

P: That is what am saying that the rightful people should be placed at the KG as they said those doing those who have done their Degree in Early Childhood be placed there, then they will know what they have to do and if they will not do that than existing ones they must give them frequent in-service training on the job so that they can perform well they are trying oh they are doing their best but then I think if they give them more training it will sharpen their skills so they will do more and also the structure if they don't improve on the structure no matter how the teachers are doing best I think the structure also counts you need to move round the children the children need to play but if the place so choked the teacher.

Uh huh and the place is hot there should be fan very conducive atmosphere for them for teaching and learning to take place and also their TLR, teacher learner resources must be provided if you don't provide the scant salary the teacher is taking the teacher cannot use his salary to go and buy these toys things for

the children. But is been long even textbooks they are not given let alone playing kits for them they don't give so we need those TLR to be given to the kids and to be given to the teachers then it means they've equipped them enough to do the work, with the training of the teachers the TLR and the structure the structure too and even this what assessment too that am mentioning now I have designed mine. All these things office must design it and give it to the teachers so if I were not to have a secretary and then a photocopier how will I do then you have to look for money and go and print those things and bring to the school most people they are not innovative so they will not do that so things will not be

F: Okay is there something else you want to share with me about your management experiences apart from what you have already discussed?

P: No, I think we are human institution so apart from the job itself we need to look at the human aspect too you will have to this time round you know even our kids in the house you don't need to shout on them, you don't need to cane them if they went wrong but you pamper them, you advise them but when there is the need to do this thing then you come in. But we normally take the human face also we look at some of the things with human face, then you talk to the person's conscience but then you make sure that the person does what you want him to do and also, I always take the children's interest first. I look at the interest of the children first before the other these things though am looking at some of the issues with human face but I always drive it down to the interest of the child. I think that is what an administrator must do for the work to proceed you will not do it clearly so that they teachers will say you don't care about their welfare only the kids but then when you are doing it, you will have the child in mind before doing it.

F: Thank you very much for all the information you have given to me and your time am so grateful.

P: Welcome.

F: I may contact you via phone in case I need further clarifications.

P: You are always welcome.

F: Thank you.

Bye



## **ANNEXURE K: EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH THE ECCD CENTRE BOARD MEMBER**

### **Transcription code:**

Facilitator- F

Participant- P

F: Please tell me about your role as a Board Chair/Member

P: In public schools, the board is what we call the school management committee and it is supposed to meet at least twice in a term to plan for the school. They will plan the terms activities with the head what they want, how they want the school to be so they have been using SWOT analysis. The strength, the weakness and so on and so forth. So, the committee sit down, they do all those things and then some of the challenges the centre is facing, the director bring it before them then they see how best they can solve them. Like the recent one was about the pupil's furniture. The director informed us that the furniture in the classroom do not befit the KG. So, we meet to plan how to improve on the running of the centre and how to address the challenges.

Er err those are the main activities that they do. At the end of the term the head also reports to the committee. Because last term for example, the head reported about the furniture the teachers have been using at the staff common room and not long ago, we gave them new set of furniture about 10 tables and 10 chairs. So, whatever we will discuss, they also take it and management try to bring around it. We talk about Water Company's tap that is not regular so they try to extend their borehole water to the compound. So, anything that is challenging, the committee work around them.

F: What is the composition of the School Management Committee?

P: The head, municipal education director's rep., PTA rep., and then chief of the area. The assemblyman and the old student, teachers, one from pre-school, primary, one from JHS. Those are the membership.

F: What criteria do you use in the selection and recruitment of centre directors.

P: At the public schools, the Ghana Education Service is responsible for appointment of the head of schools.

F: Do you receive annual report on the academic activities from the head teacher?

P: Yes, at the end of the term, the head submit report to the board after which a meeting is held to do review of the performance of the school and plan for another term.

F: What are the Board's expectations from the centre director in terms of management of the centre?

P: The School Management committee is just like the School Board, and we expect the head of the centre to provide quality day –to- day management of the ECCD centre in line with Ghana Education Service’s policies.

F: How do you perceive management practices of the directors in the following functions: Planning, organising, coordinating and controlling?

P: We are more concerned with planning, implementation and monitoring of the School Improvement Performance Plan. Based on my experiences, she is doing well. However, the centre Head needs further training in budgeting.

F: Would you share with me the roles of the School Board/School Management Committee?

P: The Government of Ghana is implementing the fee-free policy without financial barrier created by levies charged by schools, has introduced a grant called Capitation Grant to be accessed through Bank of Ghana. The application of the Capitation Grant was intended to allow the early childhood centres to effectively use financial resources to plan and carry out centre quality improvement activities under the “School Performance Improvement Plan” (SPIP).

F: Can you brief me about the purpose of the SPIP?

P: The SPIP is an early childhood centre’s road map that sets out the changes a centre needs to make to improve the centre’s performance, especially, the level of children’s achievement. The SPIP indicates most pressing activities that will help the director or head teacher, teachers and the School Management Committee to determine the changes that would improve children’s achievement and monitor the process of improvement in the centre. Therefore, I can say that the SPIP was therefore introduced as a condition for funds allocation and utilization to public early childhood centres.

F: How is the School Performance Improvement Plan prepared?

P: The planning process begins with putting together a planning team made up of the centre director and staff. The draft plan is submitted to the School Board for approval, this is then forwarded to the Metropolitan, Municipal or District Education Directorate for review and final approval. So basically, there are five steps involved as follows: 1. fixing a date convenient for teachers, School Management Committee and Parent Association to discuss the SPIP. 2. Listing items needed by the early childhood education centre (e.g., teaching and learning materials) and knowing the unit price of each item and on the meeting day, discussing thoroughly the items to be captured on the SPIP and budget projections for the various items; 3. Estimating the total cost of items to be bought and other expenditures; 4. Vetting and signing of the SPIP by the circuit supervisor, SMC, head teacher/centre director and staff secretary/all teachers, as the case might be; 5. Submitting the final SPIP to the Municipal/District Education Office for approval.

F: Please, in implementing the School Improvement Plan, how does the ECCD centre access the Capitation Grant?

P: The District Education Accountant and the Director give approval to schools’ SPIP after thorough scrutiny. Heads of schools are required to submit a completed Form B (statement of

account for the money received for a particular school) to access the CG. This Form B is signed by the head teacher or the assistant, then the SMC chairman and finally by the Circuit Supervisor. The Form B is then sent to an officer at the Municipal Education office who will go through it to make sure the proper procedures have been followed before the Municipal Director signs it. An authority note and a cheque are then issued to the head teacher to obtain the money at the bank.

F: How is the SPIP implemented?

P: In implementing the SPIP ECCD centres strictly follow plans outlined in the SPIP document. The School Board has the overall responsibility to oversee the implementation of the SPIP. We follow what we have in the SPIP and items that are not captured which become emergency are not purchased since you can't account to the authorities. The implementation of the SPIP is rigid and makes no room for adjustments to cater for incontinences which could be useful to improving the school.

F: Please what is the role of the School Board/Management Committee during the implementation of the SPIP?

P: The School Board is responsible for the monitoring of centre's activities related to access, centre management and centre facilities. SMCs' role in ECCD centre governance is restricted to monitoring children's attendance to the centre and financing of infrastructure development.

In the decentralised process in the Early Childhood Care and Development sector in Ghana, three levels of administration are involved: the Ghana Education Service under the Ministry of Education, Regional Directorate of Education and the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Directorate of Education. To ensure education quality at the local level, the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Directorate of Education, School Board/ SMC and Parent Association are the main actors in the implementation of government policies at the Early Childhood Care and Development level.

F: How do you involve the community in the operation of the ECCD centres?

P: In order to ensure community participation in the ECCD programme implementation process and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of early childhood education through the communities' watchdog role, school management boards/ committees and parent associations are formed in order to involve communities in decision-making processes in the early childhood centres. It is therefore anticipated that the involvement of the community through these bodies will improve early childhood care and development quality. In addition, the involvement of the representatives of the community in the planning process is to enhance transparency.

F: What is the purpose of the Capitation Grant?

P: The purpose of the Capitation Grant is to serve as an opportunity to help build the public early childhood centre's capacity to effectively implement fiscal decentralisation which is a long-term goal of the Government of Ghana. It is also envisioned to help implement the SPIP to improve the quality of early childhood education. The main local actors in the planning of the ECCD directors, teachers, school board are required to prepared SPIP in order to access the Capitation

Grant to enable the implementation of the SPIP. The Capitation Grant is expected to enable ECCD centres to provide teaching and learning materials and undertake minor repairs in the centre, with the crucial aim of improving the quality of early childhood education.

F: What are some of the management challenges affecting the ECCD centre?

P: There is apathy on the part of some SMC members affected meetings to prepare the SPIP due to a lack of motivation to attend meetings concerning the SPIP. Another challenge is delays in the release of funds from the central government and the cumbersome procedures of accessing the grant worsen the plight of schools. The irregular flow of the Capitation Grant means that funds are not always available to purchase some important items captured in the SPIP for school improvement.

Due to the persistent absence of the Director of Education to sign the Form B, procedures to cash the money are too cumbersome. The procedure is so lengthy and it involves a lot of travelling to the office which sometimes means that transportation uses up a sizeable part of the money. This bureaucratic procedure comes as a result of measures that have been put in place by authorities to check embezzlement and misappropriation of funds by school heads.

Some members are less enthusiastic and absented themselves from the preparation. Others also don't turn up for meetings because sometimes community members on the board don't understand the process even though much education has been done for them on SPIP. These situations called for postponements, potential factors that militate against the smooth preparation of the document. Furthermore, the number of items to be captured on the SPIP also posed a challenge. Not only did members have to write down a very long list of items but also, they had to break down some of the items into smaller units, the breakdowns were extensive, thus rendering the process very tedious and energy sapping. Some planning committee members lacked professional competence, hence, the ability to make projections constituted a major challenge in preparing the SPIP. It was not possible to foresee emergencies and project towards them. Prior to the planning, people are usually sent out to verify the prices of items, but prices for the same items differed from one shop to the other. Projections as required by the SPIP were therefore not easily identified though they constitute a very essential component in preparing the SPIP.

There are two dimensions for the beneficiary schools. Firstly, if the estimate is on the high side, the ECCD Centre would be forced by the Municipal Education Office to review the entire document. That is, they would have to review almost the whole process which is considered tedious and energy consuming. The review process could constitute an obstacle for early disbursement of the Capitation Grant which could contribute to the failure of the project. Secondly, when the cost of the items is under-estimated, the schools will be forced to make up for the difference. This is not easy for ECCD Centre which has no other source of financing their needs. Last year for example, we had to review our SPIP only when the Municipal Education Office saw that some of our prices were on the higher side and this prevented us from purchasing some important items needed by the ECCD Centre early enough.

F: As member of the School Board, how has the implementation of the School Improvement Plan improved quality of ECCD Services?

P: I must say that the concept is a laudable one, but the irregular flow of the Capitation Grant is affecting quality management of the centre. This means that funds are not always available to purchase some important items captured in the SPIP for ECCD centre improvement. The plans of the ECCD centre through the SPIP can only be effective if money is available to execute the SPIP. Therefore, the quality of public ECCD centres is yet to be seen in terms of improved teaching and learning after the introduction of the SPIP and the Capitation Grant.

F: What else could be done to improve on management of the ECCD centre?

P: There is a need to improve on management skills of the centre directors especially in the area of budgeting. In addition, Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education must organise periodic workshops to improve the capacity of SMCs, head teachers and teachers to improve the preparation of the SPIP. Furthermore, at the Municipal Education level, the Municipal Education Office must ensure that bottlenecks and bureaucracies associated with the approval of SPIP and the delivery of CG to schools are removed. Finally, the government has to ensure regular release of the Capitation Grant to ECCD centres in order to achieve the objectives of the policy initiative of improving quality in early childhood care and development in Ghana.

## ANNEXURE L: EXAMPLE OF ANALYSIS TABLE

### ANALYSIS TABLE FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PLANNING DOMAINS	CODING FREQUENCY FOR ECCD CENTRES																TOTAL
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	C14	C15	C16	
<b>VISION STATEMENT</b>																	
<b>1. Statement of Improvement Vision</b>  The director coordinates the SMC team and ECCD centre community in urgently developing stated performance improvement targets and objectives that establish how the centre will be different once its improvement is accomplished.	*	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*				*	10
<b>ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS MEASURES</b>																	
<b>2. Priorities</b>  The ECCD director identifies two to four high-impact priorities that will help to quickly remove current barriers to change and provide the footing for cutting-edge ECCD services provision and added improvements.	*				*	*		*		*	*		*				7

<b>3. Process Outcomes</b>	*	*										*	*	*	*		6
The performance improvement outcomes are clearly observable once priorities are successfully tackled.																	
<b>4. Progress Indicators</b>		*		*					*				*			*	5
Plans contain procedures and indicators of progress made in implementing improvement goals.																	
<b>5. Action Steps</b>	*			*		*			*			*	*			*	7
Plans stated significant action steps that must be taken in order to attain a process outcome, and successively, improvement priority/target.																	
<b>CONTEXT</b>																	
<b>6. ECCD Context</b>		*	*											*		*	4
Planning team identified unique factors within ECCD centre environment that influence effective and																	

efficient operation of the centre.																	
<b>7. Root Cause Analysis</b> Directors coordinate the process of identifying root cause of poor performance of the centre and strategies for improvement.	*	*	*	*					*							*	6
<b>ORGANISATION</b>																	
<b>8. Sequencing</b> Plans contain priorities, process outcomes, and action steps arranged in sequential orders.							*				*						2
<b>9. Schedule/Timeline</b> Plans indicate a schedule of important activities and processes to be fulfilled within the plan's defined time frame.	*		*		*			*				*					5
<b>10. Alignment</b> Plans contain visions that align with the circuit, district, regional and national ECCD vision. There is a proper relation of the various			*					*			*						3



elements of the plan. E.g., improvement priorities/targets align with the improvement vision.																	
<b>RESOURCES</b>																	
<b>11. Directly Responsible Individual(s)</b> Plans identified person or persons in charge of implementation of action steps with the director acting as coordinator and gatekeeper, holding people accountable.	*	*									*					*	4
<b>12. Supports</b> Directors comprehensively scanned the ECCD internal and external environments to identify sources of available materials and resources recognised as essential to implement the improvement plan.	*	*													*		3

**ANNEXURE M: TABLE OF ORGANISING THEMES AND BASIC THEMES FOR THE DIRECTORS' MANAGEMENT PLANNING ACTIVITIES AT ECCD CENTRES**

<b>Global theme</b>	<b>Organising theme</b>	<b>Basic theme</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>No. of directors</b>	<b>Sample Quotes</b>
<b>Planning practices of ECCD centre directors</b>	Vision Statement	Review of mission, vision, and guiding principles	The director coordinates the SMC team and ECCD centre community in urgently developing stated performance improvement targets and objectives that establish how the centre will be different once its improvement is accomplished.	9	<i>As a public setting, we are required to prepare performance improvement plans, which we use to apply for Capitation Grant. So, we use the planning framework from the Ministry of Education. ...I review the mission, vision and fundamental aims of my centre because they articulate why the centre exists, what it wants to create, and what it considers to be the fundamental purpose of early childhood education...I do this by examining whom the ECCD centre serves, what services the centre provides, how the service is provided and reviewing the key ideals, beliefs and values that the centre stands for...our interventions are targeted at children's improvement in English Language, Mathematics and Integrated Science. We have scheduled time for our appraisal meetings that favours everybody.</i>

					<p><i>Sometimes, we involve SISO, PTA Chairman and SMC Chairman during our self-study meetings. The self-study report is submitted to the District Director when we apply for Capitation Grant. We are usually guided by the new KG curriculum, Head Teachers Handbook as well as Teachers Resource Packs. My teachers and non-teaching staff are very cooperative during our self-review meetings... (P10: Public Director).</i></p>
	<p>Activities and progress measures</p>	<p>ECCD centre-community needs assessment</p>	<p>Directors coordinate the process of identifying the root cause of poor performance of the centre and strategies for improvement.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p><i>...To get a clear picture of the centre, it is also necessary to collect information on each of the key domains and its components, also called indicators. This information is collected in numbers that are called data. Once this is done, the core subject scores such as Mathematics, English language and Integrated Science is compared with previous years serving as the baseline to determine whether the centre is on the path of improvement... The ultimate goal for this self-analysis is to</i></p>

					<p><i>identify the centre's key gaps and challenges that form the strategic priorities to be addressed... (P10: Public Director)</i></p> <p><i>...In this centre I usually review children's performance in the previous term and if I notice some were performing poorly, I invite the teacher concern and we plan how to help that child...I don't involve parents in this review session but when they bring suggestions, I take it into consideration... (P 13: Private Director)</i></p> <p><i>...Appraisal of centre's performance helps to establish the centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Root cause analysis is a way of detecting the centre's needs that must be addressed, factors that need to be taken into consideration during centre's performance improvement planning, and centre's development priorities. We also collect data on childrens' place of residence and the occupation of their parents. This helps us to plan for access... (P1: Public Director).</i></p>
--	--	--	--	--	--

	Activities and progress measures	Development of strategic goals, objectives and strategies	The ECCD director identifies two to four high-impact priorities that will help to quickly remove current barriers to change and provide the footing for cutting-edge ECCD services provision and added improvements	7	<p><i>So far, only the SMC chairman and PA chairman, my teachers, the School Improvement Officer (SISO), and the district director actively participate in the appraisal meetings and improvement planning... We usually meet at the district, circuit, community and centre levels to appraise the performance of our centre. During such meetings, we all discuss how we can improve on the areas we did not do well. We are also informed at the meetings about district, circuit, and centre levels improvement targets for the year. For example, problems militating against quality learning are thoroughly analysed through frank and objective discussion. Realistic performance targets are set for the centres. Strategies for improving the situation are developed for the respective centres. ...The district director facilitates the district appraisal meeting; our School Improvement Support Office facilitates circuit and community-level appraisal meetings and I facilitate the centre level appraisal meeting. We usually invite parents, SMC</i></p>
--	----------------------------------	---	---	---	---

					<p><i>Chairperson and the PTA Chairperson, opinion leaders and members of the community but most of the time, they don't come, especially on market days. (P 6: Public Director).</i></p> <p><i>We set goals using the guideline provided by the Ghana Education Service. There is national, district, circuit as well as centre goals. So, we are guided by all these when we identify poor performance, we meet and strategies as to how we can turn things around... ..We set goals and objectives based on vision and mission of the centre. The mission and vision are pasted everywhere in the centre. Actually, we discuss the plan itself, the minutes will capture that we agree that this plan should be done after which teachers will go and put it into action plan. (P 15: Public Director).</i></p>
	Activities and progress measures	Formulating the ECCD centre improvement plan	Plans stated significant action steps that must be taken in order to attain a process outcome, and	9	<p><i>...Ok let me say that with the help of my teachers we develop annual implementation activity plan that we implement termly and it contains our targets, objectives, start date and end date, person responsible, resources needed and</i></p>

			<p>successively, improvement priority/target</p>	<p><i>expected outcomes. So, at the end of the year, I write a self-analysis report that we use for next cycle of planning... (P12: Public Director).</i></p> <p><i>... the centre performance improvement plan budget is prepared to access Government of Ghana Capitation Grant; covering improving quality of ECCD services, teaching and learning materials, administration, staff development, access, extra curriculum activities, repairs and maintenance... An implementation action plan is prepared where project milestones are established and project in-charges are assigned. Final plans are signed by the centre director, Chair of school board and Municipal Education Office Director approves it.....As board members, we are more concerned with planning, implementation and monitoring of the ECCD centre's performance improvement plan. Based on my experiences, she is doing well. However, the centre Director needs further training in</i></p>
--	--	--	--	---

					<i>budgeting. Alternatively, the services of experts in planning and budgeting could be employed so as to enhance our planning... (P 18: Public Board Member)</i>
	Activities and progress measures	Planning for monitoring and evaluation of the improvement plan		6	<i>At my centre, I usually prepare an annual implementation action plan with my team at a meeting. We prepare an annual implementation action plan that we implemented on a termly basis. In the plan, we identify the centre's agreed priorities, strategies to achieve priorities, targets to focus resources on, improvement goals and objectives, expected outcomes, persons responsible, timelines, resources and their mobilisation, performance indicators and evaluation strategies are all part of the action plan. We also prepare an implementation budget using the approved national early childhood care and development priority areas covered by the government Capitation Grant and we attach it as a costing sheet for approval... So, you see it is important we all know what needs to be done, why, by whom, when, with what, how to determine that the implementation of the plan is</i>



					<i>on track and how to determine the impact of implemented activities on the intended objectives (P 10: Public Director).</i>
--	--	--	--	--	---

### Coding frequencies for directors' planning management activities at ECCD Centres

Directors' Planning Activities	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10		P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	P16	P17	P18	P19	P20	Total	
Performance appraisal meetings	*	*	*		*	*			*	*			*				*						9
Review of pupils' performance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*						16
ECCD centre vision	*				*	*		*		*		*		*									7
Biographic data on children and pupils	*				*					*				*									4
SWOT analysis	*				*	*		*		*		*		*									7
Development of performance indicators																							16
Formulating implementation budget		*		*										*			*						4
Annual implementation action plan	*	*	*	*		*	*	*		*		*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*		16
Identifying responsible persons	*				*	*		*		*		*		*									7
Support from PTA	*				*	*		*		*		*		*	*	*		*	*	*			12
Plan for in-service training	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*						16
Plan for minor repairs	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*						16

Plan for management efficiency	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*					16
Plan for access	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*					16
Plan for quality	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*					16
Plan for pupils' learning tools	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*					
Plan for mainstreaming	*			*				*					*										4

# ANNEXURE N: PLAGIARISM REPORT

The screenshot displays the Turnitin Feedback Studio interface. At the top, the document title is "EMMANUEL DODZI ANYIDOHO" and the thesis title is "EXPLORING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF DIRECTORS AT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN GHANA". The similarity index is 12%. The report is broken down as follows:

Category	Percentage
Similarity Index	12%
Internet Sources	11%
Publications	3%
Student Papers	3%

Primary sources identified are:

Rank	Source	Percentage
1	uir.unisa.ac.za (Internet Source)	1%
2	csti.wested.org (Internet Source)	1%

The interface also shows the document page number (1 of 283), word count (91041), and a sidebar with various tools and navigation options.



**ANNEXURE O: DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING**

# **MWE LANGUAGE SERVICES**

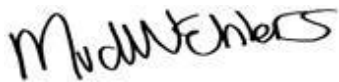
**To whom it may concern,**

This letter serves to confirm that the D Litt et Phil dissertation by Mr. Emmanuel Dodzi Anyidoho, entitled, "EXPLORING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF DIRECTORS AT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN GHANA", has been professionally edited by myself, Martine van der Walt Ehlers in June 2023.

I have been editing academic material both for students in South Africa and internationally, for several years, and completed the Certificate in Editing Principles and Practices (with distinction) through CE@UP (University of Pretoria).

Sincerely,

**Martine van der Walt Ehlers**  
**Language Editor, MWE Language Services**



[mwelanguageservices@gmail.com](mailto:mwelanguageservices@gmail.com)