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Conceptualizing School Improvements Dimension within the Context of School-Based Management

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Abstract: School Based Management has a strong emphasis on local decision making to ensure effective and continuous school improvement. There needs to be a strong focus on improved learning achievements for all students. For this to occur effectively, principals, school committees and supervisor (*pengawas*) need to continuously monitor and evaluate school performance. School Based Management is not an end in itself unless it can help foster an improved school culture, higher-quality decisions directed to improvement and above all, improvements in children's learning

This paper deals with the conceptualizing school improvements dimension within the context of School Based Management. The introductory section of the paper describes the theoretical perspectives and the occasions of the conceptual framework of School-based Management. In addition, it followed by explanation about the key-points of quality improvement in the context of school integrated development. This paper also highlights the role of the principal in successful School Based Management in greater detail. Besides, the significance of the school culture in supporting the school improvement will also be presented. Finally it briefly explains the method and approach as well as the strategy to implement the plan of school integrated development.

Keywords: School, Management, Improvement, Effective, Autonomy, Development

1. Introduction

The reform that occurred in Indonesia in 1997 has influenced the move to autonomy in a range of national fields including education. *Undang-undang* (National Law) No 22 year 1999 gives districts the authority to organize their requirements including education. Educational autonomy is not only at district level but continued further down to give autonomy to each school to administer its own educational activities (Hadi, 2001; Suwandi, 2001; Smeru, 2001; Usman, 2001).

At the school level, education autonomy is implemented through the School Based Management program (Jalal, 2004, Bandur, 2012). Schools and their communities have the authority in decision making related to educational management in their school. School Based Management aims to improve community participation and active involvement in enhancing the quality, efficiency and equal opportunity of access to education. With this participation and sense of ownership, the school, the principal and the teachers will be able to manage the school more effectively (Dimmock, 2013).

The principles of School Based Management implementation include : (a) accountability; (b) transparency; (c) collaboration; (d) bottom-up processes; (e) ownership and (f) participation as well as (g) autonomy. The ability of teachers, principals, and the community to apply School Based Management principles is the key to the success of improving the quality of children's education in their schools (Wohlstetter & Mohrman, 1993; Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003). Finally, and most importantly, through the implementation of School Based Management principles, it is expected that many education outcomes can be significantly improved (Education Human Development Network, 2007)

2. The Concept and Practice of a School-Based Management

School Based Management (SBM) is an alternative form of managing schools where they have broader authority in making decisions within the national education policy framework (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009; World Bank, 2007). Furthermore, the goals of School Based Management are to: (1) improve the quality of education; (2) build the capacity of principals as school leaders and managers; (3) build community participation; (4) build the spirit of achievement in students and teachers across schools; (5) enable decisions to be made at the local level based on local needs and (6) improve the partnership between the family and the school in the education of children as learning occurs at home and at school.

High community participation is a necessary characteristic in School Based Management (Afridi et. al, 2014). Those who are directly involved with students need to have wide access to information. They must have clear views on how to develop education in such a way that children will gain greatest benefit. Continuing development and improvement efforts will place the school as the leader in maintaining ongoing change. This can only be developed through effective school and community based management (Volansky & Friedman, 2003).

The decentralization of education enables the school to have the authority to organize an increased proportion of school management. Over time, increased financial resources will be available to schools. The school has the authority to make important decisions such as the management of the budget, procurement of facilities and recruiting honorary teachers. Schools are well placed to make these decisions with their local knowledge of the needs of their children (Vernez & Karam, 2012). The surrounding community will participate in setting priorities and decision making when, for example, the school building/roof is broken after a rainstorm, or if the school has a lack of teachers. The community can immediately work towards finding solutions.

3. School Improvement and School Integrated Development

School Based Management has a strong emphasis on local decision making to ensure effective and continuous school improvement (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2004). There needs to be a strong focus on improved learning achievements for all students. For this to occur effectively, principals, school committees and *pengawas* (supervisor) need to continuously monitor and evaluate school performance. School Based Management is not an end in itself unless it can help foster an improved school culture, higher-quality decisions directed to improvement and above all, improvements in children's learning.

School Based Management is a potentially valuable tool for engaging the talents and enthusiasm of far more of a school's stakeholders than traditional, top-down governance systems. Moreover it holds the promise of enabling schools to better address students' needs (Elmelegy, 2015).

In striving for school improvement, principals need to play the roles of curriculum leader, facilitator and manager of change (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 1994; Briggs & Wohlstetter 2003). They need to encourage teacher interaction and professional discussion during the regular school day. They need to ensure that teachers talk about and observe teaching practices, maintain higher standards of performance, seek out new ideas, and actively become involved in school-wide issues.

Greater levels of participation by staff and parents, as well as structures that include all stakeholders in the decision-making process, can facilitate improvements in school culture and student outcomes (Coleman, 1994; Mulford & Hogan, 1999; Fullan & Watson, 1999; Leppky, 2007; Australian Council for Educational Research, 2012), through the following strategies:

a) School Improvement through the School Development Plan

The school development plan is the tool that the school uses to focus on improving performance. It forms an integrated planning, monitoring, reporting and review process. It allows a school to develop its own educational plans and priorities. It provides a monitoring and reporting framework to allow a school to check on its progress and, more particularly, to establish whether its objectives are met.

b) School Improvement through Data Analysis

A key tool in effective school improvement is the collection and analysis of data. Data should be discussed within the context of the school and used to develop school improvement strategies. Data should be kept and disaggregated on: (a) student learning; (b) student attendance; (c) student behavior; (d) allocation of financial resources; (f) health and nutrition; (g) progress against minimum service standards; (h) parent and community involvement and (i) parent and community satisfaction with the school. As a matter of course, schools should collect and examine their performance data in all of these areas. School improvement comes from a close examination of data, discussing the key questions that arise, and implementing effective improvement strategies. For example, this chart (figure 1) shows the achievement in the "Format T" tests of students in one school in a particular year.

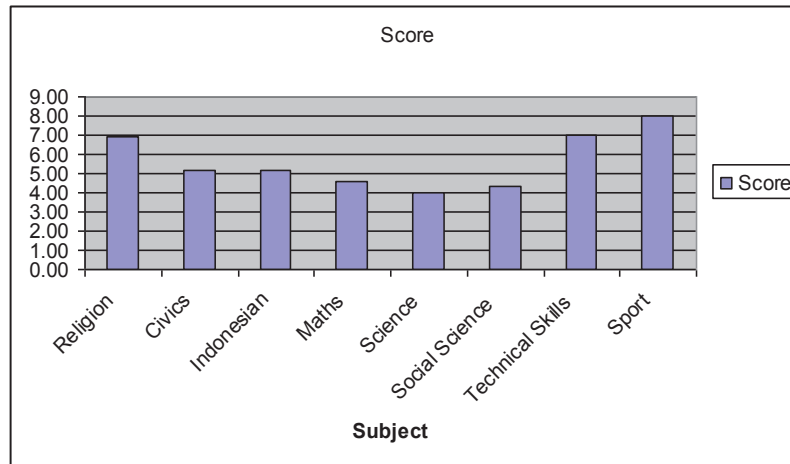


Figure 1. Achievement in the “Format T” tests of students in School X

The data by itself means little until the school examines key questions, identifies issues of concern and develops strategies to address these issues. In this case the questions might include: (1) what factors are contributing to the strong results in Technical Skills and Sport?; (2) what factors are contributing to the low achievements in Mathematics, Science and Social Science?; (3) what is the comparison between the achievements of girls and boys?; (4) what are the teacher skill levels in the subjects that are returning lower results?; (5) is there sufficient equipment available in science?; (6) what teacher professional development has occurred recently? and (7) what additional teacher support and development is needed? Depending on the school’s examination of these and other questions, the school should develop and implement a range of strategies to address concerns. These strategies could include improved professional development, teacher mentoring, additional time devoted to some subjects, and/or purchase of books or equipment. As a second example of data analysis is shown in figure 2. In the chart shows the student enrolment in one school in a particular year.

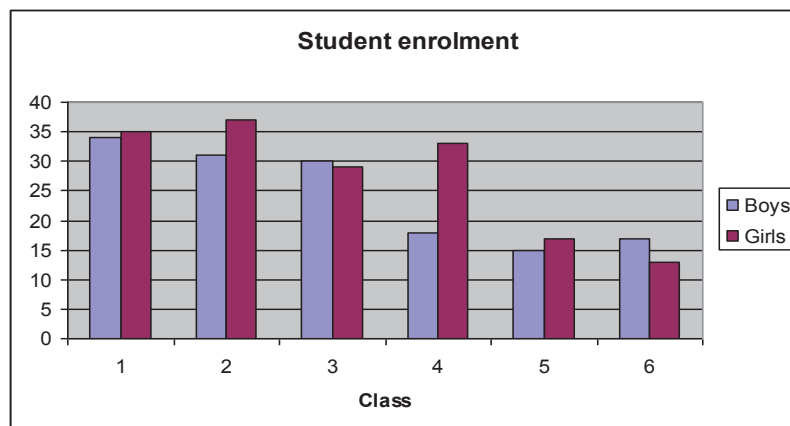


Figure 2. Student enrolments in School X

The data shows that the enrolment of girl's drops significantly from class 4 to class 5 and the enrolment of boys drops significantly from class 3 to class 4. Again, the data by itself means little until the school examines key questions, identifies issues of concern and develops strategies to address these issues. In this case the questions might include: (1) was the initial intake of students low in class one, four and five years earlier?; (2) has the decline occurred since?; (3) why might the girls enrolment drop at the end of class 3?; (4) why might the boys enrolment drop at the end of class 4?; (5) what is the quality of teaching at classes 3 and 4?; (6) is there violence causing students to leave?; (7) is anything occurring in the community to cause students to drop out?; (8) what are students doing when they drop out?

Enrolment data should also be examined over several years to follow trends as student's progress through the school. The strategies to improve enrolment and reduce drop out will depend on the answers to these and other questions. Little improvement will occur without an open and deep examination of the circumstances causing this enrolment drop and implementation of effective strategies developed by the principal, teachers and school committee.

c) School Improvement through Class Organisation

Effective use of teaching resources and classroom organisation can have a significant impact on improving student outcomes. The role of the principal is to carefully review student enrolments, distribution of students across each class level, the number and skill levels of teachers, and available classrooms. It is then important to discuss all options for class arrangements with teachers, taking into account what solution(s) will best meet the needs of students. Consider the following example enrolment pattern in a town school

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6
Numbers	49	27	14	11	12	7
Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1

The school might decide to implement the following arrangement to better meet the needs of class 1 students.

Class	1	1	2	3	4	5/6
Numbers	25	24	27	14	11	19
Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1

Consider the following enrolment pattern in a remote school.

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6
Numbers	10	11	10	12	8	11
Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1

The number of students in each class is very small and it is very difficult to attract enough teachers. The school might decide to implement one of the following arrangements to better meet student needs.

Class	1/2	3/4	5/6
Numbers	21	22	19
Teachers	1	1	1

Class	1	2	3/4	5/6
Numbers	10	11	22	19
Teachers	1	1	1	1

d) Ongoing and Continuous Development

Through the implementation of School Based Management, every school acquires the ability to continuously develop and improve its long-term achievements, both academically and financially. In the academic program, School Based Management empowers the whole school community to increase its academic competency. This is done through: (a) the principal taking on a leadership role in curriculum improvement and positive student behaviour management; (b) the principal taking on a leadership role in developing teachers within the school; (c) professional development of teachers; (d) mentoring for continuous improvement in teaching and (e) teachers learning from each other in regular (weekly) meetings to discuss teaching styles, curriculum content, effective learning methods and problem solving.

Principals play a key role in setting class sizes, class arrangements, monitoring the hours of education children receive, and allocating resources which impact on the learning. This is done through consultation. Schools can seek the support of their *pengawas* (supervisor) to assist improvement. *Pengawas* observe many classrooms and schools and have a wide knowledge of good and poor practice. *Pengawas* can then share with their schools, various improvement ideas gained from their experience and from other *pengawas*, and schools.

School committees are involved in and support their schools. School committees can assist with promoting new ideas in the community. School committees have important and valuable input with decisions on school planning and resources. School development must be quality oriented and provide improved education for all.

Either of these options would free up teachers and rooms. The teachers may then be used to assist students experiencing difficulty, provide team teaching, or provide additional literacy support. However professional support and training will be required for the teacher teaching multi-grade classes for the first time. The distribution of qualified, experienced teachers across classes is also very important. This enables mentoring opportunities.

4. The Role of the Principal in Successful School Based Management

The role of the principal in successful School Based Management involves a significant shift in thinking and approach. The shift is away from principals as supervisors who see their main role as giving instructions (Trail, 2000). The shift is towards the notion of principals as educational, human and visionary leaders in addition to being efficient and effective managers of schools.

The principal must lead the school to develop its values and associated behaviour expectations for students, staff and parents. Furthermore, the principal must then be committed to upholding these values and place student achievement and well-being as the first priority in all decisions.

The principal plays a key role in leading the school community to develop vision, mission, goals and planning. The principal is a key figure in gathering the views of the community and drawing consensus views from stakeholders. These views cover all aspects of school management including teaching, student wellbeing and behaviour, finance and facilities. In addition, the principal is the key leader in improving curriculum, teaching and learning (Briggs & Wohlstetter 2003).

With the move to local school management, decision making patterns of school administration, leadership and management have changed (Bayhaqi, 2004). The table below provides an overview of the changing nature of management and the increased need for leadership. It is a useful basis for schools to discuss their own progress in the evolution of leadership and management in their workplace.

Old Pattern	School Based Management pattern
Principal as a manager	Principal as a leader (and manager)
Centralised	Decentralised
Central decision makers	Local participative decision makers
Bureaucratic approach	Professional approach
Directing	Facilitating
Being controlled and organised	Self motivation
Avoiding risks	Managing risks
Using all funds, in accordance with broad system priorities	Using funds as required and as efficiently as possible in accordance with locally determined priorities within broad system priorities
Information centred on the authorized parties	Information available for all of the community

Source: School Based Management Handbook (NTTPEP, 2007)

In School Based Management, the emphasis is on the local community and the school taking greater responsibility for teaching and educational decisions, management, budgeting and communication with

all stakeholders (Agustinus, 2008). Contextually, the School Based Management can be implemented successfully when: (1) the fundamental goal of the school is better education for students; (2) there is collaboration at the local level to improve the quality of education; (3) there is support from everyone in the school and the local community; (4) schools work towards improvement; (5) schools use a wide range of modern and innovative teaching methods; (6) schools develop all children’s potential, by considering the individual learning differences of each child, and in particular, the individual learning differences between boys and girls; (7) there is support from the school social environment, including school and community resources, to achieve targets; (8) processes of planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting of school programs and school management involve the school community; (9) informal education is implemented at home and (10) education is also implemented through art studios, apprenticeships, extra curricular activities, seminars, etc (Kelehear, 2006).

5. School Leadership, School Management and School Culture

Management is completing the organizational tasks that make the school run well. Leadership is developing a school that values and improves the learning, well-being and capacity of students, teachers and the community (Duignan & Bezzina, 2006). The role of the principal swings between management and leadership and both are necessary. Good management is important for effective school operation. Good leadership improves harmony, student results and improved teaching. It is important for principals to develop and use a wide range of different styles of leadership to suite different circumstances and needs (Leithwood, et. al, 2004). Effective management is needed to run a *good* school but it is not enough to produce a *great* school.

Principal Role	School Management	School Leadership
Areas of Importance	Necessary but not sufficient	Vital for school improvement
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School budget • School maintenance • Inventory of school material resources • Completing forms and reports • Data gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting on and establishing the school priorities • Reviewing what the data means to develop improvement strategies • Ensuring a transparent approach to school management • Means of and purposes for student assessment
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class organization • Purchase of classroom materials • School instruction hours • Extra curricular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methods • Developing classroom management policies and practices • Attendance • Improved curriculum

	activities	
Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher materials and equipment • Teacher accommodation • Election of school committee • Election of student leaders • Teaching loads and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local curriculum needs • Establishing school values • Ensuring behaviours are based on school values • Developing student behaviour management policies and practices • Teacher mentoring and sharing of good methods • Teacher sharing of areas where they need help to improve • Discussion of student needs • Dealing with gender and children's rights
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising school committee meetings • Completing the school development plan • Training the school committee in effective meetings • Training school committee executive in their roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and mission • Being accountable to the community • Seeking community input • Building good relationships • Mentoring the school staff and community in what constitutes sound teaching • Maintaining confidentiality

Source: School Based Management Handbook (NTTPEP, 2007)

School Based Management places increased expectations on the principal to be a leader in addition to completing necessary management roles. No longer is it sufficient for principals to neglect leadership and fill the school day with management tasks. The principal has an important role in curriculum leadership.

Curriculum leadership in schools involves: (1) implementing the national curriculum to deliver the competencies, outcomes and indicators; (2) including local culture in learning and teaching; (3) developing the teaching skills of teachers; (4) ensuring that teachers use a range of methods of teaching to meet the needs of students who learn in different ways; (5) ensuring that teachers are engaged in professional development to improve their teaching; (6) ensuring that teachers are meeting with each other to plan their teaching, share their resources and discuss improvements in teaching methods and

student assessment; (7) supporting teachers to gather and use student data to focus teaching on the individual needs of students; (8) developing improved student behaviour management; (9) monitoring student achievement data and attendance data and developing methods to address problems in these areas through consulting with parents, teachers and the community; (10) involving community members in student learning where they have particular knowledge and skills and (11) overcoming inequalities imposed by the “hidden curriculum” (eg. gender bias).

Curriculum leadership is also closely related to the school’s and school committee’s strategy of determining teaching materials for students. The content of the national curriculum will be much more relevant and meaningful if it is linked to the local culture, environment and social life.

In developing School Culture within context of School-Based Management is need to be considered that school culture is the basis for interaction between all members of the school organisation (Maslowski, 2001). This includes : (1) values (beliefs, honesty, and transparency) and (2) norms (regulations and behaviours that prevail and are agreed by all members of the organization). The school culture also requires common views on how students learn, how student behaviour is managed and how members of the school community - students, teachers, principal, parents and school committee - respect each other (Stoll, 1998).

A positive school culture arises from good relationships between the principal and teachers, teachers and teachers, teachers and students, student and students, and between all of these groups and the school community. This becomes a school characteristic that positively influences the teaching and learning process at school (Bray, 2007). The principal has a key role in developing a positive school culture. This is done through discussion with the teachers and school community, through modeling positive values and behaviour and by having individual discussions with teachers who show unacceptable behaviour.

6. School Development Planning

The primary objective of all schools is to provide an excellent education to every student. Research tells us that effective schools need a shared purpose, values that help people work together, and a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve. Strategic planning is a process that can help schools set direction for their school and monitor achievement of the school’s goals and targets flowing from that direction. Strategic planning identifies strengths and challenges to help build strategies to ensure the provision of high quality educational programs for young people into the future. A strategic plan is the road map describing how to move towards achievement of longer term outcomes. The School Development Plan is a ‘compass’ and guide for all parties regarding the direction the school will be developed. Without a School Development Plan there is no continuity of the school’s annual activity plan from year to year (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2012). Some kabupaten make decisions on the allocation of major facilities grants to schools and other discretionary grants based upon goals in the the school development plan.

The quality of a plan is measured by its applicability in school daily management. Sometimes things might change and adjustment actions are unavoidable. A limited authority can be given to the principal, teachers and school committee to make needed adjustments. All the changes made should be reported in

school committee meetings to avoid misunderstandings and problems. Support for the School Development Plan depends upon accurate and detailed information being provided to all school members - teachers, students, school committee, parents and the community. Information can be provided through school displays, community meetings and school committee reports. The school is accountable for ensuring that its activities contribute to achieving the school vision mission and goals. The school is also made accountable by providing reports to the school committee and community (Jenni, 1991). This also includes financial reports. The role of community participation through the school committee becomes a key factor in developing the school plan, starting from the concept stage and continuing through to the final accountability stages. Under School Based Management, schools can over-see major building works in an efficient manner that enables greater value-for-money.

7. Concluding Remarks

The process of educational decentralization in Indonesia delegates some of the authority in education to regions to make decisions about budget allocation, development, school location, teacher recruitment, principal selection and appointment, teacher training, and local curriculum determination. Decentralization of schooling is a complex process, which can bring significant change to school systems, empowering schools to make policies; gain resources; spend the budget; develop teacher training; provide teacher professional development and develop curriculum. School Based Management has a strong emphasis on local decision making to ensure effective and continuous school improvement. There needs to be a strong focus on improved learning achievements for all students. For this to occur effectively, principals, school committees and pengawas need to continuously monitor and evaluate school performance. School Based Management is not an end in itself unless it can help foster an improved school culture, higher-quality decisions directed to improvement and above all, improvements in children's learning. School Based Management is a potentially valuable tool for engaging the talents and enthusiasm of far more of a school's stakeholders than traditional, top-down governance systems. Moreover it holds the promise of enabling schools to better address students' needs.

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