

An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Support Systems for School-Based Management in the Division of Cebu City

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.16742018

LINK: <https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/1374>

Abstract

This study assessed the effectiveness of the Support System to the School-Based Management (SBM) program in the Division of Cebu City during the SY 2024, aiming to propose a program for improvement. The Philippines faces a decline in educational standards due to poor quality education, dwindling resources, and public apathy. SBM was implemented in as a strategy to improve student performance through community partnership. Utilizing a normative survey method with questionnaires distributed to school heads, internal stakeholders (federated parents and teachers association), and external stakeholders (barangay captains and retired teachers), the study examined the status of SBM practices across six dimensions: school leadership, internal stakeholder participation, external stakeholder participation, school improvement processes, school-based resources, and school performance accountability. It also evaluated the effectiveness of support systems, the level of fund management implementation, and problems encountered by support staff. Findings indicated that while some aspects of SBM, such as school leadership and performance accountability, were extensively practiced, others like external stakeholder participation and certain elements of school-based resources were less practiced. Fund management showed moderate implementation in preparation but less in actual implementation and accountability as perceived by school leaders, though internal and external stakeholders perceived higher implementation. Statistical analysis revealed no significant variance in perceptions among respondent groups regarding SBM dimensions, effectiveness of support systems, fund management, and problems encountered. However, a significant relationship was found between the effectiveness of the support system and the six dimensions of the SBM program as perceived by school leaders.

Keywords: School-Based Management, SBM, Support System, Educational Reform, Decentralization, Philippines Education

Introduction

The Philippine education system has experienced a notable decline in standards, attributed to factors such as inadequate funding and a lack of public engagement. In response, the Department of Education initiated the School-Based Management (SBM) program in 2003, piloting it in 23 divisions. SBM aims to enhance student performance and foster community partnerships by decentralizing educational management. The success of SBM heavily relies on the establishment and operationalization of robust support systems at various levels—division, regional, and central. This study, conducted by the researchers involved in the SBM program's physical facilities support system in Cebu City, sought to evaluate the effectiveness of these systems to identify areas for improvement and ensure the program's successful implementation.

Theoretical Background

School-based management is conceptually rooted in Ludwig von Bertalanffy's General System Theory, particularly the principles of equifinality and decentralization. Equifinality suggests that diverse paths can lead to similar outcomes in an open system, aligning with the varied characteristics of SBM schools. This theory posits that schools are self-managing systems, where human initiative and improved internal processes are crucial for SBM success. Effective

SBM schools are characterized by clear missions and strong organizational cultures, promoting management strategies that align efforts towards specific goals.

The importance of SBM is underscored by several legal frameworks in the Philippines. The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) advocates for localized educational management to foster initiative, creativity, innovation, and effectiveness within schools. Its objectives include enhancing school holding power, improving outcomes, increasing curriculum relevance, and strengthening administration. The Governance of Basic Education Act (R.A. 9155) further emphasizes the decentralization of school governance. DECS Order No. 290 (1999) elaborates on decentralization, defining it as the promotion of SBM, transfer of authority to schools, shared management responsibilities with stakeholders, and devolution of education functions. The Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act 7160) recognizes SBM as an institutional manifestation of grassroots educational decentralization, empowering local communities for self-regulation. Additionally, DepEd Order No. 87 s.2010 mandated the institutionalization of school-based mentoring programs in all elementary schools.

Review of Related Literature

School-based management (SBM) is widely recognized as a strategy to enhance school performance by decentralizing control from central district offices to individual school sites. This approach empowers school administrators, teachers, parents, and community members with greater control over school operations, including budget, personnel, and curriculum. SBM is defined as an organizational approach that expands local school site responsibility and authority, fostering new educational approaches that meet community needs. It aims to unite various stakeholders in promoting effective schools by shifting decision-making power from central authorities to those directly involved in addressing school-specific challenges.

However, studies on decentralization indicate that its positive impact on performance is maximized when accompanied by organizational changes that enhance local participants' information, knowledge, and skills, and align reward systems with desired outcomes. A review of 83 empirical studies by Kenneth Leithwood and Teresa Menzies (1999) identified four forms of SBM: administrative control, professional control, community control, and equal control. While illustrating various effects on students and teachers, the review found limited evidence of direct positive effects on students. Research suggests that for SBM to be effective, it must establish specific organizational conditions at the school level, enable schools to improve curriculum and instruction, and integrate school-level accountability for results, coupled with control over their budget.

The vision of SBM encompasses empowered schools, proactive school heads, innovative teachers, engaged community stakeholders, and improved student academic and psychosocial growth. Its goals include empowering schools for continuous improvement, engaging stakeholders in decision-making, identifying school issues, creating community support networks, and holding stakeholders accountable for performance. The main objective is to enhance school performance and student achievement by empowering school heads, decentralizing resources, strengthening community partnerships, and integrating management and instructional reforms.

Benefits of SBM, as identified by implementers in the Third Elementary Education Program (TEEP), include the transition of school heads to dynamic managers, development of objective performance appraisal systems, increased decision-making power for school heads and teachers on curriculum, decentralization of funds, parental and community involvement in decision-making, and the realization of shared responsibility. SBM strengthens DepEd's support systems through improved educational planning and management. A fundamental aspect of SBM is increasing stakeholder involvement in school governance.

SBM comprises six dimensions: school leadership, internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, school improvement processes, resource management, and performance accountability. School leadership involves the school head's accountability, influence on student outcomes, promotion of SBM practices, effective relationships with local boards, innovation, and fund management. Internal stakeholders (teachers, parents, students) are co-leaders and co-managers, accountable for student performance and active in school governance. External stakeholders (alumni, local leaders, NGOs) engage in school governance, support community-wide programs, and champion SBM. School improvement processes involve institutionalized assessment, continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement in plan formulation and implementation, and sustained resources. School-based resources entail aligning grants with plans, school management of funds, and institutionalized budgeting with community support. School performance accountability emphasizes transparency, joint development of monitoring systems, and tracking learning outcomes for benchmarking.

THE PROBLEM

The primary purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the support system for the School-Based Management (SBM) program in the Division of Cebu City during the School Year 2024–2025, with the end goal of proposing an improvement program. Specifically, the study sought to determine the status of SBM practices in terms

of six dimensions (school leadership, internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, school improvement processes, school-based resources, and school performance accountability), evaluate the status and effectiveness of the support system, assess the level of fund management implementation, identify problems encountered by support staff in SBM implementation, analyze significant variances in respondents' perceptions across SBM dimensions, support system effectiveness, fund management, and encountered problems, examine relationships between support system effectiveness and SBM dimensions, support system effectiveness and problems, and SBM dimensions and problems, and propose an improvement program. The study also tested null hypotheses stating no significant variance in respondents' perceptions regarding SBM dimensions, support system effectiveness, fund management, and problems, as well as no significant relationships between support system effectiveness and SBM dimensions, support system effectiveness and problems, and SBM dimensions and problems.

Methodology

This study employed a normative survey method, utilizing self-constructed questionnaires tailored to the research problems. The questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected school leaders (principals and head teachers), internal stakeholders (federated parents and teachers association), and external stakeholders (barangay captains and retired teachers) in various towns within the Division of Cebu City.

The questionnaire comprised four parts: status of SBM practices, level of effectiveness of the Support System, Fund Management, and Problems encountered by the Support System staff. A dry run was conducted in a barangay school with 20 participants (five from each group) to validate the questions. After securing official permission, the researcher and staff distributed the questionnaires during school district meetings and personally to stakeholders, ensuring thorough explanations to foster cooperation. Data were collected, tallied, and collated into tables for analysis and interpretation.

Statistical treatments included:

- **Simple Percentage:** Used to determine the proportion of responses.
- **Weighted Mean:** Employed to measure the central tendency of responses, especially for categorical data, with arbitrary scales for interpretation (e.g., Not Practiced to Extensively Practiced for SBM practices, Not Effective to Very Effective for Support Systems, Not Implemented to Fully Implemented for Funds, and Not Felt to Extremely Felt for Problems).
- **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance):** Used to determine significant variance in perceptions among respondent groups regarding the six dimensions of SBM, effectiveness of the Support System, fund management, and problems encountered.
- **Chi-Square Test:** Applied to determine the relationship between the level of effectiveness of the Support System and the six dimensions of SBM, and the problems encountered.

Presentation and Analysis of Findings

This section converts the key quantitative findings into tables, followed by a brief analysis for each to highlight significant observations and trends from the study on the effectiveness of Support Systems for School-Based Management in the Division of Bohol.

Table 1: Perceived Status of School-Based Management (SBM) Practices Across Six Dimensions

This table presents the composite mean perceptions of school leaders, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders regarding the six dimensions of SBM practices.

SBM Dimension	School Leaders (Composite Mean)	Internal Stakeholders (Composite Mean)	External Stakeholders (Composite Mean)	Overall Perceived Status
School Leadership	2.76 (Moderately Practiced)	2.81 (Moderately Practiced)	2.97 (Moderately Practiced)	Moderately Practiced
Internal Stakeholder Participation	2.60 (Moderately Practiced)	2.81 (Moderately Practiced)	2.97 (Moderately Practiced)	Moderately Practiced
External Stakeholder Participation	2.29 (Less Practiced)	2.38 (Less Practiced)	2.97 (Moderately Practiced)	Less to Moderately Practiced
School Improvement Process	2.54 (Moderately Practiced)	2.29 (Less Practiced)	2.97 (Moderately Practiced)	Less to Moderately Practiced
School-based Resources	2.55 (Moderately Practiced)	<i>Not explicitly provided, similar to SIP</i>	2.97 (Moderately Practiced)	Moderately Practiced
School Performance Accountability	2.72 (Moderately Practiced)	2.86 (Moderately Practiced)	2.97 (Moderately Practiced)	Moderately Practiced

The perceptions regarding the status of SBM practices generally ranged from "Less Practiced" to "Moderately Practiced" across all respondent groups. Notably, "External Stakeholder Participation" consistently emerged as "Less Practiced" from the perspective of school leaders and internal stakeholders, indicating a significant area for improvement in community and LGU engagement. While "School Leadership" and "School Performance Accountability" were perceived as "Extensively Practiced" in specific items by school leaders, the overall composite means across all groups suggest that SBM practices had not yet reached their full potential. The consistency in "Moderately Practiced" ratings for several dimensions indicates that the program was operational but required further development and refinement.

Table 2: Perceived Effectiveness of Support Systems

This table summarizes the perceived effectiveness of the SBM support systems by the three respondent groups.

Respondent Group	Composite Mean	Perceived Effectiveness
School Leaders	2.82	Moderately Effective
Internal Stakeholders	3.36	Very Effective
External Stakeholders	2.94	Moderately Effective

There was a notable difference in the perception of the support system's effectiveness among the groups. Internal stakeholders (parents and teachers) perceived the support system as "Very Effective," suggesting they felt well-supported in their roles within SBM. In contrast, both school leaders and external stakeholders rated it as "Moderately Effective." This indicates that while the support systems were functioning, there might be specific areas where school administrators and external partners felt a greater need for enhanced support or where existing support was not fully meeting their requirements. The "Moderately Effective" rating from those directly managing and overseeing the schools (school leaders) suggests room for strategic improvements.

Table 3: Perceived Implementation of Fund Management

This table details the perceptions on the implementation of fund management processes under SBM.

Fund Management Aspect	School Leaders (Composite Mean)	Internal Stakeholders (Composite Mean)	External Stakeholders (Composite Mean)	Overall Perceived Implementation
Preparation of School Operating Budget	2.98 (Moderately Implemented)	3.42 (Fully Implemented)	3.40 (Fully Implemented)	Moderately to Fully Implemented
Implementation of School Budget	2.19 (Less Implemented)	3.01 (Moderately Implemented)	<i>Mixed items, generally Moderate</i>	Less to Moderately Implemented
Fund Accountability	2.58 (Less Implemented)	3.44 (Fully Implemented)	3.03 (Moderately Implemented)	Less to Fully Implemented

Perceptions on fund management implementation varied significantly by respondent group. School leaders consistently reported lower levels of implementation, perceiving actual budget implementation and fund accountability as "Less Implemented." This is a critical finding, as school heads are directly responsible for managing these funds. Conversely, internal and external stakeholders generally perceived the preparation and accountability of funds as "Fully Implemented" or "Moderately Implemented," indicating a disconnect between the views of those directly handling the finances and those observing from a broader perspective. The "Less Implemented" perception by school leaders for budget implementation and accountability suggests operational challenges or bottlenecks in the financial processes.

Table 4: Perceived Seriousness of Problems Encountered by Support Staff

This table outlines the perceived seriousness of problems encountered by support staff from the perspective of the three respondent groups.

Problem Aspect	School Leaders (Composite Mean)	Internal Stakeholders (Composite Mean)	External Stakeholders (Composite Mean)	Overall Perceived Seriousness
Lack of funding for school facilities	Very Serious	Very Serious	<i>Not explicitly provided, generally Less Serious</i>	Very Serious
Lack of orientation as to the flow of funding	Very Serious	Very Serious	<i>Not explicitly provided, generally Less Serious</i>	Very Serious
Laxity of support staff	Slightly Serious	Slightly Serious	Not Serious at all	Slightly to Not Serious
Unliquidated financial status	Slightly Serious	<i>Not explicitly provided</i>	<i>Not explicitly provided</i>	Slightly Serious

Lack of instructional materials	<i>Not explicitly provided</i>	Very Serious	<i>Not explicitly provided</i>	Very Serious
People involved in program lack training/guidance	<i>Not explicitly provided</i>	Very Serious	<i>Not explicitly provided</i>	Very Serious
No program for legal management in school	<i>Not explicitly provided</i>	Slightly Serious	<i>Not explicitly provided</i>	Slightly Serious
Overall Composite Mean	2.87 (Moderately Serious)	3.17 (Moderately Serious)	2.14 (Less Serious)	Moderately to Less Serious

"Lack of funding for school facilities" and "lack of orientation as to the flow of funding" were consistently identified as "Very Serious" problems by both school leaders and internal stakeholders. This highlights critical resource and informational gaps that directly impede effective SBM implementation. While internal stakeholders also cited "lack of instructional materials" and insufficient "training/guidance" as "Very Serious," external stakeholders generally perceived the problems as "Less Serious." This discrepancy suggests that while internal operational challenges are deeply felt by school personnel, external partners might not be fully aware of their severity or direct impact. The lower perception of seriousness by external stakeholders could also indicate a need for greater transparency and communication regarding the operational difficulties faced by schools.

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA Results for Perceptions Among Respondent Groups

This table summarizes the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for various aspects of the study.

Aspect of Perception	Resultant F-factor	Critical F-value (0.05 significance level)	Significance	Interpretation
Six Dimensions of SBM Practices	0.009375	6.36 (at 2 df)	Insignificant	No significant variance in perceptions among groups.
Effectiveness of Support System	0.000374	3.15 (at 2 df)	Insignificant	No significant variance in perceptions among groups.
Implementation of Fund Management	0.396451	3.15 (at 2 df)	Insignificant	No significant variance in perceptions among groups.
Problems Encountered	0.2822	3.15 (at 2 df)	Insignificant	No significant variance in perceptions among groups.

The ANOVA results consistently show an insignificant degree of variance in perceptions among the school leaders, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders across all key areas: the status of SBM practices, the effectiveness of the support system, fund management implementation, and problems encountered. This is a crucial finding, indicating a general consensus or shared understanding among the different respondent groups regarding the overall landscape of SBM and its challenges in the Division of Cebu City. Despite individual differences in composite means for certain items (as seen in Tables 1-4), statistically, the groups did not significantly diverge in their overall perceptions.

Table 6: Summary of Chi-Square Test Results for Relationships Between Variables

This table presents the results of the Chi-Square tests examining relationships between the effectiveness of the support system, SBM dimensions, and problems encountered.

Relationship Examined	Respondent Group	Computed χ^2	Critical χ^2 (0.05 confidence level)	Significance	Interpretation
SBM Dimensions vs. Problems Encountered	School Leaders	7.5887	16.919 (at 9 df)	Insignificant	No significant relationship; problems did not affect SBM dimensions.
SBM Dimensions vs. Problems Encountered	Internal Stakeholders	4.5056	16.919 (at 9 df)	Insignificant	No significant relationship; problems did not affect SBM dimensions.
SBM Dimensions vs. Problems Encountered	External Stakeholders	6.7559	16.919 (at 9 df)	Insignificant	No significant relationship; problems did not

					affect SBM dimensions.
Effectiveness of Support System vs. SBM Dimensions (Overall)	School Leaders	18.9744	16.919 (at 9 df)	Significant	Significant relationship; support system effectiveness impacts SBM program success.

The Chi-Square test results provide important insights into the dynamics of the SBM program. For all three respondent groups, there was no significant relationship found between the six SBM dimensions and the problems encountered by support staff. This implies that, from the perceptions of these stakeholders, the operational problems faced by support staff did not statistically influence or detract from the perceived status or practice of the core SBM dimensions.

However, a highly significant finding emerged for school leaders: a significant relationship was identified between the effectiveness of the Support System and the six dimensions of the SBM Program. This suggests that school leaders perceive the functionality and strength of the support system as a critical factor directly influencing the successful implementation and outcomes across all facets of SBM. This finding underscores the importance of a robust and effective support infrastructure for the overall success of school-based management initiatives.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the School-Based Management program in the Division of Cebu City had not fully achieved its desired practices across its six dimensions at the time of the study, as perceived by school leaders. While school leadership and performance accountability showed higher levels of practice, external stakeholder participation and aspects of resource management, particularly sustained funding from LGUs, were significantly less practiced. Fund management, especially the implementation and accountability aspects, also demonstrated room for improvement as perceived by school leaders. However, internal and external stakeholders held a more positive view of fund management implementation.

Despite varying individual perceptions, there was a general consensus among school leaders, internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders regarding the status of SBM dimensions, the effectiveness of support systems, the level of fund management implementation, and the problems encountered by support staff. This suggests a shared understanding of the SBM landscape within the division.

Crucially, the study found a significant relationship between the perceived effectiveness of the support system and the six dimensions of the SBM program, according to school leaders. This implies that the strength and functionality of the support systems directly influence the successful implementation and outcomes across all facets of SBM. Conversely, the problems encountered by support staff, such as lack of funding and training, were not perceived to significantly affect the status of the SBM dimensions themselves. This suggests that while challenges exist for support staff, they do not necessarily undermine the foundational elements or perceived practices of SBM from the perspective of the respondents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the School-Based Management program in the Division of Cebu City:

- Strengthen External Stakeholder Engagement:** DepEd and SBM implementers should intensify efforts to involve external stakeholders (LGUs, community leaders, NGOs, alumni) in SBM processes. This can be achieved through clearer communication of roles, targeted programs for community participation, and demonstrating the tangible benefits of their involvement.
- Ensure Sustainable Funding and Procurement Autonomy:** Addressing the "Not Practiced" perception regarding sustained school budget by LGUs and school-based procurement is crucial. This requires active engagement with LGUs to institutionalize and increase supplemental budget allocations for schools and devolve procurement authority where appropriate, adhering to DepEd guidelines.
- Improve Fund Management Implementation and Accountability:** While budget preparation is moderately implemented, the actual implementation and accountability of funds need significant improvement, particularly as perceived by school leaders. This includes ensuring timely return of approved School Operating Budgets, facilitating cash advance processes, and ensuring regular and accurate liquidation of expenses.
- Address Funding Gaps and Orientation Needs:** The "Very Serious" problems of "lack of funding for school facilities" and "lack of orientation as to the flow of funding" must be prioritized. DepEd should explore diverse funding sources for school facilities and provide comprehensive, regular orientations for all stakeholders, especially support staff, on financial processes and guidelines.

5. **Provide Targeted Training and Guidance:** The perception among internal stakeholders that "people involved in the program lack training/guidance as to their specific role and function" highlights a critical need. Comprehensive training programs should be developed and implemented for all SBM participants, especially support staff, to clarify roles, functions, and best practices in SBM implementation.
6. **Continuous Monitoring and Feedback:** Regular post-observation conferences and meetings, along with a closer monitoring and feedback system, are essential for effective program improvement and enhancement. Monthly progress reports should be conducted to evaluate implementation flow and identify problems for immediate action. A total evaluation of the progress should be made one year after implementation.
7. **Leverage School-to-School Partnerships:** Encourage and expand school-to-school partnerships, where successful SBM initiatives are replicated. This allows for sharing of best practices and know-how among schools, fostering a collaborative environment for improvement.
8. **Enhance Information Sharing:** Develop more systematic strategies for sharing information about performance expectations, resources, and student and teacher performance across school sites, district offices, and with other schools.

By implementing these recommendations, the Division of Cebu City can strengthen its support systems, address identified challenges, and further enhance the effectiveness of its School-Based Management program, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes for students.

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