EduVision: Journal of Innovations in Pedagogy and Educational Advancements
Volume 2, Issue 11, November 2026
brightmindpublishing.com
ISSN (E): 3061-6972
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MANAGEMENT IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS PSYCHOLOGICAL, PEDAGOGICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITIONS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This article analyses, through an integrated approach, the psychological, pedagogical and organizational conditions for establishing and improving management in preschool education organizations. Management effectiveness is determined not only by a director's individual competencies but also by the organization's psychological climate, mutual trust, professional collaboration, pedagogical values, distribution of authority, material and resource provision, and system of continuous professional development. The article examines humanistic and child-centred management, pedagogical leadership, distributed leadership, motivation, emotional intelligence, organizational culture, the communication environment and reflective management. International academic literature and findings from the OECD TALIS Starting Strong 2024 study are reviewed, and the possibilities of adapting relevant approaches to state preschool education organizations in Uzbekistan are considered. The study is theoretical and analytical in nature; it does not present survey or observation results that were not actually collected as empirical data. Finally, practical organizational and pedagogical recommendations aimed at developing leadership practices are proposed.

Keywords: Preschool education, management, psychological conditions, pedagogical conditions, organizational environment, leadership competence, pedagogical leadership, distributed leadership, motivation, emotional intelligence, organizational culture, professional development.

Introduction

Preschool education covers one of the most important stages of human development. It is during this period that the foundations necessary for a child's physical, cognitive, speech, and social-emotional development are established. Therefore, the quality of a

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preschool education organization depends not only on its educational programme or material and technical resources, but also on daily relationships, the organization of the pedagogical process, staff collaboration and leadership practices. The way management is organized directly affects teachers' working conditions, cooperation with parents, children's safety and well-being, and the continuity of the educational process.

Modern management cannot be equated merely with issuing orders, monitoring the implementation of assignments and maintaining documentation. Management is a process of setting common goals, coordinating human and material resources, supporting pedagogical quality, regulating relationships within the organization, anticipating problems and managing change. In preschool education, children's interests must remain at the centre of this process. Thus, effective management is measured not only by the fulfilment of plans and reports, but also by the creation of a safe, developmental and caring environment for children.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Preschool Education and Upbringing" establishes such principles as every child's access to preschool education, equal conditions, a child-centred approach, unity between the educational influence of the family and the preschool education organization, and openness of the educational process (Law No. O'RQ-595, 2019). The law also regulates the operation of a state preschool education organization as a legal entity under its charter, its rights and obligations, and the organization of the educational process. The Law "On Education" establishes the general legal framework for the education sector (Law No. O'RQ-637, 2020). These provisions demonstrate the need to organize management on the principles of legality, transparency, child-centredness and accountability.

International research also emphasizes the role of leadership in ensuring the quality of early childhood education and care. The OECD paper "Leadership for Quality Early Childhood Education and Care" considers leadership a factor influencing process quality, namely everyday interactions between children and staff and the developmental environment (Douglass, 2019). The OECD TALIS Starting Strong 2024 materials highlight the relationships between leadership practices, staff well-being, professional development, working conditions and resources (OECD, 2025).

The aim of this article is to analyse, on the basis of academic sources, the psychological, pedagogical and organizational conditions that influence the development of effective management in preschool education organizations and to

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formulate practical recommendations applicable in Uzbekistan. The objectives are to clarify the concept of management; describe psychological factors; explain pedagogical conditions; analyse organizational mechanisms; identify relevant aspects of international experience; and propose practical recommendations and evaluation criteria.

The article is based on a theoretical and analytical approach. It provides a comparative analysis of regulatory legal documents, reports by international organizations and academic literature on educational leadership. No survey, interview or observation is reported as having been conducted in a particular organization. Therefore, the recommendations in the text should be understood not as empirical findings, but as the author's proposals derived from the sources and theoretical analysis.

2. The Content and Systemic Characteristics of Management in Preschool Education Organizations

Management in a preschool education organization is a multi-component process in which pedagogical, administrative, financial, communicative and social functions are carried out in an interconnected manner. The director determines the organization's strategic direction, coordinates staff activities, ensures that employment and educational processes are organized lawfully, and establishes relationships with parents and partner organizations. At the same time, the director must remain engaged with the content of the pedagogical process, monitor the quality of work with children and develop mechanisms for providing methodological support to teachers.

The administrative dimension of management includes planning, distribution of tasks, resource management, documentation, occupational safety, internal monitoring and accountability. Pedagogical management, in turn, focuses on clarifying educational objectives, supporting teachers' professional growth, monitoring children's development, improving the learning environment and strengthening cooperation with families. These two dimensions should not function separately, but as a mutually complementary system. For example, allocating time for methodological sessions for teachers is an administrative planning decision, while its purpose is to improve pedagogical quality.

Limiting leadership to the director's personal authority may prevent the organization from making full use of its potential. The distributed leadership approach assumes that certain leadership responsibilities are shared with team members who have

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relevant experience and competencies. This does not mean that the director relinquishes responsibility. On the contrary, the director clearly defines common goals, the scope of tasks, authority and accountability, while creating opportunities for staff initiative. Heikka and colleagues (2021) identified a positive relationship between distributed pedagogical leadership and teachers' commitment to pedagogical leadership within teams in Finnish early childhood education settings.

For a management system to be effective, its goals, structure, human resources, organizational culture and evaluation mechanisms must be aligned. For example, if collaboration is declared an organizational value but all decisions are made by a single person in practice, a contradiction arises between values and practice. Similarly, if innovation is expected but staff are not given time or resources to experiment, achieving the desired results becomes difficult. Therefore, when developing management, priority should be given to practical organizational mechanisms rather than slogans.

3. Psychological Conditions for Developing Management

3.1. A Healthy Psychological Climate and Mutual Trust

The psychological climate is the environment characterized by relationships among members of an organization, their emotional state, mutual support and sense of belonging to the team. In a team with a healthy psychological climate, staff are more inclined to discuss problems rather than conceal them; asking questions, expressing opinions and requesting help are accepted as normal practices. In contrast, in an environment based on fear and punishment, staff may hide mistakes, refrain from taking initiative and work only within the limits of formal instructions.

Mutual trust is built when the director's words and actions are consistent, decisions are based on understandable criteria and staff are treated fairly. To strengthen trust, the director should avoid meetings focused solely on criticism, recognize successful practices and analyse problems in relation to processes rather than individuals. For example, when an error is found in a document, it is more appropriate to examine its cause, the clarity of the instructions and the monitoring process than to publicly humiliate the employee.

Psychological safety refers to an environment in which team members can ask questions, express opinions and acknowledge mistakes without excessive fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999). In a preschool education organization,

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psychological safety is important for professional learning among staff, open discussion of children's needs and timely reporting of safety-related problems. However, psychological safety does not mean the absence of high expectations: quality standards and accountability remain in place, while mistakes are treated as opportunities for learning rather than simply as grounds for punishment.

3.2. Motivation, Needs and Staff Job Satisfaction

Staff motivation is an important psychological factor affecting the quality of management. Motivation is not determined solely by material incentives. Opportunities for professional growth, meaningful work, autonomy, respect within the team, fair evaluation and a sense that one's work is valuable also support intrinsic motivation. In the self-determination theory developed by Deci and Ryan, the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are interpreted as important conditions for human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

When this theory is applied to a preschool education organization, autonomy is reflected in a teacher's ability to make informed choices within the scope of professional responsibilities; competence means having the knowledge and skills needed to perform one's work; and relatedness is expressed through a sense of belonging to and support from the team. If the director excessively centralizes all processes, teachers' independent thinking may be restricted. At the same time, complete freedom without oversight may lead to a loss of shared educational goals and standards. Therefore, a management model is needed in which authority is clearly defined while sufficient space is left for professional initiative.

The incentive system should be transparent. Staff can be recognized not only for performance indicators but also for collaboration, professional growth, respectful relationships with children, trying new methods and sharing experience. If incentive criteria are not explained in advance, a sense of unfairness may grow within the team. Therefore, both material and non-material incentives should be applied clearly and equally, within the limits of legal and financial possibilities.

3.3. Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management

In a preschool education organization, the director communicates with staff members, parents and other stakeholders who differ in professional experience, age, character and needs. For this reason, emotional intelligence—the ability to recognize and

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manage one's own emotions, understand the emotional states of others and establish effective relationships—is an important management resource. Goleman (1998) identifies self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills as important components of leadership.

Emotional intelligence does not mean that a director must agree to every request. Rather, it enables the director to remain composed during difficult conversations, distinguish facts, listen to the parties, clearly define the problem and agree on an appropriate solution. For example, when a disagreement arises with a parent, the director should first clarify the substance of the concern, listen to the parent's worries, explain the organization's current procedures and determine the next steps.

When managing conflicts, it is important not to turn a problem into a personal confrontation. Before asking "Who is to blame?", the director may ask, "Which process or communication breakdown caused the problem?" This approach does not eliminate accountability; rather, it helps identify the causes more fully. Once a conflict has been resolved, agreements should be recorded in writing or otherwise clearly documented, and their implementation should be monitored.

4. Pedagogical Conditions for Developing Management

4.1. Child-Centred Pedagogical Values

The interests and development of the child must be at the centre of management in a preschool education organization. Management decisions should take into account children's safety, health, individual needs, learning through play, social-emotional well-being and equal opportunities. The legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan on preschool education also gives particular importance to a child-centred approach, equal opportunities and the principles of cooperation with families (Law No. O'RQ-595, 2019).

Child-centred management should be clearly reflected in the director's daily activities. For example, when preparing schedules, it is important to consider children's age-related characteristics and need for rest; when organizing the environment, to ensure safety and opportunities for independent activity; and during pedagogical observation, to consider each child's individual development rather than comparing children with one another. The director may ask teachers to analyse not only the number of activities or completeness of documentation, but also the quality

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of communication with children, the content of the play environment and children's active participation.

4.2. Pedagogical Leadership and Professional Collaboration

Pedagogical leadership is purposeful influence and support aimed at improving the quality of the educational process. The director should not merely inspect teachers' work, but should also create conditions for their professional growth. Methodological meetings, peer observation, exchange of experience, reflection after lessons or activities, mentoring and professional learning communities can serve as important tools for this purpose.

Heikka and colleagues (2021) associate distributed pedagogical leadership with the development of shared pedagogical views and strategies within an organization, the sharing of pedagogical responsibility, clarification of authority and relationships, and the implementation of pedagogical improvement through team participation. Under this approach, the director's role is not to make all pedagogical decisions alone, but to establish a common direction and mechanisms for collaboration.

To introduce distributed leadership in practice, an organization may appoint teachers responsible for specific methodological areas and establish experience-sharing groups or small project teams. For example, one group of teachers may develop proposals to improve the play environment, another may focus on cooperation with parents, and a third may work on inclusive approaches. The responsibilities, deadlines, resources and methods for presenting results for each group should be clearly defined.

4.3. Reflection, Observation and Improvement of Pedagogical Quality

Reflection is the process through which a teacher analyses their own practice and identifies successful aspects as well as areas requiring improvement. To develop a reflective culture, the director can use monitoring results not merely as a list of shortcomings, but as a basis for professional discussion and development planning. For example, after observing an activity, the director and teacher may discuss questions such as: "In which situations did the children participate more actively?", "Which questions encouraged their thinking?" and "What could be changed next time?"

The purpose of pedagogical observation should not be to punish employees or create rankings, but to improve the quality of interactions with children. Observation criteria

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should be known in advance, understandable and relevant to the purpose of the activity. Results should be discussed in accordance with confidentiality and professional ethics. This approach strengthens teachers' sense of ownership of their work.

One important form of professional collaboration is the professional learning community. In this format, teachers meet regularly to study a particular problem together, try practical solutions and analyse the results again. The studies by Denee (2018) and Denee and Thornton (2021) discuss the relationship between distributed leadership, trust, mentoring and professional collaboration in early childhood education settings. These findings indicate the need for leaders to provide time, structure and support for collective professional learning.

5. Organizational Conditions for Developing Management

5.1. Clarity of Organizational Structure, Authority and Responsibility

Organizational conditions include the formal structure, distribution of tasks, work procedures, communication channels, resources and monitoring mechanisms required to carry out management activities. If it is unclear who is responsible for each issue, where decision-making authority lies and how information should be communicated, duplicated work, lack of accountability or conflicts may arise.

When distributing tasks, the director should take into account employees' job responsibilities, professional qualifications and workload. Delegating authority is not simply assigning a task; it also involves explaining the expected result, identifying the necessary resources, defining the limits of decision-making and providing feedback. Final accountability is determined in accordance with the relevant regulatory documents and job responsibilities.

5.2. Resources, Working Conditions and Staff Well-Being

Effective management requires human resources, time, financial and material capacity, information and a safe physical environment. Even when a director has strong professional capabilities, management outcomes may be limited if there are not enough staff, workloads are excessive or the materials needed for pedagogical activities are unavailable. Therefore, explaining management problems solely in terms of staff discipline or motivation would be a one-sided approach.

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The OECD TALIS Starting Strong 2024 findings demonstrate the complex relationship between staff well-being, working conditions, resources and leadership practices. The report identifies excessive administrative work, performing several tasks simultaneously, staff shortages and workload as sources of stress in some systems. At the same time, satisfaction with leadership, autonomy and support are considered resources that can mitigate stress (OECD, 2025). These findings cannot be directly transferred as statistics to the context of Uzbekistan; however, they show the need for local organizations to analyse workload and well-being as important components of management.

To support staff well-being, the director may set priorities among work tasks, organize documentation to avoid unnecessary duplication wherever possible, monitor compliance with working and rest hours, and develop mechanisms of mutual support within the team. These recommendations should remain within existing financial and legal capacities and comply with occupational safety and labour law requirements.

5.3. Information Exchange and Digital Management

Timely, accurate and clear information exchange within an organization affects the quality of management decisions. The director can communicate necessary information to staff through meetings, written assignments, electronic communication tools and internal documents. However, contradictory instructions across different channels or an excessive flow of information for employees can reduce work efficiency. Therefore, official communication channels and procedures for recording assignments should be established in advance.

Digital tools can facilitate attendance recording, planning, document management, communication with parents and internal monitoring. However, technology is a means of management, not its goal. When introducing a digital system, it is necessary to consider staff members' digital literacy, data security, protection of personal information, internet and technical capacity, as well as the risk of creating an excessive reporting burden. Digital monitoring should not replace human communication and professional trust.

5.4. Cooperation with Families and the Community

A preschool education organization is not the only educational environment in a child's life. Relationships with families, the mahalla, healthcare services, social

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services and other partners support children's development and well-being. The director should not limit communication with parents to meetings or conversations held only when a problem arises, but should organize regular, respectful and two-way communication.

For cooperation to be effective, it is necessary to provide parents with understandable information about their child's development, listen to their views, respect different family circumstances and maintain confidentiality. Decisions made in cooperation with parents should serve the child's best interests and comply with the rights of legal representatives and the organization's scope of authority. In this process, the director acts as an intermediary between teachers and parents, organizes information exchange and coordinates agreements.

6. International Experience and Its Adaptation to the Context of Uzbekistan

International experience shows that there is no single management model for preschool education organizations. The powers of directors, training requirements, financing arrangements and pedagogical leadership practices differ across countries. Therefore, rather than copying international experience directly, it is important to analyse its principles and operating conditions and adapt them to the local management system.

The OECD's 2019 working paper "Leadership for Quality Early Childhood Education and Care" examines the administrative and pedagogical responsibilities of leaders in early childhood education and care centres, leader preparation, working conditions and professional development factors (Douglass, 2019). The analysis emphasizes that leadership responsibilities require a broad range of competencies, from knowledge of child development to the management of staff and financial resources.

Studies on the experience of Finland highlight the importance of distributing pedagogical leadership within the team and teachers' mutual reflection (Heikka et al., 2021). Research in New Zealand identifies trust, mentoring, coaching and providing teachers with opportunities to lead as practices that support distributed leadership (Denee & Thornton, 2021). A study conducted at one childcare centre in Singapore discusses how teachers' collaborative learning and distributed pedagogical leadership may contribute to quality improvement even under resource constraints (Yang & Lim, 2021). However, findings from a single centre cannot be generalized to all countries or organizations.

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The OECD TALIS Starting Strong 2024 report analyses information about preschool education staff and leaders in 17 countries and subnational jurisdictions. The report focuses on distributed leadership, support for staff pedagogical learning, targeted professional development for leaders, coaching and the provision of resources (OECD, 2025). These data do not provide direct indicators for Uzbekistan, but offer international benchmarks for analysing policy and management practices.

The following aspects of international experience may be relevant to preschool education organizations in Uzbekistan: continuous, needs-based professional development for leaders; integration of pedagogical leadership with administrative management; assigning clear authority and responsibility to team members; developing mentoring and professional communities; treating staff well-being as an integral part of quality management; and organizing systematic cooperation with parents. When implementing these approaches, current legislation, financing procedures, staffing structure and the actual capacities of each organization must be taken into account.

7. Author's Proposal: A Model for Integrating Psychological, Pedagogical and Organizational Conditions

Based on the theoretical analysis above, the author proposes an approach consisting of three interconnected layers for developing management in a preschool education organization. The first layer is the psychological environment: trust, fairness, psychological safety, motivation and emotional support. The second layer is pedagogical development: child-centred values, pedagogical leadership, collective reflection, mentoring and continuous professional learning. The third layer is organizational support: clarity of authority, resources, workload balance, information exchange, internal monitoring and cooperation with parents.

These three layers cannot function effectively in isolation from one another. For example, developing pedagogical collaboration requires staff to feel safe expressing their views (the psychological layer), to have methods for joint analysis and learning (the pedagogical layer), and to have time allocated in the work schedule and a clear organizational mechanism for doing so (the organizational layer). Therefore, when introducing any innovation, it is advisable for the director to assess all three layers together.

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The model may be implemented in the following stages:

Stage 1 – Identifying needs: priority problems are identified through discussions with the team, self-assessment, observation of work processes and analysis of existing documents.

Stage 2 – Defining common goals and criteria: the problem is clearly formulated, and the expected result, responsible persons, deadlines and necessary resources are determined.

Stage 3 – Collaborative planning: teachers and relevant staff develop proposals for resolving the problem; the boundaries of authority and responsibility are agreed upon.

Stage 4 – Implementation and support: the plan is implemented through training, mentoring, methodological meetings, workplace observation or digital tools.

Stage 5 – Reflection and improvement: results are analysed against the established criteria, effective and ineffective aspects are identified, and adjustments are made for the next cycle.

This model is an author's proposal and is not presented as a ready-made methodology that has been empirically tested. Before introducing it in a particular organization, the needs of the director and team, regulatory requirements, available resources and evaluation capacities should be identified.

8. Criteria for Assessing Management Conditions

The process of management development should be supported by regular evaluation. Evaluation should serve to improve organizational processes rather than punish employees or compare them with one another. The following criteria are proposed as the author's recommendations:

Psychological environment: staff feel able to express their opinions; communication with the director is open; conflicts are resolved fairly; mutual assistance and respect are present.

Pedagogical development: pedagogical observation and reflection are regular; methodological collaboration takes place; mentoring and experience-sharing are supported; child-centred practice is encouraged.

Organizational clarity: tasks and authority are clearly understood; assignments are recorded; resources and working time are planned; information is communicated in a timely manner.

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Cooperation: there is a procedure for handling parents' requests; parents' views are heard; communication with relevant partner organizations is maintained; coordinated actions focus on the child's best interests.

Continuous improvement: problems are identified, plans are developed, implementation is monitored, results are analysed and subsequent decisions are made on the basis of evidence.

It is advisable to use several sources in evaluation: anonymous staff feedback, meeting minutes, professional development plans, observation records and analysis of implemented measures. Personal data protection, objectivity and confidentiality must be ensured. If actual data have not been collected in the organization, results should not be published as percentages or statistical indicators.

9. Practical Recommendations

First, an annual management plan should be developed that goes beyond administrative monitoring and also covers pedagogical leadership and staff professional development. The plan should integrate work with the team, support for children's development and well-being, cooperation with parents and the use of resources.

Second, regular open communication meetings are recommended to strengthen psychological safety and mutual trust within the organization. These meetings should enable staff to discuss problems without blame, make suggestions and develop solutions together. The director should record the outcomes of discussions and provide feedback on proposals that can be implemented.

Third, teachers' professional experience and interests should be considered when distributing authority. Small working groups may be established for methodological areas, mentoring, work with parents or innovative initiatives. The responsibilities of each group, its decision-making limits and its reporting procedure to the director should be clearly defined.

Fourth, professional development for directors should not be limited to one-off seminars, but should be combined with training, individual coaching, mentoring and professional communities. The OECD's 2025 report also identifies targeted professional development, coaching and collaborative approaches as factors supporting leadership practices (OECD, 2025).

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Fifth, staff well-being and workload should be considered as a separate component of the management plan. It is important to reduce duplication of tasks, organize documentation processes, use working time rationally, identify risks associated with staff shortages in advance and, where appropriate, refer them to higher-level organizations.

Sixth, pedagogical observation and internal monitoring results should be used for developmental purposes. Observation criteria should be explained in advance, results should be analysed with the teacher in a professional discussion, and an individual development plan should be prepared where necessary.

Seventh, regular and two-way communication mechanisms with parents should be developed. It is recommended that parents receive clear information about children's development, daily routines, safety and the educational process; that procedures for reviewing requests be explained; and that feedback be used for improvement.

Eighth, when introducing digital management tools, it is necessary to ensure that they address real needs, are convenient for staff and protect data security. Before introducing each new electronic form or report, it should be assessed whether it simplifies the existing process or, conversely, creates an additional workload.

10. Conclusion

Developing management in preschool education organizations is a multifaceted process whose effectiveness depends on the integration of psychological, pedagogical and organizational conditions. From a psychological perspective, a healthy climate, mutual trust, fairness, motivation and emotional intelligence strengthen the team's ability to collaborate. From a pedagogical perspective, child-centred values, pedagogical leadership, professional reflection, mentoring and collective learning contribute to improving the educational process. From an organizational perspective, clearly defined authority, resources, balanced workloads, effective information exchange, digital tools and cooperation with parents ensure the stability of management.

International academic literature and OECD materials indicate that leadership in preschool education should be viewed not merely as an administrative activity, but as a systemic factor influencing pedagogical quality, staff well-being and organizational development. However, when adapting international experience to local conditions,

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the country's legislation, the organization's resources, staffing structure and regional characteristics must be taken into account.

The three-layer approach proposed in this article—the integration of the psychological environment, pedagogical development and organizational support—is considered the author's conceptual model for the systematic analysis of management. Before applying it in practice, it should be adapted to local conditions and evaluated on the basis of actual data. Thus, an effective leader of a preschool education organization should not merely supervise, but should prioritize children's interests, build trust and collaboration within the team, support teachers' professional development and direct all the organization's resources towards a common goal.

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