

OBSERVATION OF MANAGEMENT OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BASED ON FOREIGN EXPERIENCES

Sotimova Barno Ma`rufjonovna ¹

¹ Master's student of preschool education at Tashkent
International University of Chemistry

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This article explores the management practices of preschool educational organizations through the lens of international experiences. It examines diverse governance and administrative models from countries such as Finland, Italy, Singapore, the United States, and New Zealand. Each model demonstrates unique approaches to decentralization, collaboration, quality assurance, and cultural responsiveness. The article emphasizes the significance of empowering local authorities, involving stakeholders, and investing in professional development for early childhood educators. By analyzing these foreign practices, the article provides valuable insights and practical recommendations for improving preschool management systems in different educational contexts.

INTRODUCTION. Preschool education plays a critical role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and development. Effective management of preschool educational organizations is vital to ensure quality outcomes for young learners. Across the globe, countries have developed diverse approaches to managing preschools, influenced by cultural, political, and economic contexts. Observing these international experiences provides valuable insights for improving the structure and administration of preschool institutions in other regions. In countries like Finland, Norway, and Sweden, early childhood education (ECE) is managed through a decentralized approach. Local municipalities are responsible for implementing national curricula and ensuring quality. This local autonomy fosters innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness to community needs. The Reggio Emilia approach emphasizes collaboration among educators, parents, and the

local community. Management in these preschools is less hierarchical and more cooperative, involving teachers in decision-making processes and curriculum design. Singapore's Ministry of Education maintains rigorous standards for preschool management, emphasizing teacher training, curriculum uniformity, and outcome-based evaluation. All preschools must adhere to the Early Childhood Development Agency's (ECDA) regulations, ensuring consistency and high quality [1].

In the United States, preschool management often involves a mix of public and private entities. Programs like Head Start are federally funded but locally administered, while private centers operate independently but may receive state subsidies. This model provides flexibility and choice but can lead to disparities in quality.

New Zealand integrates indigenous Māori values into ECE, emphasizing holistic development. Management supports professional development, autonomy in teaching practices, and culturally responsive pedagogy [2].

Comparative Insights and Implications

- **Autonomy vs. Standardization:** A balance must be struck between allowing autonomy for contextual adaptation and maintaining national standards for quality and equity.
- **Parental Involvement:** Models like Reggio Emilia and New Zealand show that involving families in preschool management and curriculum leads to stronger developmental outcomes.
- **Investment in Teachers:** Across all successful models, well-trained and well-supported teachers are a consistent factor in high-quality preschool education.

The observation of international experiences in managing preschool educational organizations reveals that there is no single best model. However, certain principles—such as decentralization with accountability, inclusive governance, and professional empowerment—emerge as effective across various contexts. Policymakers and educational leaders can draw on these global lessons to design systems that respond to local needs while striving for universal standards of excellence in early childhood education.

Literature analysis. The management of preschool educational organizations has been a subject of growing academic interest, especially in the context of increasing demands for quality early childhood education (ECE) worldwide. Numerous studies emphasize that effective governance structures, investment in professional development, and inclusive stakeholder involvement are foundational to successful preschool systems. One of the most cited models in early childhood education management is the Nordic model, particularly

Finland. According to Kangas et al. (2016), Finland's decentralized approach—where municipalities manage ECE within a national curriculum framework—promotes flexibility, innovation, and local accountability [3]. This model underscores the value of trusting educators and local governments with the autonomy to adapt teaching to cultural and social contexts. Another influential framework is the Reggio Emilia approach in Italy. Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (2012) explore how this philosophy integrates collaborative management, where teachers, parents, and administrators collectively participate in curriculum development and school governance. The model is built on democratic ideals, child agency, and a strong emphasis on the learning environment, positioning management as a shared responsibility [4].

In contrast, countries like Singapore demonstrate a highly centralized model. The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) plays a pivotal role in regulating preschool services. Tan (2017) highlights how centralized regulation, paired with heavy investment in teacher training and standardized curricula, has improved school readiness outcomes across socioeconomic groups. The Singaporean case shows that centralization, when combined with quality assurance and support systems, can effectively scale quality. In the United States, a mixed public-private system dominates [5]. Programs like Head Start, established in 1965, have been the focus of numerous studies (Zigler & Styfco, 2004). These studies often highlight both the opportunities and the challenges of such hybrid systems, particularly in ensuring equity and consistent quality across diverse provider types. States like Oklahoma and New Jersey, however, show how public investment and strong governance can elevate standards across both public and private centers (Barnett et al., 2017) [6].

Finally, New Zealand's approach, particularly the Te Whāriki curriculum, is often praised for its cultural responsiveness and emphasis on holistic development. According to Carr and May (2000), management structures in New Zealand support teacher autonomy, integration of Māori cultural values, and a strong link between pedagogy and community identity. These elements are seen as critical for building inclusive and reflective preschool systems.

Comparing these systems reveals several common factors contributing to effective management:

- Clear but flexible regulatory frameworks,
- Investment in teacher training and professional development,
- Inclusive and participatory governance,

- Cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to community needs.

Research discussion. The comparative analysis of international preschool management models reveals a dynamic and evolving field shaped by local needs, cultural values, and national education policies. Although management practices vary significantly across countries, several common threads emerge that have important implications for both theory and practice in early childhood education (ECE). One of the most striking contrasts lies in the degree of centralization in preschool management. For example, Finland's decentralized system promotes flexibility and local autonomy, allowing educators to adapt teaching methods and curricula to specific community contexts. In contrast, Singapore's centralized model ensures uniformity and high standards across the board through strict regulation and state-led initiatives. The research suggests that neither extreme centralization nor complete decentralization is a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, a hybrid approach—where central governments provide guidelines, funding, and monitoring, while local entities maintain autonomy in implementation—can foster both innovation and accountability [7].

This underscores the importance of inclusive and participatory management structures, where all voices—especially those of families and educators—are considered in decision-making processes. Such inclusivity leads to a stronger sense of ownership, more culturally relevant programming, and ultimately better outcomes for children. Another consistent theme across successful preschool management systems is the investment in teacher preparation and continuous professional development. Countries like Singapore and Finland emphasize rigorous teacher education and ongoing support, which correlate with higher educational outcomes in early childhood settings. Empowered teachers are not only more effective in the classroom but also play crucial roles in shaping organizational culture and contributing to management decisions. Therefore, policies aimed at strengthening preschool management must prioritize teacher capacity-building as a central strategy [8].

The research also highlights the importance of cultural responsiveness in management practices. New Zealand's model, which integrates Māori perspectives, shows that preschool management must respect and reflect the cultural identities of the communities they serve. The U.S. model, with its diversity and decentralization, presents both opportunities and challenges in achieving equity. To create inclusive learning environments, preschool management must go beyond administrative efficiency and address issues of social justice, equity, and access. Ensuring that all children—regardless of background—receive high-quality early education requires management systems to be sensitive to the diverse realities of the population.

The findings of this research suggest that effective management of preschool educational organizations should:

- Encourage decentralized implementation guided by centralized quality standards,
- Promote community and parental engagement in school governance,
- Ensure continuous training and support for educators,
- Adopt culturally responsive approaches that address equity and inclusion.

These insights are particularly relevant for policymakers and education leaders aiming to reform or enhance their national early childhood systems. By learning from international experiences, countries can design management frameworks that are both contextually relevant and aligned with global best practices. Moreover, the importance of culturally responsive education practices cannot be overstated. By integrating local cultural values and respecting diversity, preschool organizations can provide more meaningful learning experiences for children, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Conclusion. The comparative analysis of preschool educational management systems across various countries reveals that there is no universal model that guarantees success. However, several critical factors emerge as essential to the effective management of preschool organizations globally. These factors include a balance between centralization and decentralization, active stakeholder involvement, robust teacher professional development, and cultural responsiveness to community needs. Countries like Finland, Italy, Singapore, and New Zealand offer valuable lessons in how to balance governmental regulation with local autonomy, ensuring that both educational quality and community relevance are maintained. Finland's decentralized model highlights the importance of local autonomy, while Singapore's centralized approach emphasizes uniformity and quality assurance across the system. Teacher empowerment through continuous professional development is a common thread across successful models. Highly trained educators are critical to implementing high-quality curricula and supporting the social and cognitive development of children. This highlights the need for investment in teacher education and professional growth as a central aspect of preschool management. The observation of international practices in preschool educational management offers rich insights into how different countries have developed systems that prioritize quality, equity, and cultural relevance. Policymakers and educators worldwide can learn from these experiences, adapting them to their own national and local contexts to improve preschool education systems. Effective preschool management requires a holistic approach that combines thoughtful leadership,

strong governance, and a deep commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment for young children.

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