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Exploring the Challenges and Strategies in Overcoming School-Based Management (SBM) Implementation Standards and Policies

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the challenges encountered by teachers in meeting the standards and policies of School-Based Management (SBM) implementation practices and examined the strategies employed to overcome these challenges. The research used a phenomenological design to investigate the lived experiences of 15 teachers from selected schools in the three congressional districts of Cotabato Province, Philippines. The study identified key challenges, including inconsistent dissemination and communication of new directives, increased workload and time management issues, insufficient training on SBM documentation, and difficulties with accessing timely and reliable data. Teachers expressed confusion due to unclear directives and frequent changes in policies, which hindered their ability to implement SBM practices effectively. In response, teachers developed strategies such as creating a shared responsibility system, fostering collaborative leadership, and building a culture of accountability and transparency. The study emphasized the importance of efficient communication, continuous professional development, and leadership enhancement to address the challenges teachers face in SBM implementation. The findings provide valuable insights into the obstacles and solutions related to SBM practices and offer recommendations for improving SBM implementation through better communication, training, and leadership strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The successful implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) is essential for improving the quality of education, and it is increasingly seen as a key factor in promoting sustainable educational reform. SBM emphasizes decentralizing decision-making to the school level, where teachers and other stakeholders are directly involved in managing school operations. This approach aligns with the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), which focuses on continuous improvement in education systems to meet the evolving needs of students, teachers, and the community. TQM is recognized as a systematic framework that helps schools enhance the quality of their services, processes, and environment, ensuring that educational institutions consistently improve and adapt to socio-economic and environmental challenges (Sallis, 2019; Pambreni et al., 2019).

However, research exploring the challenges and strategies in overcoming SBM implementation standards and policies in public elementary schools remains limited. While many studies have focused on the application of TQM in higher education institutions (Balzer et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2016), SBM practices in primary and secondary schools are still emerging (Cruz et al., 2016). The literature on SBM implementation in these settings is insufficient, particularly when it comes to understanding how teachers face and manage the challenges of meeting the standards and policies of SBM. The present study seeks to bridge this gap by exploring the specific challenges encountered by teachers in SBM implementation, as well as the strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles. Through this, the study aimed to contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge on SBM practices and provide practical recommendations for improving the quality management systems in educational institutions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The general objective of this study was to explore the challenges encountered in meeting the standards and policies of SBM implementation practices and to examine the strategies employed to overcome these challenges.

1. What are the challenges encountered in meeting the standards and policies of SBM implementation practices?
2. How were these challenges overcome?

Research Design

This study explored the challenges and coping strategies of teachers within educational ecosystem. The research design for this study was phenomenological, as it aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers in meeting the standards and policies of SBM implementation practices and to examine the strategies they employed to overcome the challenges they encountered. By focusing on the participants' perspectives, the study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and strategies associated with SBM implementation in educational settings.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in selected schools across the three congressional districts of Cotabato Province: the First, Second, and Third Districts, which are located in the heart of Mindanao, Philippines. The province is characterized by its diverse geography, including mountain ranges, plains, and bodies of water, with each district facing unique challenges related to agriculture, urbanization, and infrastructure development.

Research Instrument

This study used an interview guide with a primary question and probing questions, which was assessed for content validity by three experts to ensure relevance and accuracy.

Research Participants

In this study, 15 teachers from the initial sample were purposively selected to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. These teachers underwent in-depth interviews to explore their knowledge of TQM and practices in complying with SBM standards. The qualitative phase provided deeper, contextualized insights into the teachers' lived experiences, offering more distinctions in understanding the quantitative results.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data. This method enables the researcher to identify, analyze, and report patterns and themes within the data, offering an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences, challenges, and coping strategies. Thematic analysis requires the identification of patterns or themes in qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2006) confirmed in their study that it is the first qualitative approach to be studied because it provides key skills that are useful for other types of analytical purposes. Thematic analysis was used to analyze common answers from the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Challenges Encountered in Meeting the Standards and Policies of SBM Implementation Practices

When examining the challenges encountered in meeting the standards and policies of SBM (School-Based Management) implementation practices globally, there is only recurring theme emerge. This challenge is often tied to local contexts but are also influenced by global educational policies, resources, and governance. School teachers face various organizing themes they have encountered in meeting the standards and policies of School Based Management (SBM) implementation practices. As presented in Table 1, the global theme is Challenges of Teachers in Adhering to SBM Standards and Policies with organizing themes described such as *inconsistent dissemination and communication of new directives; challenges in increased workload and time management; lack of time and overburdened schedules; insufficient training and knowledge on SBM documentation; and inadequate data access and timeliness.*

Inconsistent Dissemination and Communication of New Directives.

As narrated by the teachers during the in-depth interview there were challenges in dealing with new directives. The distribution of memoranda and directives can be inconsistent across schools or among stakeholders within the same schools. This inconsistency may result from inefficient communication systems, lack of follow-up mechanisms, or reliance on outdated communication methods (e.g., paper-based memos) that fail to reach all relevant parties.

Shared by one (1) of the informants that there is struggle in her part as teacher in complying with the memorandum on the new directives given to them which resulted to confusion.

"I believed that the most struggle of teacher when it comes to SBM is the issuance of memorandum. There are new directives that were given, which causes confusions as to if what directives to follow because sometimes there is no clear instructions." Informant 3

Similar description is given by another teacher-informant who observed the same situation in meeting the standards and policies in the implementation of School Based Management practices dealing with memorandum issued.

"The problem that I can shares that we always experiences is that we always don't know the specific things we need to accomplish. Usually, memorandum was just given to us by our school head but no further explanation if what are the expectations or what we need to do." Informant 12

There is also a challenge in dealing with changing directives for the implementation of SBM practices. It was evident in the narration of one (1) of the key informants:

"I think the most challenging for me is the always changing directives. For example, there are guidelines to be implemented then suddenly there are updates or revisions that we don't know." Informant 15

The findings imply that the inconsistent dissemination of directives can lead to confusion and uneven implementation of SBM practices, which may cause disparities in how schools respond to central mandates. It could also result in different interpretations of the same directive, leading to ineffective practices.

In support to the findings, Fullan (2019) asserts that communication strategies are integral to the successful implementation of educational reforms. When new directives are not disseminated consistently, it hampers the potential of SBM to create widespread positive change.

Similarly, Figueroa (2020) emphasizes that inconsistent communication and a lack of clear, systematic distribution channels can create fragmentation in the implementation of SBM practices.

Table 1. Challenges Encountered by the Teachers in Meeting the Standards and Policies of SBM Implementation Practices

Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Specific Themes
Challenges in meeting SBM standards and policies on implementation practices	Inconsistent dissemination and communication of new directives	Struggling with changing directives
		Lacking of clarity and transparency in directives
		Challenging in dealing with changing directives
	Increased workload and time management challenges	Role strain due to dual responsibilities
		Limited man-power in the school
	Insufficient training and knowledge on SBM documentation	Challenge in time element
		Lack of time and overburdened schedules
	Inadequate data access and inconsistent indicator	Challenge on SBM MOVs
		Issues on untimely and proper documentations
		Burdens on documentation responsibilities
		Lack of reliable data
		Mismatch tasks dealing with indicators
		Confusions on indicators
		Difficulty in complying with indicators

Strategies in Overcoming Challenges in the Implementation of SBM Practices

In the context of School-Based Management (SBM), overcoming challenges in implementation is crucial for ensuring that schools effectively improve their educational outcomes. Global themes in SBM strategies typically revolve around addressing common barriers and leveraging resources to foster sustainable practices. These strategies can be categorized into three main themes: **collaborative and participatory leadership; building a culture of accountability and transparency; and leadership and governance enhancement.** Below is a discussion of each theme, supported by the narration shared by the teacher-participants during the interview and results and findings are displays in Table 2.

Collaborative and participatory leadership

The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) practices in the Department of Education (DepEd) particularly in Cotabato Division has encountered various challenges. However, the teacher-participants have devised strategies to mitigate these challenges while promoting effective SBM practices. Teachers emphasize the importance of collaboration and participatory leadership in the successful implementation of SBM practices.

Creating shared responsibility system. One of the most effective ways to ensure the successful implementation of SBM practices is through the establishment of a **shared responsibility system**, where different stakeholders take collective ownership of the school's performance and decision-making processes.

"Our strategy is to make a shared responsibility system in our school. We have assigned documentation team who are in-charge in tracking all narrative reports and MOVs. In this way, there was specific team that could oversee the SBM papers that makes the work easier for all." Informant 7









Similarly, key informant 9 reiterates during the interview that...

"Collaborative approach was our way to solve the challenges. We had work grouping, wherein each group was assigned within the different SBM indicators. In this way, we shared workload and makes easier to handle compliance." Informant 9

A shared responsibility system refers to a collaborative approach in which all relevant stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community) participate in the decision-making, governance, and management of school activities. Each stakeholder has distinct roles and responsibilities but must work together toward the common goal of improving the school environment and academic outcomes.

In support in the above statements, effective implementation of shared responsibility requires robust accountability mechanisms. This includes clear metrics for performance, transparency in decision-making, and regular monitoring. Without these, there may be risks of non-compliance or failure to meet collective goals. A study by Van de Ven and Poole (1995) highlights the importance of **institutional mechanisms** to ensure the monitoring and enforcement of shared responsibilities.

Table 2. Strategies in overcoming challenges in SBM Implementation Practices

Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Specific Themes
Strategies in overcoming challenges in the implementation of SBM practices	Collaborative and participatory leadership	 Creating shared responsibility system
		 Conducting community mapping workshop
	Building a culture of accountability and transparency	 Priority task
		 Using checklist for documentations
		 Creating simplified guide
	Leadership and governance enhancement	 Setting of deadlines per team documentation
		 Conducting of orientation on new directives
		 Focusing on most essential indicators

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the challenges encountered in meeting the standards and policies of SBM implementation practices reflect a complex set of issues deeply rooted in local contexts and global educational frameworks. The recurring theme identified in this study is the inconsistency in the dissemination and communication of new directives. Teachers face difficulty in navigating through changes in policies, which often lack clarity and consistency. These communication gaps lead to confusion and hinder the uniform application of SBM practices across schools. Teachers also experience role strain due to dual responsibilities and increased workloads, exacerbated by inadequate time management and overburdened schedules. Insufficient training and knowledge, particularly in SBM documentation, and difficulties in accessing reliable data further complicate the situation. Moreover, the burden of documentation responsibilities places additional strain on teachers, further contributing to their challenges in implementing SBM practices effectively.

The study also highlighted the importance of strategies to overcome these challenges. Teachers have proposed the establishment of a shared responsibility system, which fosters collaboration and collective ownership of school management. This approach enables schools to better manage documentation and implement SBM practices in a more organized manner. Building a culture of accountability and transparency was identified as another key strategy. By ensuring clear expectations and setting deadlines for team documentation, schools can maintain consistent and efficient operations.

Furthermore, conducting regular orientations and workshops on new directives helps improve understanding and compliance, especially regarding changes in policies. These strategies contribute to overcoming the challenges posed by inconsistent communication, time constraints, and lack of training.

In addition, leadership and governance enhancement emerged as critical to overcoming the challenges. Teachers emphasized the need for participatory leadership, where all stakeholders—administrators, teachers, parents, and the community—work together toward shared goals. This collaborative approach strengthens school management and ensures that SBM implementation is more effective and sustainable. The importance of accountability mechanisms to monitor and enforce shared responsibilities cannot be overstated, as these mechanisms ensure that everyone involved in the process understands their roles and the expectations placed upon them.

Despite the challenges identified, the study found that teachers are actively engaged in finding solutions that promote effective SBM practices. By fostering a collaborative environment and focusing on accountability, schools can enhance their capacity to meet the standards and policies of SBM. The strategies proposed in this study offer a roadmap for improving SBM implementation and can serve as a guide for future efforts to address the challenges schools face in educational reform. These findings emphasize the need for ongoing support, training, and clear communication from all stakeholders involved in the SBM process. The success of SBM ultimately depends on the ability to adapt to challenges, foster collaboration, and create a culture of accountability.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have significant implications for practice in the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) practices. First, the inconsistency in the dissemination and communication of new directives highlights the need for more efficient communication channels. Schools should invest in modern communication systems, such as digital platforms or integrated messaging systems, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders receive timely and clear information. This would reduce confusion and ensure that SBM directives are understood uniformly across all levels of the school system.

Additionally, the challenges related to increased workload and time management suggest that schools must consider providing more support to teachers. This may include hiring additional staff or restructuring responsibilities to prevent overburdening teachers. Schools should also consider providing more flexible working hours or time management workshops to help teachers balance their dual roles effectively. Moreover, the burden of documentation responsibilities can be alleviated by creating streamlined processes or appointing specific personnel responsible for documentation tasks, allowing teachers to focus on their core educational responsibilities.

The lack of training and knowledge on SBM documentation identified in the study points to the need for continuous professional development. Schools and educational authorities should prioritize regular training programs on SBM practices, documentation standards, and data management. These training sessions should be mandatory and ensure that all teachers are well-equipped to comply with SBM policies and requirements. Providing teachers with clear, simplified guides on the documentation process could further assist in this area, reducing confusion and ensuring that standards are met consistently.

Moreover, the study's findings on the importance of a shared responsibility system underscore the need for collaborative leadership in schools. School leaders should foster a culture of inclusivity and teamwork, where all stakeholders—administrators, teachers, parents, and the community—participate in decision-making processes. Creating a shared responsibility framework can help distribute the workload more evenly and promote accountability. Establishing committees or teams focused on different aspects of SBM implementation can ensure that responsibilities are clearly defined, and tasks are efficiently managed.

Finally, the emphasis on accountability and transparency suggests that schools need to establish clear performance metrics and monitoring mechanisms to track progress. Regularly assessing the effectiveness of SBM practices and providing feedback to teachers and administrators will help ensure that SBM implementation remains on track. Leadership at all levels should be committed to making SBM a shared goal, fostering collaboration, and maintaining transparent communication to ensure that challenges are addressed promptly and effectively.

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