Compliance with School-Based Management Standards: An Assessment for Policy Formulation

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ABSTRACT

Basic education is challenged to be responsive to the current demands of quality education through the efficient delivery of educational services and the translation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable the learners to attain mandated learning outcomes. Over the past decades, many initiatives and reform efforts have been implemented to realize the thrusts of Basic Education Reform Agenda. One key response of the national government is the implementation of the standard principles of the School-Based Management (SBM). Two elementary schools in the Division of San Carlos City in Negros Occidental, Philippines, implement SBM with an ultimate goal of achieving learning outcomes. This study aimed to assess the level of compliance with the standard principles of SBM and its implication to the quality of life among the learners beyond basic education using a descriptive-comparative research design. The participants were internal and external assessors identified through a predetermined criterion. The data were collected through SBM standardized survey form with the necessary supporting documents including focus group discussion (FGD) relative to the compliance with SBM standards. The findings revealed that the two central schools are on Level 2 and are categorized as maturing schools, wherein, most of the standard principles of SBM are complied with and implemented for continuous improvement. Both schools are prepared for National SBM level 3 accreditation relative to the SBM principles.

Keywords: Compliance, Descriptive-Comparative, Education, Negros Occidental, School-Based Management

1.0. Introduction

School-based management is a formal alteration of governance structures and a form of decentralization that identifies the individual school as a primary unit of improvement. The redistribution of decision-making authority is the primary means through which improvements might be stimulated and sustained (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990; Brint, 2017). In the context of education, educational decentralization is a worldwide phenomenon (Fullan & Watson, 2000; Farrell, Manion, & Rincón-Gallardo, 2017). It is a key feature in institutional reform throughout the world (Patrinos & Fasih, 2009; King & Ozler, 1998). Responsibility and decision-making over different types of school operations are transferred to individuals at the school level, who in turn must conform with a set of centrally determined policies (Gertler, Patrinos, & Rubio-Codina, 2006; Khattri, Ling, & Jha, 2012).

In the Philippines, School-based Management (SBM) is a Key Reform Thrust 1 (KRT1) of the Basic Education Reform Agenda (BESRA). It considers the school as the key provider of education meant to broaden and sustain further the Department of Education's current effort of implementing the Schools First Initiative (Valisno, 2010). BESRA aims at improving the basic education outcomes through a broadly participated, popular movement featuring a wide variety of initiatives. Congruent with the KRTs of BESRA, DepED pursues SBM to raise the quality of education in the Philippines and to attain the Education for All (EFA) goals by improving its operations and delivery of services through autonomous decision-making powers to local school officials in terms of school repairs and maintenance, procurement of textbooks, supplies, and equipment as well as human resource development (Bautista & Rose, 2005).

In line with the thrust of the Department of Education, the two central schools in the Division of San Carlos City in Negros Occidental have implemented SBM since 2008. However, the gap is very apparent that despite their self-evaluation mechanism, these schools have not acquired the national Level 3 accreditation as expected of any central school.

In adherence to quality management principle, it is imperative to assess the SBM compliance of these central schools in terms of the SBM standard principles. Apparently, the objective of this assessment is to determine the note-worthy areas and to address opportunities for improvement (OFI) that shall be the bases in formulating the three-year development plan. Hence, this study was conducted to assess the level of compliance with the SBM standard principles in the two central schools during the School Year 2017-2018. Specifically, it sought to find out the level of compliance with SBM standard principles in the areas of leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, aaccountability and continuous improvement, and management of resources as assessed by the internal and external assessors. It also sought to determine if there is a significant difference in the level of compliance with the SBM standard principles in the same areas as assessed by internal and external assessors.

2.0. Framework

This study is anchored on the philosophy of Total Quality Management (TQM) by Deming which focuses on management process (Deming, 1982). It can be used by organizations through continuous quality improvement plans to the fulfillment of the

vision and mission of the organizations. TQM represents the foundation for continuous learning improvement for learners and teachers (Ross, 2017).

Deming's Chain Reaction Theory states that improvement in quality leads to lower costs because it results in lesser work, fewer mistakes, fewer delays, and better use of time and materials. Consequently, lower cost leads to productivity improvements (Deming, 2000). Relatively, Evans and Lindsay (2016) reiterated that an effective quality management system needs to integrate with the organizational system, focus on actionable decision making, seek the causes of problems, and improve processes and systems. It should drive the principle of quality management throughout the organization by fostering effective practices to implement the principles. Again, as Deming, Juran, and Crosby pointed out, these responsibilities lie upon the organization's leadership (Sallis, 2014). Consequently, the Theory of Trait Leadership describes leader effectiveness as the amount of influence a leader has on individual or group performance, followers' satisfaction, and overall effectiveness (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011).

Quality Assurance is a philosophy and a process in which all the functions and activities of an institution are treated equally, planned, controlled, and implemented systematically and scientifically (Allais, 2009; Doromal, 2010; Lim, 2018).

A school that aims at continuous improvement of its performance is operating with good leadership and governance. It consists of a development plan that is collaboratively developed and regularly reviewed by its stakeholders and the community and a clear structure and work arrangements that promote shared leadership and governance. It likewise consists of a relevant curriculum and instruction that provide for the development needs of all types of learners; a sense of accountability and continuous improvement with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities of accountabilities; and effective management of resources. These indicators of continuous improvement are characterized by a shared vision and mission which are the collective dreams and commitment of the major stakeholders to pursue and realize planned improvements, shared decision-making by the team of its stakeholders, collaboration, autonomy, accountability, shared governance, and transparency (Deming, 2000; DepED, 2012).

One of the simplest theories of SBM is that people who primarily benefit from education including children, their parents, and other community members should have a say in the provision of education (Abu-Duhou, 1999). A good education involves not only physical input such as classrooms, teachers, and textbooks but also opportunities that lead to better instruction and learning outcomes. Education systems place extreme demands on the managerial, technical, and financial capacity of governments. Thus, education as a service is too complex to produce and distribute efficiently in a centralized fashion (LaRocque & Boyer, 2007). Most of the opportunities that affect learning outcomes such as choice and competition, school autonomy, and school accountability are by nature institutional. The idea behind choice and competition is that parents who are interested in maximizing their children's learning outcomes can choose to send their children to the most productive school that regards academic results or performance. This demand-side pressure gives all schools an opportunity to improve their performance (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007).

The decision on the aspect of school management and its stakeholders may

start to build upon makes assessment imperative. It is also important to determine the directions of improvements to attain the level of its implementation particularly the SBM implementation program (DepED, 2005, 2009; BESRA, 2012).

Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the "Local Government Code of 1991", has originally formulated policies of decentralization as a response to the new challenges for sustainable human development. It enables local communities to become self-reliant and more effective partners in the attainment of national goals. This law was the basis of the DepED's Ten-Year Master Plan (1995-2005) to entrust more decision-making powers to local school officials in terms of school repairs, maintenance, and procurement of learning materials, school supplies, and equipment necessary for the improvement of its operations and delivery of services to the clientele.

Subsequently, DECS Order No. 230, series of 1999 further defined decentralization to mean promotion of SBM; transfer of authority and decision-making powers from central and regional offices to the divisions and schools; sharing of education management responsibilities with other stakeholders such as the Local Government Units (LGUs), Parents, Teachers and Community Association (PTCA), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs); and devolution of education functions.

Additionally, Republic Act No. 9155, otherwise known as "Governance of Basic Education of 2001", has instituted the framework of governance for basic education and other purposes that mandates the implementation of shared governance and the administration of public schools. It has granted the school heads the authority, responsibility, and accountability regarding the development of school improvement programs, management of school resources, and fostering of effective school-family-community linkages.

In 2007, the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) became the evolving agendum of the DepED to improve the basic education outcomes. As disseminated through DepED Order No. 83, series of 2007, dated February 26, 2007, the implementation of BESRA is the priority of DepED management headed by the DepED secretary as the overall director of its implementation (DepED Order No. 83, 2007).

The overall objectives of BESRA are contained in policy actions that seek to create a basic education sector that is capable of attaining the country's Education for All (EFA) objectives by 2015. These objectives include adult-functional literacy, universal school participation and elimination of drop-outs, and repetition in the first three grade levels. Similarly, it mandates the universal completion of the full cycle of basic education schooling with satisfactory achievement by all at every grade or year level and total community commitment for the attainment of basic education competencies for all.

For the basic education sector to achieve these goals, BESRA focuses on five key reform thrusts. These are to improve all schools continuously by enhancing the teachers' contribution to learning outcomes, to increase social support to attain the desired learning outcomes, and to improve the impact of learning outcomes from education, complimentary early childhood, alternative learning systems, and private sector support. The thrusts also aim to change the institutional culture of DepED and provide better support to these key reform thrusts. In short, these thrusts are part of the schools' and teachers' social support to learning, complementary interventions,

and DepED's institutional culture (BESRA, 2012). From 1998 to 2006, DepED piloted the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) and the SBM which is a nine-year investment program funded by the World Bank and Japan Bank for International Cooperation. Based on legislation of the Philippine Local Government Code of 1991 (R. A. No. 7160) and the Framework of Government for Basic Education Act (R. A. No. 9155), TEEP intended to improve the quality of elementary education in the 23 poorest provinces of the country.

Specifically, the project aimed to improve the learning achievements, completion rates, and access to quality elementary education to build the institutional capacity of the DepED in managing changes. It is also intended to actively involve the community and the local government in a large-scale effort to attain quality education (NEDA, 2011). SBM was not a specific sub-component of TEEP per se. At the beginning of the later part of the project cycle in the school year 2003-2004, it was the central integrating framework for directing project inputs and building local capacity for education planning and implementation. World Bank Report states that TEEP feature is explicitly defined to mobilize community support for the school, catalyze ownership of the education processes and outcomes, and enhance transparency and accountability (The World Bank, 1996).

This study utilized the Plan, Do, Check, and Act (PDCA) cycle for quality continuous improvement model as the guide in the implementation of TQM. This model consists of the logical sequence of four repetitive steps for continuous improvement and learning (Deming, 1950) to provide a clear perspective on how to carry out the study and the direction for continuous improvement specifically of the central schools that are worth accrediting with the SBM.

3.0. Methods

The research design used was descriptive-comparative. This approach is used in comparing two or more things with a view to discovering something about one or all of the things being compared (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, the comparison of the assessment on the level of compliance with the standard principles of SBM in the two central schools by the internal and external assessors through inter-rater technique was conducted. The internal assessors composed of four SBM coordinators in each of the respective school campuses, while the external assessors composing of four SBM assessors were EPSvr and SEPS of the Division Office. The external assessors were chosen based on their designation as certified SBM assessors by the Philippine Accreditation System for Basic Education (PASBE) while the internal assessors were selected according to their function as SBM coordinators as designated by their respective school principals. The objectivity of the assessment was established through a multi-faceted approach such as the use of SBM standardized assessment tool, followed by the verification of the document that support the ratings reflected in the assessment tools. Also, the FGD with the key informants was conducted to obtain an in-depth information. Likewise, an ocular inspection was done by both internal and external assessors to verify the authenticity and the veracity of the claims of the key informants and document presented.

Table 1. Distribution of Assessors

External	Internal	Areas of SBM Standard Principles	Total
SEP-ME	Teacher – SBM Coordinator	Leadership and Governance	2
EPSvr	Teacher – SBM Coordinator	Curriculum and Instruction	2
SEP-ME	Teacher – SBM Coordinator	Resource Management	2
EPSvr	Teacher – SBM Coordinator	Accountability and Continuous Improvement	2

The data were collected through a standardized SBM assessment form. It covered the four standard principles such as leadership and governance with five standard indicators; curriculum and instruction with seven standard indicators; accountability and continuous improvement with five indicators; and management of resources with five standard indicators. It is indicated for Level 3-Advanced (Accredited) which means that the school ensures the production of intended outputs/outcomes and meeting all standards of a system fully integrated into the local community and is self-renewing and self-sustaining; for Level 2 categorized as maturing school means that the school is introducing and sustaining continuous improvement process that integrates wider community participation and significantly improve performance and learning outcomes; and for Level 1 - Developing which means that the school is developing structures and mechanism with acceptable level and extent of community participation and impact on learning outcomes.

With due permission from the Schools Division Office of the Department of Education, SBM assessment form was officially utilized by both internal and external assessors. Supporting document evidences, such as, attendance sheet of internal and external stakeholders during the formulation of school improvement plan, annual accomplishment reports, minutes of annual planning of the team committee and community meeting, record of the SWOT analysis, covenant of commitment of GOs, NGOs and other stakeholders, flyers of school activities, barangay resolutions relevant to child welfare, certificate of trainings, classroom observation and inventory of learning materials, and actual ocular inspection on the facilities and equipment. Moreover, focus group discussion (FGD) among the key informants formed part in the assessment to validate and to establish objectivity in the numerical rating of the assessors and establish the veracity of the claim during the assessment process.

In analyzing the data, descriptive-comparative scheme was used. Furthermore, the study employed the Kendal Tau Coefficient. This statistical tool is appropriate in determining the degree of concordance or disconcordance between two sets of data which are derived from a non-parametric distribution.

4.0. Results and Discussion

The results of the gathered data on the compliance of School A in Table 2 show that the school has complied with the Level II status which is considered as maturing school. This means that the school is on the level of introducing and sustaining

continuous improvement process that integrates wider community participation and significantly improves performance and learning outcomes. This result implies, that most of the mandated standard principles are implemented and complied for continuous improvement. It is noticeable that the assessment ratings vary between the internal and external assessors.

Level of Compliance with SBM Standard Priciples of Central Schools

Table 2. Level of Compliance with SBM Standard Principles of School A

SBM Standard Principles	Internal			External		
	Mean	Compliance	Int	Mean	Compliance	Int
Leadership and Governance	1.68	Level II	M	1.72	Level II	M
Curriculum and Instruction	2.43	Level II	M	2.49	Level II	M
Accountability and Continuous Improvement	2.49	Level II	M	2.48	Level II	M
Management of Resources	2.21	Level II	M	1.52	Level II	M
As a Whole	2.20	Level II	M	2.05	Level II	M

Note: Int=Interpretation; M=Maturing

Table 3. Level of Compliance with SBM Standard Principles of School B

SBM Standard Principles	Internal			External		
	Mean	Compliance	Int	Mean	Compliance	Int
Leadership and Governance	1.33	Level I	D	1.04	Level I	D
Curriculum and Instruction	2.21	Level II	M	2.49	Level II	M
Accountability & Continuous Improvement	1.20	Level I	D	2.11	Level II	M
Management of Resources	2.49	Level II	M	2.40	Level II	M
As a Whole	1.81	Level II	M	2.01	Level II	M

Note: Int=Interpretation; D=Developing; M=Maturing

With respect to the assessment of internal and external assessors for School B, the findings in Table 3 reveal that the school obtained the Level II compliance or maturing level of compliance with the four SBM standard principles as evident in the obtained rating of 1.81 and 2.01, respectively. Moreover, it can be noted that School B

is still developing or in its Level I compliance in the area of leadership and governance. The internal and external assessors, being composed of program supervisors and specialists, are involved in supervising and monitoring every school of the division. As such, they have been tasked to inform and advise the school heads with regards to the areas that need improvement (BESRA, 2010). The result further signifies that School B, being at the National SBM Level II status, is still in the process of developing structures that introduce and sustain continuous improvement process to integrate wider community participation and improve performance significantly.

Difference in the Level of Compliance with the SBM Standard Principles of Central Schools

Using Kendal Tau Coefficient, the results show that the disconcordance or disagreement between the assessment of the internal and external assessors on the compliance of School A with the SBM standard principles [t=0.963, p=0.337] is negligible and does not result in serious situations that would cause a total bug-down of the quality education in School A.

In the same way, the findings also show that there is no significant difference in the disconcordance between internal and external assessments of School B compliance with SBM standard principles [t=-1.336, p=0.183]. In addition, the negative (-) t-value signifies that School B internal assessors underrated themselves when compared with the external assessor.

Despite the discrepancies between the internal and external assessors, the t-test for independent samples showed no significant difference as manifested by p-values (0.337 and 0.183) which are greater than 0.05. These figures mean that the difference between the ratings of the assessors, whether internal or external, is not significant and may simply be due to sampling selection. Therefore, there is no strong evidence to prove that the difference is significant.

The accounts of the key informants from the focus group (FGD) discussion suggest the importance of a quality management system for continuous quality improvement to fully comply with the Level III standard principles of SBM. This includes a certain degree of political will to plan and implement school policies, programs, and projects. A high degree of sensitivity towards the needs of the workforce, excellent social attributes, efficient management of resources, and credibility should also be considered. Hence, the idea of quality management system is anchored on the principle that it is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when one celebrates victory and when nice things occur. Thus, a clear and well-defined direction has formed-part in meeting with standards as per quality management principle.

This study unveiled significant findings that compliance with the SBM standard principles will bring every learner beyond the thrust of basic education. Through the continuous improvement of their learning outcomes in a much wider horizon, there will be more totally empowered individuals who are culturally-mature, productive and self-reliant, and globally competitive members of the society. Such realization beyond the basic education of every learner can be achieved when full compliance with the SBM standard principles is attained. This can be made possible through quality management

system as a result of every educational leader's commitment and dedication of his leadership to make these things happen meaningfully in the lives of the learners.

The results imply that raising the bar to reach the advance status as per SBM principles through an administrative policy must be implemented by school leaders to continuously innovate and provide a real-world learning experiences to students. In the study of Serdyukov (2017), innovation can be presented as a model in the context of its effects on the quality of teaching and learning within an educational environment, which is permeated by professional and societal cultures. Even when an innovation comes to life, it is of little worth without implementation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). Supporting the innovations in the Philippine Basic Educational system will continuously and effectively evolve and progress through effective leadership and governance.

5.0. Conclusions

The level of compliance with SBM standard principles of the two central schools as assessed by the internal and external assessors is at maturing level of compliance or in their Level 2. Because of the 76.7% compliance status, the schools have a strong capability to a very nearly compliance with the Level 3 standards. Apparently, among the four principles or areas, leadership and governance need to be given attention for continuous improvement as the least among the SBM principles as evident in the findings. Further, it is concluded that no significant difference exists in the level of compliance of the two central schools with the SBM. This signifies that both schools are possessing the same characteristics as far as SBM principles are concerned.

In as much that the ultimate goal of the two central schools from the context of SBM compliance is to improve the learners' learning outcomes and attain the Level 3 of the SBM accreditation, the following recommendations are deemed significant: a) every teacher designated as SBM Coordinator may be de-loaded of all his/her teaching assignment so that every SBM and other related activities can be properly monitored and evaluated; b) Quality management system review may be conducted at least once a year, by the Division SBM Coordinator; c) all learning materials should be quality assured prior to the school opening; d) every school may have a separate Records and Documentation Office that will serve as repository of vital school's records and documents to be managed by an SBM Coordinator; e) every Principal may present his or her innovations to the Division Office; and, f) teachers may facilitate the quality teaching and learning activities of the students in the development of the mandated competencies.

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