

School-Based Management: Challenges Hindering Improvement of School's Level of Practice

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Abstract: This paper presents an overview on the school-based management and its challenges hindering improvement of school's level of practice.

Keywords: School-based management, SBM level of practice.

1. Context and Rationale

The Philippine Constitution states that the government must preserve and promote all citizens' right to quality education at all levels, as well as take reasonable actions to make such education available to everyone (Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution). To fulfill the Education for All (EFA) goal, the Department of Education pursued policy reforms under the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) in 2015. School-based management is BESRA's Key Reform Thrust 1 (KRT1) (SBM). SBM allows important stakeholders in school communities to actively participate in continuous school improvement. It is possible to achieve improved student learning outcomes through this empowerment.

The Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, Republic Act No. 9155, places a premium on the school principal's power, accountability, and responsibility, which is in line with the law, national educational programs, plans, and standards. The school heads are responsible for establishing the school's mission, vision, goals, and objectives, as well as providing an environment conducive to teaching and learning, implementing, monitoring, and assessing the school curriculum, and being accountable for higher outcomes, among other things.

While there are many problems in the field of education that seem to be recurring across the country, there are still specific concerns in one school that need to be handled immediately. In times like these, the Department of Education introduced School-Based Management, which decentralized decision-making from central and regional offices to school offices, allowing school administrators and heads to focus on the difficulties that were unique to their schools. School heads are given more power and responsibility over what happened and will happen in their schools.

Every educational institution's School Based Management (SBM) best reflects achieving quality learning outcomes. As a result, schools are encouraged to come up with new approaches

to improve their SBM level of practice by including both internal and external stakeholders through their efforts on the shared governance idea. With this, technical assistance is provided to further elevate the four SBM principles in the City Schools Division of Tanauan. However, despite the provision of technical assistance, the SBM evaluation revealed that there are still some challenges and bottlenecks that the schools need to address. For three consecutive years now, none among the schools has been qualified for the Regional Office's SBM level 3 validation. It is in this reason that this study is proposed with the hope of identifying how the Schools Division Office through the School Governance and Operations Division (SGOD) could help the schools in improving their level of practice.

2. Review of Related Literature

School-based Management was officially rolled out by the Department of Education in all public schools in 2012 though it has been existing for several decades in the educational systems of other countries such as Australia, United States, Indonesia and others (Leroy, 2013). One of its goals is improving outcomes of learning by getting all schools to continuously improve. That is, management framework must look into the specific needs of the pupils and the community. However, there are challenges being encountered in the implementation of SBM which hinder schools from improving. Prash, 2019 identified some of the problems that SBM stakeholders encountered. These include more work for internal and external stakeholders, less efficiency, uneven school performance, increased need for staff development, confusion about new roles and responsibilities, and coordination difficulties. Other barriers that schools experienced include lack of knowledge by stakeholders of what SBM is and how it works; lack of decision-making skills, communication, trust among stakeholders, and teachers' time involvement; and the reluctance of some administrators and teachers to allow others to take over decision-making authority (Prash, 2019).

A study conducted by Bala (2017) on challenges encountered by SBM committee in the North West Zone of Nigeria include refusal of the members to attend meetings, lack of proper communication and lack of members' commitment. These findings coincide with Adediran's (2010) who found the same

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challenges in addition to the poor motivation among SBM committee members.

Another study by Kiragu et al (2013) revealed that 50% of the respondents agreed that SBM led increased workload for the teachers and other stakeholders. Specific challenges include lack of commitment, inadequate personnel, lack of accountability and transparency, conflict among stakeholders, delays in making decisions, lack of clear demarcation of duties, lack of cooperation from stakeholders, conflict of interest, lack of competent school administrators as well as lack of goodwill.

Prevailing and dominant problem is the low capacity of SBM members as identified by Ayeni and Ibukun (2013), Pushpanadman (2018), and Kingi (2015).

Other researchers such as Gamage and Sooksomchitra (2014) Maksymjuk (2016), Schlegel (2017) found in their studies other challenges including poor resources in schools, lack of professional development on leadership for school leaders to implement SBM, confusion on the part of school councils concerning new roles and responsibilities, difficulties of coordination, and low parental participation.

The Researcher will look into the case of the 59 schools in the City Schools Division of Tanauan if the findings of other researchers are also prevailing here.

3. Action Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to identify the challenges being encountered by each school in the implementation of school-based management (SBM) in the 59 public schools in the City Schools Division of Tanauan. Specifically, it aims to:

- 1) Determine the level of practice of the different schools on school-based management (SBM), in terms of the four principles (leadership and governance, curriculum and learning, accountability and continuous improvement and management of resources);
- 2) Determine the level of practice of the different schools in terms of performance improvement (access, efficiency and quality);
- 3) Identify other factors affecting the school's level of practice;
- 4) What intervention could be proposed to improve the school's level of practice?

4. Action Research Methods

A. Participants

The 59 School Heads from the public schools of SDO Tanauan City were the participants of this study. It is composed of 43 elementary schools and 16 secondary schools.

B. Data Gathering Methods

The results of the SBM evaluation for school year 2020-2021 were tabulated and consolidated to determine the level of practice of the different schools in terms of the four principles as well as the learning outcomes which included access, efficiency and quality. A self-designed and structured questionnaire on factors affecting school's level of practice was used to collect the needed information such as

factors/challenges being encountered by the school heads in terms of improving the SBM level of practice. The questionnaire was divided into Part 1 and Part 2. Part 1 included information of the respondents such as name, gender, years of experience as school head, and the name of school. Part 2 consisted of different possible factors/challenges affecting improvement in the school's SBM level of practice. Respondents put a check mark on the factors/challenges that hinder improvement on the level of practice being experienced by their schools. They were also asked to add more factors/challenges being experienced in school which were not found in the questionnaire.

C. Data Analysis

Data gathered in the course of this study were analyzed using tabulation of the frequency and percentages of the responses. Weighted mean was used and qualitative data were consolidated for interpretation of results.

5. Results and Discussion

The findings which cover the results and discussions of this paper are presented in accordance with the research questions.

- 1) The level of practice of the different schools on school-based management (SBM) in terms of the four principles: (i) leadership and governance; (ii) curriculum and learning; (iii) accountability and continuous improvement; and (iv) management of resources are presented on the following figures.

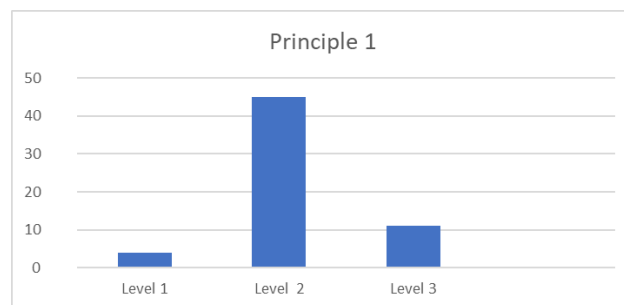


Fig. 1. Leadership and Governance

The figure above shows the level of practice of different schools in the first principle. Four schools or 7% of the sixty schools (Ulango ES and Ulango JHS have separate SBM documentation) are in "good" practice, forty-five or 75% demonstrated "better" practice while Eleven schools or 18% illustrated "best" practice.

The four schools that are still in level 1 in terms of leadership and governance do not have these documents: approved monitoring tool, accomplishment report of the implemented PPAs, PPAs monitoring report, updated and accurate transparency board, designation order with terms of reference, consolidation and analysis of the evaluation results from feedback and M&E results with proposed solutions /interventions and minutes of the meeting (discussing feedback /results and proposed solutions).

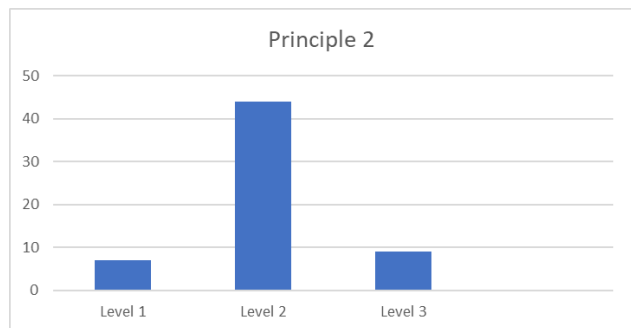


Fig. 2. Curriculum and Instruction

Figure 2 reveals seven schools or 12% in level 1, forty-four schools or 73% in level 2 and nine schools or 15% in level 3. Lack of the following documents were the main reasons of schools for not making it to level 2 or level 3: evaluated instructional materials, documented teaching and learning activities provided, contextualized intervention programs, school-based monitoring results on learning outcomes, record of continuous and shared practices in the community to improve teaching and learning activities, assessment tool/feedback of pupils, teachers and parents, resource gaps analysis, updated inventory of LMs with analysis, project proposal on intervention material used, parental involvement in the production of innovative needs-based learning resources, evaluation and monitoring results basis for action research, development needs plan of diverse learners, CI projects, action research on reported results and interventions, development needs plan of diverse learners, copy of school action plan per learning area, sample of differentiated quarter assessment test strategies, rubrics for differentiated instructions, records on intervention on the findings of test results and other forms of assessment, registry of alternative differentiated assessment strategies and documented partnership activities on improving assessment system design.

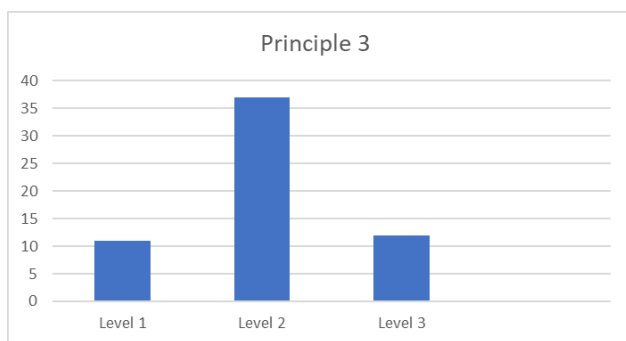


Fig. 3. Accountability and Continuous Improvement

Figure 3 on accountability and continuous improvement presents eleven schools or 18% in level 1, thirty-seven schools or 62% in level 2, and twelve or 20% in level 3. Schools that are still in level 1 are challenged to provide their lacking documents in order to level up their practice. These documents include proposed PPAs on matters of school governance and operations initiated by the school and stakeholders, records of stakeholders' initiated PPAs, copy of the school memo on the conduct of the activity for internal stakeholders, SGC minutes

of the meeting, narrative report on school implemented PPAs in varied forms (general assembly, open line communication, etc.), strategic direction to address gaps, progress monitoring report on the implemented solutions/interventions.

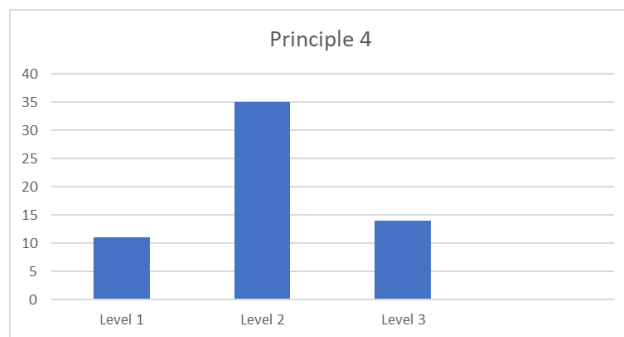


Fig. 4. Management of Resources

Figure 4 which focuses on management of resources arrives at eleven schools or 18% in level 1, thirty-five schools or 58% in level 2, and fourteen schools or 24% in level 3. Reasons behind the struggle of schools in level 1 to improve their level of practice are the lack of documents on the following: school calendar of activities highlighting the project work plan and budget matrix (resource inventory), complete set of documents on conducted PPAs, resource allocation and mobilization plan, report on school asset management, inventory of machine/equipment, approved physical and financial plan, updated and audited canteen report, list of generated resources, memo and minutes of meeting on regular review and adjustment on AIP, MOA/MOU with partners, M7E report on the implementation of resources management system, program for resource mobilization, progress monitoring report thru media on resource mobilization.

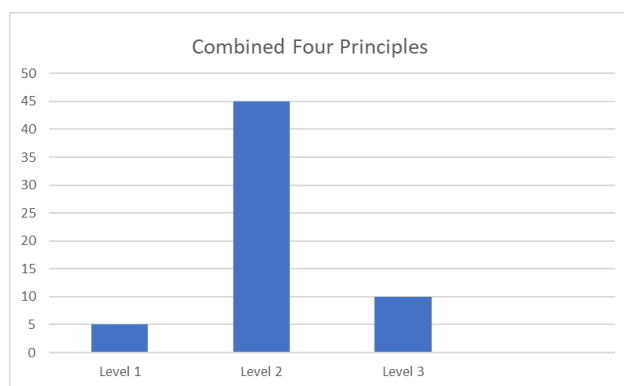


Fig. 5. Summary of level of practice of the four principles

Figure 5 shows the average rating of the sixty schools in the School-Based Management (SBM) four principles. As shown in the illustration, five schools or 8% are in level 1, forty-five schools or 75% in level 2, and ten schools or 17% in level 3. These results comprise 40% of the final SBM level of practice according to the validated practices using DOD (document analysis, observation, and discussion) process. The other 60% is based on improvement of learning outcomes (access, efficiency, and quality) which is presented on the next figures.

- 2) The level of practice of the different schools in terms of the performance improvement (access, efficiency and quality) is presented and discussed on the table below.

Table 6
Performance Improvement – Access, Efficiency and Quality

Rate of Increase	No. of Schools		
	Access Enrolment Increase (45%)	Efficiency Drop-out and Promotion Rate (25%)	Quality Average MPS (30%)
0	34	3	0
1 (marginal)	9	2	2
2 (average)	8	24	13
3 (high)	9	31	45
Total	60	60	60

Data shows that access or enrolment rate has the biggest chunk in the performance improvement weighing 45% yet it has also garnered the least improved indicator. Thirty-four or 57% of the schools fall under zero which means not being able to meet the required target of enrolment. On the other hand, drop-out rate and promotion rate weighing 25%, and average MPS weighing 30% gained positive results as illustrated in the table. For efficiency, only three schools did not meet the target while quality flaunts its data with a resounding positive result with no school not meeting the target and has the highest number of schools, 45/60, with improved MPS.

- 3) Other factors affecting the improvement of schools' level of practice.

Having been identified the level of practice of the schools in terms of the four principles as well as the performance improvement, schools heads were also surveyed on factors affecting the schools' level of practice. Fifty-seven out of the fifty-nine school heads responded on the said survey. The questionnaire was categorized into four namely 1) collection of documents and artifacts; 2) teachers' attitude towards SBM; 3) resources and time; and 4) stakeholders' support. This part does not document all the answers but only the top 2 or top 3 with highest responses.

- *Collection of documents and artifacts*

The top most challenges being encountered by the schools are the following: 36 out of 57 school heads indicated inconsistency of documents or no proper documentation, 32 marked undocumented activities, 30 said no available template or format for the required documents/do not know what document to attach and 21 answered lost documents/artifacts. Some answers with less than five responses are: difficult to organize documents, hard to collect documents, and confusion/misinterpretation of the indicators.

Documentations in school is not only a way to track teaching-learning process but most importantly a resource that can be used and definitely will have an effect over future planning.

- *Teachers' attitude towards SBM*

Teachers' inability to do their SBM tasks has a great impact on the school's level of practice. This affects how they view SBM as part of their roles as teachers. 54 out of 57 replied too many tasks of teachers/assignment overload resulting to lack of time for SBM, while 14 said that some members do not perform

their designated tasks, and 5 claimed lack of cooperation from each team member.

Teachers' workload has direct effect not only on the quality of instruction but also with other related activities. If teachers are loaded with so many extra loads, their overall efficiency decreases. This happens if teaching load and ancillary loads are not equally distributed among teachers.

- *Resources and time*

51 respondents agreed on lack of time in gathering data due to other school matters/tasks while 20 noted insufficient resources/funds to purchase materials for data filing purposes.

The first concern has something to do with teaching load which has been addressed already while the other one, insufficient resources, can also be addressed through the utilization of the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) of the school. It can be spent on activities and necessities that support learning programs in which SBM activity is one of them. Another way to address this concern is to innovate a database system where SBM documents and artifacts can be stored. This will not require supplies and materials for filing purposes.

- *Stakeholders' support*

49 of the respondents indicated less stakeholders' involvement, 10 responded on resistance of stakeholders to change being implemented by the school, and 7 claimed no community support.

Stakeholders' participation is necessary for the smooth operations of every school. When students, parents, teachers, school administrators and other external stakeholders contribute adequately, sustainability of programs, projects and activities is ensured. Therefore, stakeholders are significant members of the school community to attain school's goals. To encourage support from them, evaluate and refine engagement efforts with stakeholders and continue planning for improvement and sustainability.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research demonstrates that despite the number of schools lacking documents and artifacts in the four principles, it is clear that these are not the main reasons that hinder the schools from levelling up. As indicated in the summary of level of practice found in Table 5, only five schools are in level 1. The forty-five schools in level 2 are good signs of performance among schools. The 10 schools showing best practice in terms of how they document their programs, projects and activities are remarkable in terms of documentation.

The study determined that despite the positive results on the level of practice of the 60 schools on four principles, it is evident that the schools' performance improvement (access, efficiency, quality) has a great impact on the totality of the schools' final level of practice. 60% is based on improvement of learning outcomes which covers performance improvement. It should be noted that the enrolment rate is beyond the control of the school especially in far flung areas where small and medium schools are located. It should therefore not be given that much weight. Thus, there is a strong urge that this indicator

in SBM be reviewed in the higher office.

The results on survey of factors hindering improvement of practice indicated that proper documentation is one of the keys to level up the practice. With proper documentation, schools can improve from level 1 to level 2, and from level 2 to level 3. With these results, the Researcher recommends the following:

1. Strict implementation of Division Memorandum No. 164, s. 2021 entitled, *Localized Policy Guidelines on the Distribution, Assignment and Term of Reference of School Coordinatorship*.
2. Include regular SBM meetings in the school's schedule of activities to make sure that documents and artifacts are being updated on time.
3. Provide an orientation and designation order to each member of the SBM team with term of reference (TOR) so that they will be guided accordingly of their duties and responsibilities.
4. Innovate a data banking system where SBM documents and artifacts could be stored to save space and resources.
5. Present to both internal and external stakeholders the school's milestone and future plans. Seek for their ideas and suggestions and recognize their contributions, whether big or small. In this way, they will be encouraged to partake in the school's PPAs.
6. Coordinate with the Division Field Technical Assistance Team (DFTAT) to help and guide schools that have difficulty in preparing their documents.
7. Review in the higher office the indicator on rate of enrolment increases as one of the bases in performance improvement. This indicator is beyond the control of schools and should therefore not be pointed to teachers' performance.
8. Develop a localized SBM Manual that will include template and formats for the documents and artifacts needed for each indicator across all the four principles. This will help the schools to easily prepare for the documents which is hoped to improve the SBM level of practice of each school in the City Schools Division of Tanauan to level 3.

7. Innovation and Intervention

Based on the findings, the Researcher came up with an activity proposal to address no. 8 recommendation entitled, *Running Across School-Based Management: Training Cum*

Workshop on a Development of Localized SBM Manual.

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