



## The Implementation of School-Based Management Concept in Tehran Schools

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**ABSTRACT:** School leaders across the world are exploring ways to better train students and develop school performance. In this sense, they should also have the capacity to conform to the changing range of SBM and should be ready to respond to central innovations as these may be determined from time to time at the province, state, national, or district levels. This article started with introducing school-based management reform, which is one of the strategies that to reform and change the education system in the world in the past two decades. A review of SBM policy showed that this system causes more efficiency and effectiveness of schools and empowering principals, teachers and student's academic achievements, and also more participation of sympathetic people in education. Discussion continued to introducing the emergence and extent of SBM around the world and also in Iran content and presenting conceptual framework.

**Key words:** School-Based Management, SBM policy, Teacher

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### INTRODUCTION

In the non-centralized education system such as in the USA and most countries in Europe, school-based management (SBM) has been a common practice in which the school and its surrounding community possess the power and resources to develop, govern and determine the management of the school in whatever manner suitable. However, on the other hand in the centralized education systems in the world, SBM seems to be a novel idea because education is not viewed as the means to the unification of diverse communities in a nation state; thus, SBM has been mooted with great caution and apprehension. A review of literature indicates that the main purpose of SBM concept to reduce central bureaucratic process and delay in the education system by transferring authority and participation all individuals in decision-making and planning related to education, especially schools staffing, finance, and general development.

According to Malen et al. (1990), the main theory of SBM around the world is that giving actors of schools more authority over school affairs will result in school improvement as they are in a better situation to decision-making to meet the school requirements in a more effective manner. SBM reform decentralizes accountability and decision-making authorities to local school management committees (World Bank, 2003). In this sense, SBM take many different forms, both in terms of who has the authority to make decision and also the level of decision-making (Gertler et al. 2006).

Murphy and Beck (1995) argued that, SBM involves a decentralized redistribution of authority from central and region offices to local schools. Theoretically, effectiveness of local schools and the impact of parent's participation and the rest of society members -sometimes students themselves- would increase. Thus, sharing fundamental interested factors in the educational districts is the main characteristics of SBM. Oswald (1995) about this concept comments that SBM is a strategy to reform education system via transferring decision authority from general offices of education to schools. In other words, SBM is defined as the decentralization of decision authority and transferring it to schools.

SBM is the decentralization of authority from the central administration to the school level (Caldwell, 2005:1). Wohlstetter and Mohrman stressed that the function of SBM as an enabling force that reshapes power relationship between the central educational system and schools, to facilitate constantly and responsive school development. They argue that SBM is a common political mode to reform school administration and governance that gives local community school participants, teachers, parents, students at large, and the power to improve their school (Wohlstetter and Mohrman, 1996:4).

#### Outcomes of SBM

SBM embraces a broad variety of strategies ranging from wholly autonomous schools with power over every financial, educational and personnel affairs, to more limiting versions that consent to autonomy

over certain areas of school functions. Another dimension of SBM revolves around whom greater decision authority and responsibility are transferred to. In this sense, the main outcomes of SBM concepts vary considerably although they typically include: (1) improving the involvement of parents and local communities in schools; (2) empowering principals and teachers; (3) construction local level capacity; (4) establishing responsibility approaches for school-based actors and improving the transparency of processes by delegation of authority; and (5) improving effectiveness, efficiency and quality of schooling, thus raising student academic achievement levels (Gertler et al. 2006).

**1-** The Emergence and Extent of SBM Concept

**2-** There are conflicting views of the origin of school-based management concept. Some authors suggest (Caldwell, 1993) that the development of school-based management had its origin in Tasmania, spreading first to Victoria and New Zealand and then to the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere. Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1996) suggest that school-based management's origin was within the USA and Canada in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Also, they further explain that school-based management spread from the North American continent to Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Europe, and South Africa, parts of South East Asia and the Pacific and more recently to the nations of South America. Whatever its journey, it has now touched almost all western nations and Asia, Africa and South America. According Abu-Duhou (1999) school-based management reform came out in 1976 for the first time for the purpose of development of United States schools. Later on, many educational systems focused on this strategy as a way for school reformation and improvement.

**3-** The emergence of the SBM concept is present by some researchers (Darensbourg, 1996 and Cookson, 1994) as a direct political response to provide greater parental choice in the school their children attend, as well as the programs that are offer within the school. Through developed strategic decision-making, school communities may now provide a variety of programs that differentiate them from other local district schools and therefore may better cater for the needs of the school community.

**4-** Iran Education Supreme Council (IESC) has defined SBM concept as: it is a guideline to facilitate access to education goals through transferring part of decision-making authorities to school basis and main emphasis on principals, teachers, students and their parent's participation in decision making (Schools executive rules of procedures, 2000). The main goals of this system in Iran is empowering teachers,

principals and emphasis on teacher's participation in main decisions of school, because it is believe that teachers are only persons who are close to students at school and are fully familiar with their interests, demands and psychics. Moreover, this reform emphasise on students outcomes, ethical prosperity and development and promoting during the study.

**5-** Regarding to strategic policies of education system in the Third-Five Year Development Plan of Islamic Republic of Iran (2000-2004), the executive regulations of Iran schools were edited in detail and given to schools in 652 meeting of IESC in 2000s - regarding to education policies and fundamental strategies such as decentralization, school-based and developing people's participation- and all schools in Iran (primary, guidance, high schools and pre-university) should apply this regulations (Research and Educational Planning Organization of Education Ministry, 2006).

**6-** Despite numerous efforts, this plan did not receive much attention from politicians and individuals involved at school decision and society, because of the barriers and limitations until 2004: political considerations, highly centralized structure, bureaucracy, management instability and legal barriers, insufficient budget to change education system specially at schools, lack of clear laws, regulations, policies and dominance of administrative system on educational system.

**7-** For expanding peoples and school staffs participation in managing schools and in order to achieve to SBM reform, IESC in 706 meeting in 2004s, approved administration of some public and charity schools as the 'Board of Trustee schools'(BTS) (Research and Educational Planning Organization of Education Ministry, 2006).

Table 1 shows the historical and development process of school-based management concept in Iran. This table indicates that real implementation of SBM concept occurred in 2004. The objective of this section is present perfect picture of school-based management implemented in Iran. Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1996) review the literatures and classified three different models of school-based management. They explain that in the *first model* the local community has most control over decision-making and the targets of the reform tend to focus on accountability to parents and selection; in the *second model* has the teachers who obtain most of the authority, and many of these reforms have teacher empowerment as a principle goal; and the *third model* has the school principal as the key decision-maker and is purpose to provision increased responsibility to central or local government and improve efficient use of school resources.

**Table 1.** Historical and development process of school-based management

Years of program	Program description	Program results
1997	SBM concept for the first time discussed by Ministry of Iran Education. the main goals of this concept in Iran is empowering principals and teachers and also transferring some authority from central government To into schools.	In this year this concept did not perform in any school
2000	Based on Third-Five Year Development Plan of I.R of Iran, IESC approved This reform for implementation in the schools, but did not execute because Some limitation until 2004	In this year this concept did not perform in any school
2004	IESC approved implementation of SBM concept in some public and charity schools under name Board of trustees Schools (BTS)	In this year implemented the SBM in 500 schools throughout the country
2009	IESC based on Forth Cultural, Social and Economic Plan of I.R of Iran, once again emphasizes on the continue and implementation of this concept in the country	In this year implemented the SBM in 1000 schools throughout the country

### Conceptual Framework

In education systems a conceptual framework is a model of reality that indicates the key concepts that are used to understand reality and the relationship between and among concepts. To express it somewhat differently, conceptual framework are used as a lens in attempting to make sense of the world (Anderson, 2004).

The conceptual framework used in preparing this study contains four concepts. Three concepts in this model are clearly alterable which changes in these concepts- Iran education system, policy goals of SBM reform, and school management- can be expected to result in increases or decreases in the implementation of school-based management reform in schools. As a consequence, policies related to these concepts are also quite likely to result in increases and decreases in the performing SBM reform.

The first concept (Iran education system) include the Ministry of Iran Education who are responsible for major parts of planning authority and responsibilities and also their execution; which these authorities and duties should be devolved inside the schools (executive school staff especially principals and teachers) according to SBM reform.

The second concept of this figure - policy goals of SBM in Iran- consists of concepts of school-based management reform (decentralization and empowerment) which each country around the world accept one or some concepts as evidence according to political, economic, cultural, and geographical conditions; and apply these concepts in their schools. As mentioned earlier, Iran education system most emphasis in two concepts of SBM reform namely

empowerment of principals and teachers and decentralization of authorities and duties from center to inside the schools. For the purpose of gaining valuable and real information on implementation of this strategy in Tehran schools, this research aims to study two dimensions of SBM system (decentralization and empowerment), which are considered as the effective factors on efficiency of principals and teachers. Decentralization involves the transfer of decision-making powers and responsibility from central government to lower levels of government or private institutions. This could be a transfer of responsibility such as distribution of resources, administrative and management tasks, and planning (Abu-Duhou, 1999). Lieberman and Miller (1984) and Short and Green (1989) believes that empowerment as enabling school staff members to commence and to carry out new idea which, afterward, should generate increase teaching and learning opportunities for students. According to Short and Rinehart (1992) empowerment not only includes participation in decision-making, but it also comprises autonomy, self-effectiveness, professional growth, status and effect.

The concept next - school management- which is the main center of changes and reforms considered in this strategy and includes the resources of SBM reform such as associations, allocation budget, administration, maintenance and infrastructure, and curriculum development as well as the ways in which principals and teachers are organized and managed within these environments. Two of these concepts- principals and teachers - are "givens" in most schools. Principals and teachers are employed in schools, usually for period of several years. As a consequence,

neither of these concepts is conducive to bringing about great change in relatively short period of time. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the characteristics of both principals and teachers are important to consider in examining and implementation of school-based management reform in schools.

Behrman et al. (2002) argued that teachers' knowledge and experience should be include in key school decision and therefore teachers are expected to play role in staff development, mentoring and curriculum development and become key parents in schools (Behrman et al. 2002:26). According to Romanish (1991) principals has an important role in changing situation and supporting teachers at the schools and they have different roles in school-based management, because they do not decide about all school's affairs and should understand that this system works with teachers, students, and community member's participation. The emphasis in this study to review the perceptions and attitudes of principals and teachers on the implementation of school-based management concepts in Tehran schools (primary, guidance and high courses).

## **DISCUSSION**

School leaders across the world are exploring ways to better train students and develop school performance. In this sense, they should also have the capacity to conform to the changing range of SBM and should be ready to respond to central innovations as these may be determined from time to time at the province, state, national, or district levels (Caldwell, 2005).

Caldwell and Spinks (1998) argues that for more than two decades in the world, SBM has been evident in policy and practice to the point that there are now few nations that have not moved down this track. In fact, by the start of the 21st century, there seemed to be three major tracks for change in systems of education: the construction of systems of self-managing schools (school-based management), continuous focus on learning outcomes, and the creation of schools for a knowledge society and global economy. Also, Caldwell (2005) further explains that, it seems that no system of education to remain at the same point along these tracks for very long. Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1996) suggest that SBM in the long term strategic context offers a way to encourage improvement by decentralizing control from central district offices to all school staff. It efforts to give school components-principals, teachers, parents and other local community members-more manage over what happens in schools.

It goes without saying that among the main resources of school-based management are money

and time for the spreading skills-development process necessary to support the new way of operating. Also, development of staff abilities and team development of the different councils and other collective structures require finding specialists to help with the process and time for it to occur. Each School will have to find procedures to free-up participants for such development. Moreover, school areas will have to invest in the extension of new site-based information systems, including measurement and feedback systems, financial and budget allocation systems, and new reward systems. Hence, the extension of these systems will take expert time, but also should be done in a collaborative way in order to the diverse stakeholders understand and help to shape them. Again, this involves freeing up people to participate.

De Grauwe (2004) describes that two groups expected to be the main guarantors of the successful performing of school-based management reform that comprise senior teachers, especially the school's principal, and the parents – and, sometimes, the wider local community. It is wrong to assume that school personnel are always ready and willing to undertake the reform. According to some researchers SBM has in several cases made life harder for school principals by raising their executive and managerial workload, to the detriment of their role as an educational leader (Caldwell 1993; Odden and Odden 1994; Wylie 1996). Indeed, many of the administration-related decisions SBM reforms include – especially financing and staffing issues – are complex and intricate. Regarding the community, its involvement in school activity might also impose considerable coordination and time demands. Therefore, these can indicate a significant cost for Low-income students parental who might have to give up some wage-earning work time to contribute in the school committees. In addition, in societies with many social and political tensions, the school committee can become means in the hands of an elite group and cannot improve transparency and accountability will be achieved. Based on these potential problems, additional rigorous evidence is needed to check the influence of different ways of implementing SBM.

This article started with introducing school-based management reform, which is one of the strategies that to reform and change the education system in the world in the past two decades. A review of SBM policy showed that this system causes more efficiency and effectiveness of schools and empowering principals, teachers and student's academic achievements, and also more participation of sympathetic people in education.

Discussion continued to introducing the emergence and extent of SBM around the world and

also in Iran content and presenting conceptual framework that this study with facing.

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