

STAKEHOLDERS' PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT OF A PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN SAN PABLO CITY, PHILIPPINES

Abstract

When the School-Based Management (SBM) program was implemented in 2001, it decentralized decision-making in basic education sector in the Philippines and gave mandate to council members to seek solutions to problems and situations peculiar to the school and enhance the delivery of quality education. This study was conducted in a public elementary school in San Pablo City through survey questionnaire distributed to 40 respondent-members of the SBM council who were selected through purposive sampling. They were chosen based on their active participation in SBM of the selected public elementary school. The profile of the stakeholders, the level and nature of their participation in SBM, and the challenges they encountered as council members were the foci of the study. Results showed that the respondents were diligent in attending school meetings and they were eager to participate in school-initiated activities. Socio-economic status, including family and financial problems affected their participation in SBM activities. The study finally recommends specific strategies that will help augment the stakeholders' participation in SBM and other school activities.

Keywords: School-Based Management, Decentralized Decision-Making, School-Community Alliance, Stakeholders, Participation Accountability

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Introduction

The family, education and government are among the basic components that constitute a society. They are tasked individually and collectively to work together to promote the health, well-being, and learning of individuals – who are the building blocks of the community. This is effectively done through the educational process.

Cabardo (2016) mentioned that “The basic framework of a quality education system is one that succeeds in meeting the individual school desired goals and outcomes; one that is relevant to the needs of students, communities and society; and one that fosters the ability of students to acquire knowledge and the needed twenty-first century skills.” For the school to accomplish its noble goal, it needs to have a framework that is relevant to the needs of the students, the community, and the society.

Quality education calls for nurturing the inherent ability and developing the potentials and talents of the students who would later become the leaders and influencers of their communities. The community is both a stakeholder and beneficiary of a good educational system. As such, the community is

instrumental in helping the school uphold the ideals of its students. The community's participation as partners is required to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge and be equipped with the much-needed twenty-first century skills to cope with the current trend of globalization. However, for quality education to materialize there must be an effective delivery of the teaching-learning activity. The governance and implementation of the SBM plans enable the school to have the upper hand and make the most significant stride in managing the affairs of the school. Together with the members of the community as part of the School-Based Management (SBM) council, the school is now deputized and empowered by the Department of Education (DepEd) to make the necessary adjustments, as the need arise, in the planning and implementation of the SBM strategies.

The SBM is a DepEd thrust that decentralizes the decision-making from the Central Office and field offices to individual schools (DepEd, 2015). This policy was drawn up to enable the schools to prepare detailed strategic plans to better respond to their specific education needs. SBM as a system is designed to empower the schools and their governing entities to formulate their own strategic plan and execute it. SBM is the game-changer in the field of education because it increases the leveraging capacity of the schools. SBM also allows the school to solicit maximum participation from the stakeholders' and benefit from their expertise. SBM can likewise guide them to productively and maximize the use of material resources available to them. Practically, the planning and implementation of the SBM is confined and fine-tuned to the requirements of a particular school.

SBM has been in existence in the Philippine educational system since 2001 (Abulencia, 2012). It was officially implemented as a governance framework of DepEd with the passing of R. A. 9155 as its legal cover. DepEd at present "is going full throttle in its effort to decentralize education management - a strategy that is expected to improve the Department's operational efficiency and upgrade education quality" (Official Gazette DepEd, 2010). To support the decentralization effort, the Department pushed for the

implementation of SBM, a vital component of the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA). BESRA is a widely accepted reform initiative which "recognizes that schools, as the key providers of education, should continuously improve by being empowered to make informed and localized decisions based on their own unique needs" (Official Gazette DepEd, 2010).

With the mandate of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) bestowed upon local schools through the SBM program, the delivery of the teaching-learning activity took a dramatic turn towards improvement. Through the SBM, the schools can actively seek the participation of community stakeholders and encourage them to respond more effectively to the academic and other needs of the learners. The school provides the social structure where deliberately designed learning experiences are delivered to the students. The ultimate and noblest objective of the school within the community is to produce educated citizens, leaders, movers, and influencers. The community acts as the partner who can be tapped to help safeguard the quality of education of its student constituents. Within the society, relations are established and maintained through mutual and beneficial association between and among the institutions and the citizens. Building school-community relationships focused on improving education therefore becomes an important activity to undertake. The idea of establishing a robust school-community alliance is a boon to the education sector in the local setting.

The SBM's highest goal is geared towards advancing the academic stature of the school with the participation, support, guidance, and collaboration from its stakeholders. The teachers and school head can work closely together with the stakeholders to collectively generate innovative ideas and forge mutual alliances necessary to successfully adapt and actualize the SBM and improvement plans.

Similar with other public elementary schools in the Philippines, the elementary school in San Pablo City had already implemented the SBM as mandated by the DepEd. Plans and strategies had been drawn up for the school to meet the dynamic move of the educational system. These plans,

formulated through the collective effort of the school head, faculty members and the stakeholders who had been tapped by the school administration were mostly geared towards the improvement of the curriculum. Basically, the delivery of sustained learning component of the strategy was the focus of the SBM. From its inception, there had been steady changes and fine-tuning of activities and their consistent implementation to sustain and further enhance the students' academic performance. But since then, there had been no studies conducted yet on area that investigates the stakeholders' nature and level of participation in the SBM. There had been no basis as to what the challenges could be the stakeholders are facing as SBM council members and the level of school improvement in terms of school-community relationship. This area of concern was specifically significant to the researcher both as a member of the academe and as a local citizen of the community.

This study paralleled in some respects the study of Cabardo (2016) wherein he pointed out that SBM gave rise to several strategies such as the School Governing Council (SGC); conduct of Assessment of Level of Practice; School Improvement Planning (SIP); and reporting of accomplishments through School Report Cards (SRCs). The author noted in his 2016 study that "revisions in the SBM plan sought to better highlight the learner as the center of SBM practice; to encompass the diverse realities of learning contexts defined and uniquely occurring within specific geographic, social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental make-up of the contemporary society; to enhance commitment of education stakeholders at all levels to their responsibilities and accountabilities in realizing the education outcomes for children; and to improve the school system's capacity to be on track in achieving the Education for All/Millennium Development Goals and sustain good performance" (Department of Education, 2012).

This study was conducted to analyse the stakeholders' participation in the implementation of SBM in a public elementary school in San Pablo City. Specifically, it aimed to: (i) discuss the nature and level of stakeholders' participation in SBM; and (ii) analyze the challenges faced by the stakeholders in the SBM.

Materials and Methods

A. Research Design

This study used survey research design to determine the stakeholders' participation in the implementation of the SBM. A survey research design is a procedure in quantitative research wherein a survey is administered to a sample or to the entire population to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors or characteristics of the population (Tanny, 2018). The procedure requires the researcher to collect quantitative data through interviews or questionnaires and statistically analyze data to describe trends or patterns in attitudes or characteristics of the respondents.

B. Research Participants

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of research participants. According to Crossman (2020) a "purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study." A total of 40 respondents were identified for the purpose of the study. They were selected based on their active participation in SBM planning and implementation. The participants were composed of two school heads, teachers, and selected stakeholders.

Among the stakeholders of the schools, 58% were female and 42% were male. Only 12% of the respondents considered themselves well-to-do. A large percentage (61%) of the respondents belong to the middle class, while the rest (27%) classified themselves as members of the marginalized sector. Majority of the respondents (61%) who belong to the middle class are mostly office workers, government employees and businessman and all are college graduate. The remaining 27% are farmers, helpers, construction workers and factory workers. Some 18 % were high school graduate and 9% were high school undergraduate. The basis of the classification for economic profile was derived from the records of the barangay census. Based on the Philippine Statistics Authority.

The participants helped provide some insights into the SBM structure which were useful in the data collection. The researcher also checked

whether the two schools had maintained a prescribed set of practices as guide in their execution of school-based management plans.

C. Instrumentation

This study was conducted using a researcher-made structured survey-questionnaire. The first part of the survey-questionnaire consists of questions regarding the demographics and economic profile of the stakeholders. The second part deals with the nature and level of participation of the stakeholders in the planning and implementation of SBM. There were questions in the survey that asked about the challenges the stakeholders faced. The last part of the questionnaire calls for suggestions from the respondents how they could further enhance their participation in the planning and implementation of SBM. Their inputs were solicited to synchronize efforts for the continuous improvement of delivery of the teaching-learning process and management of school resources as well. Through the results of this field study, a system could be formulated to lead to more enhanced school-community relationships. The knowledge and insights gained from this research could help the school make minor adjustments in its SBM platform.

D. Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages.

Results and Discussions

A. Nature and Extent of Stakeholders' Participation in SBM

The stakeholders were diligent in attending the meetings that were called for by the school heads (Table 1). These meetings were scheduled monthly, and the agenda were usually posted in advance at the bulletin boards which are conspicuously located where the parents and other stakeholders usually converge (near the gate and at the parents' hall). For the last five months (June-October, 2019), the attendance to meeting averaged 78%. Some of the reasons attributed to this high turnout of attendance were the fact the stakeholders lived within the community and the meeting was announced several times prior to the occasion itself. The pupils were also reminded to tell their parents of the upcoming event a day before the activity.

Table 1 : Parents' Attendance in School Activities from June to October 2019

Activities	Total No. of Parents	Number of Parents Attending	Percentage
Gen. Assemblies	245	191	78.0
Homeroom Meetings	245	188	77.0
Nutrition Celebration	245	205	84.0
Linggo ng Wika (Language Week)	245	191	78.0
School Academic Contest	245	181	74.0
Income Generating Activities	245	191	78.0
School General Cleaning	245	191	78.0
Average	245	191	78.14

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 shows that majority of stakeholders are actively participating in SBM implementation. Those under the Poor category are probably the parents who have no time to participate because they need to go to work for a living.

Table 2 : SBM Activities Undertaken in The School

School-Based Management Activities		5	4	3	2	1
1.	Takes active part in establishing linkages and networks for the school to realize its aims of delivering quality education.	31	7	2	1	3
2.	Helps the school community in fund raising for students who will compete in academic and non-academic contests.	8	22	7	0	4
3.	Provides support in the selection, nomination, and election of SGC members and GPTA officers.	12	10	13	2	3
4.	Volunteers in the different activities like the school feeding programs, intramurals and book reading.	6	19	12	1	
5.	Participates actively in school maintenance projects like BrigadaEskwela (School Brigade) through financial assistance, extending free labor or contributing materials for the event.	10	18	8	1	2
6.	Solicits assistance from community members especially during special activities like field demonstrations, sports fest and teachers' day.	13	14	11	4	2
7.	Attends general assemblies, PTA meetings and other activities that require the presence of parents and stakeholders.	14	21	5	4	
8.	Helps in formulating plans for school-community relations improvement.	13	21	6	0	3
9.	Actively participates in SIP planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.	14	15	8	2	1
10.	Renders meaningful volunteer work in the school community like sports competitions to promote sportsmanship and foster healthy interaction among the youth.	9	22	5	4	1
11.	Assists in the conduct of school activities directed towards the enrichment/remedial program of the pupils.	9	10	2	1	4
	Total	139	179	79	20	23
	Percentage	31.6	40.7	18.0	4.5	5.2

Source: Primary Data (Legend: 5-Excellent; 4- Very good; 3-Satisfactory; 2- Good; 1- Poor)

When Edwards (2013) suggested that “authentic participation has the greatest prospects of success at the local level,” it rallied for the individuals' involvement in the community and their participation in local activities. Cabardo (2016) in his study was concerned about the local observation “that although the schools are doing their best in linking with the different school stakeholders, still declining results had been reported by schools on some of the school-initiated activities”. Hence, his study prodded him to investigate whether the level of SBM implementation affects the level of participation of the different stakeholders to school-initiated activities. His findings revealed a high descriptive rating among stakeholders' active participation in the different events initiated by the schools especially Parents, Teachers' Association (PTA) conferences, general assemblies and Parents' Day celebration. Other school activities like reduction of illiteracy, special events such as teachers' month, and scouting were also enthusiastically supported by the stakeholders.

In this study, when asked for the level of their commitment, a large percentage of the respondents (72%) were eager to participate in school-initiated activities geared towards the improvement of the institution. These were the Brigada Eskwela (School Brigade) program, the celebration of Nutrition month, intramurals, school programs, quiz bees and other activities that required the participation of the pupils. The respondents revealed that they view school events as moments for their children to shine. The parents' participation was mainly focused on food, costumes, transportation (if required) and the security of the children. Their eagerness to help in those areas were highly evident (4.03 rating in the Likert scale). This finding mirrored the observation of Crano et al. (2011) in their research about the hedonic relevance of an attitude or vested interest that fostered attitude-behaviour consistency. When the respondents perceived something at stake would affect them or their children, they behaved in a certain way - by giving direct support to the activities. Vested Interest (VI) had been responsible in the improved attitude-behaviour of the members.

Cabardo (2016) observed a moderate rating for the

level of stakeholders' participation in events such as volunteering for activities related to the health and nutrition of the school children like school feeding programs, activities in the nutrition month. He also noted their eagerness to engage in meaningful volunteer work like value formation and sports competitions. The stakeholders assisted the school in soliciting funds for students who compete in academic and non-academic contests. They participated in the schools' maintenance week dubbed as Brigada Eskwela (School Brigade) through some financial, material, labour assistance. They also supported other vital activities such as helping the school prepare for coming visitors and aid in SBM evaluation. The results from this study revealed that school's SBM stakeholders displayed an almost similar response noted in Cabardo's 2016 study. Blackburn's (2019) definition of stakeholder as anyone who has a keen interest in an organization, project or business and its proceedings aptly described the respondents of this study. The respondents were likewise very appreciative of the fact that the school budget from the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) and how it was disbursed were discussed during these meetings, so they have a clear understanding of the financial status of the school. The concept of decentralization which intended to “widen decision making while increasing responsibility and accountability” was made possible through SBM, that gave greater autonomy and bigger responsibility to the school heads and council members (Valenzuela, 2010).

B. Challenges Faced by the Stakeholders

While there was no apparent link between the respondents' demographics and their willingness to participate in SBM, there were factors deemed responsible that affect the actual participation of the stakeholders in the implementation of the program. The fragile socio-economic aspect of the stakeholders registered the highest mark. It was highly observed in the survey that the reasons why stakeholders cannot fully participate in the implementation of SBM is because of lack of time and they have no time at all because they need to go to work. They cannot afford to miss one day in work because one day earning is important. The respondents also acknowledged that this factor accounted for cases of absenteeism and dropping

out of school of some pupils. The teachers and school officials also gave the same observation.

Table 3. Challenges Faced by Stakeholders

Challenges face by stakeholders	
Time constraint	61%
The Priority is work	21%

Source: Primary Data

This study shed light on the difference between the willingness to participate and the actual participation of the SBM council members of the school and the factors that were responsible for it. In the study conducted by Mojtahedzadehet al. (2013) they noted that in developing countries, the idea behind SBM is less ambitious because the focus is mainly on involving community and parents in the school decision making process rather than putting them entirely in control. But putting them entirely in control when these community stakeholders are beset with pressing economic and familial problems would be asking too much.

The last part of the survey-questionnaire asked for suggestions from the stakeholders how they could further improve their participation in the SBM. The respondents were quick to point out more dialogues with the school heads to foster the spirit of volunteerism and forge stronger alliances with other schools and communities. A more open channel of communication from the school administration would likely result in a closer tie between and among the SBM council members.

In Cabardo's study (2016) he reported that his results supported the findings of Rutherford and Jackson (2006) that with the implementation of School-Based Management, principals have new and bigger roles. Instead of the usual traditional, legal, and functional authority for the total management of the school, principals or school heads are encouraged to build a policy that promotes community participation and collaboration. The author believed that educating a child is a concerted and collaborated effort. It is up to the school heads to reach out to the community to strengthen the alliance. To meet the

new challenges of their job, principals may need additional training in leadership skills (Llego, 2019).

Mojtahedzadehet al. (2013) echoed the same sentiments when they expressed the view that vital to the success of SBM is for school principals to support the decentralization reform. They will remain personally accountable for the performance of their school but will no longer have complete control over its management. With SBM in place, the school heads can no longer blame the policies of the school district when things go wrong. They must realize that their final and most important source of necessary support is from parents and other community members and how they chose to interact with them would ultimately result in the success or failure in implementing SBM.

The school have goals to be responsive to the challenges of SBM. The school heads together with the SBM council members were keenly aware of the positive effects their concerted effort to improve the delivery of teaching-learning process. The team were deeply committed to their pledge to make their school up to par with the rest of the public elementary institutions in the City Schools Division of San Pablo. In effect, the schools had formed coalition teams to implement necessary changes for the institutions and to monitor the progress and bottlenecks, if any. Group discussions and regular meetings were called for by the school heads to inform the council of any development or any changes that had taken place. Through the initiative of the school heads, both elementary campuses had successfully introduced and sustained the principles of shared governance and accountability. Good working camaraderie and better rapport among and between the stakeholders and school authorities were always emphasized. Team members work interdependently to reach the goal of providing the students the quality education that they deserve. The team recognized the fact that quality education hinges on the cooperation of the SBM council members. Thus, they were quick to point out that whenever any slight deviation from their desired goal was observed, they act decisively to patch up and or correct the matter. The SBM team hoped that their effort will ultimately result in

giving the children the quality education they deserve and at the same time a dynamic and mutually beneficial relationship of the school and the community will continue to be forged.

Conclusions and Implications

From the data collected in this study, it can be concluded that the stakeholders, no matter what their demographics may be, were in one accord – they all want the school to succeed in its quest to provide optimum learning opportunity for their students. As for financial rewards, the school firmly encourage volunteerism and cooperation. The school believes that there is no need for financial rewards because parents' participation is not for the school staffs but for the benefit of their child. The stakeholder recognition is already implemented. It is already a part of SBM program. There is an award for those who are active in donating school building materials, school supplies and contributing help for painting walls and fences and cleaning and such. As the school advances towards its noble goals, the stakeholders also establish closer rapport with one another. Thus, the final aim of fostering closer school-community relationships and forging stronger ties with the key players in the community gained added momentum.

Since most stakeholders are active in participating in school-initiated events the remaining number of respondents who cannot fully participate in such activities due to financial constraints and family matters should not, in any way, feel they are not part of the organization. To encourage the stakeholders to join in SBM and other school activities, the researcher recommends the following steps to be undertaken.

1. A survey must be conducted to know what possible arrangements may be made so everyone can attend important school activities like homeroom meetings for card-giving, classroom maintenance and cleaning schedules, Christmas and other parties held to celebrate special occasions. Through this survey, the teachers will have an ideal on how to deal with parents who cannot find time to attend important school events due to their work.

2. Another measure would be to get feedbacks and suggestions from the people who may have personal knowledge about the situation of inactive parents, they may suggest ways on how to help and convince their co-parents to join school activities.
3. The school must find creative ways to encourage 100% participation of stakeholders. The school must be imaginative in celebrating memorable events such as Linggo ng Wika, Nutrition Month, Intrams and the likes. Creative celebration of school events can be done economically to emphasize the educational aspects of the event and bring fun and entertainment to the school community. Parents should be encouraged to join these activities on a voluntary basis. It is hoped that once they become aware of the implications of such activities, they will not mind if they may incur some expenses.
4. Encourage parents to confer with each other. Through such deliberations, parents can discuss and agree on schedules and activities that they would support through their attendance and cooperation.
5. Fund raising activities like rummage sale, food fairs, arts and crafts exhibits would be some of the activities that would be fun and worthwhile activity for the school and the community.

Volunteer teachers and parents may work together to accomplish these tasks. A team of one teacher and two parents per grade level will be assigned to reach out to other parents who cannot attend activities in school. Through dialogues and some adjustments in schedules, it is hoped that council members will be able to come up with some proposals for innovations. The most important aspect is to get every member of the school community on the same page – that there is alignment of purpose, and everyone will work towards the realization of the goals of the institution.

The working climate in the planning and implementation of the SBM established deep impact and forged lasting relationships among the constituents that comprise the community. SBM

council members like the idea of volunteerism and they agreed that it should be encouraged through constant dialogue between school heads and the stakeholders. It was repeatedly acknowledged by the respondents to be a unifying factor for the school and its stakeholders. Through SBM the school stands a better chance to provide quality education to its pupils. These young learners are after all, the future leaders, educators, and citizens of the community.

As Edwards (2013) suggested, "Authentic participation has the greatest prospects of success at the local level". Through the individuals' involvement in the community and their participation in local activities, they may have a better awareness of opportunities for themselves to learn and develop important skills, gain knowledge, and find employment. Active participation results in enhanced well-being and increased self-confidence because it means an individual is vigorously involved in his own care, support, and well-being.

SBM as a program identifies the individual institution as the primary unit of improvement and relies on school-level decision-making authority as the primary means to stimulate and sustain development and with its accountability mechanisms delivery of improved outcomes is ensured. SBM facilitates active involvement and contribution from the parents, the students, and the community stakeholders. SBM planning and implementation can be a tool for the school to solicit the participation from the stakeholders. The local citizen of the community where the school is located is a rich source of manpower. Each stakeholder is gifted with a skillset that the school can benefit from. Now that the schools have a mandate for decision-making vis a vis the SBM, it is important that the school as a major stakeholder should provide effective leadership that will set the pace for all other stakeholders in the community.

The stakeholders come in all forms and sizes and each of them brings along talents, resources and skills collectively needed to enhance and push into full throttle the school's programs for reforms and improvement. Without the stakeholders, the school could float along. Engaging the

stakeholders' help and cooperation provide the strong anchors to firmly put the institution in its rightful place as a haven to learners who are seeking the emancipative power of education.

With a vibrant and dynamic educational system that calls for massive changes brought about by the radical and exponential progress in the 21st century technology, the community provides a solid base of support mechanism to advance the cause of the educational sector. It nurtures the learning institutions from its infancy stage upwards. While the government provides for their logistical support, it is the community that sustains the school so it could thrive and grow. The school-community alliance must be cultivated and strengthened by fostering closer ties among them. An effective method to achieve this is through the planning and implementation of the SBM where the entire community is actively involved. The give and take relationship between the two entities would no doubt result in a vibrant and robust society where the constituents are nurtured and who, in return give back to the community.

With the limitations of the study, the researcher recommends additional studies on SBM planning and implementation. Further research must be conducted on how to initiate activities that would encourage participation from stakeholders. These researches must be steered towards a broader scale that would cut through borders and cover a wider scope to offer a more comprehensive research and provide additional information for a database on this topic.

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- Valenzuela, E.A. P. (2010). Decentralization of Education in the Philippines Status, Trends and Challenges. SEAMEO INNOTECH 1 The roles and challenges of District Education Offices in a context of decentralization Experiences from the Philippines and Sri Lanka IIEP Workshop in Manila.