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# AN EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE NEW SCHOOL MODEL: A STUDY ON AL AIN SCHOOLS

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AN EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES IN THE NEW SCHOOL MODEL: A STUDY ON AL AIN
SCHOOLS

Shaikha Ali Abdulla Al Kaabi

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Education (Educational Leadership)

Under the Supervision of Dr. Ali Ibrahim

May 2015

**Declaration of Original Work**

I, Shaikha Ali Abdulla Al Kaabi, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled "*An Evaluation of The School-Based Management Practices in The New School Model: A Study in Al Ain Schools*", hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is an original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Ali Ibrahim, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not been previously formed as the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. The materials borrowed from other sources and included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged.

Student's Signature _____          Date _____

**Approval of the Master Thesis**

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**Abstract**

In 2005, the government of Abu Dhabi started a reform initiative by establishing the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). ADEC became responsible for efforts to improve the performance of schools and increase students' achievement in the emirate. One way to do this was by creating the New School Model (NSM). Part of the NSM reform was a shift from the centralized system of managing the schools into a decentralized system that delegates and sometimes devolves decision-making authority to schools themselves. The purpose of this study is to investigate the degree to which School-Based Management (SBM) has been practiced in the New School Model (NSM) schools in Al Ain. The other purpose is to investigate the influence of staff position on the practices of the SBM. The third purpose is to identify the main areas of SBM practices that need improvement based on the perceptions of the participants. A descriptive quantitative research method in the form of a questionnaire was utilized to obtain the perceptions of 351 school staff. The conceptual framework for the SBM practices that guided this study was built from a synthesis of literature related to SBM and the features of NSM. The framework identified six critical areas of SBM practices: (a) effective school leadership, (b) budget allocation, (c) management strategies, (d) staff development, (e) curriculum and instruction, and (f) resources. ADEC grants authority in the areas of management strategies, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and resources. The areas of effective leadership and budget allocation have no or little authority. The results indicate that participation of school staff in SBM practices in areas where staff has more authority was greater than their participation in areas with no or little authority. In addition, the staff desire to participate in decision-making was strong and compatible with their actual participation in both areas. Moreover, the staff desire

and actual participation was stronger in the areas that have direct relations to teaching than to the administrative tasks. The variable of position played a significant role in determining staff perceptions on practices in the areas of curriculum and instruction, management strategies, and resources. Finally, the study found that all areas of SBM need improvement, except for preparing school development plan, which has acceptable practice.

**Keywords:** School-Based Management, SBM, New School Model, ADEC, decentralization in education, decision-making, authority.

**Title and Abstract (in Arabic)**

**تقييم ممارسات الإدارة الذاتية للمدارس في النموذج المدرسي الجديد: دراسة على**

**مدارس مدينة العين**

الملخص

بدأت إمارة أبوظبي مبادراتها لإصلاح التعليم في عام ٢٠٠٥ من خلال إنشاء مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم. حيث أصبح المجلس مسئولاً عن تطوير أداء المدارس ورفع التحصيل العلمي للطلاب. وكان النموذج المدرسي الجديد أحد مبادرات المجلس لتحقيق هذه الأهداف. وقد أشتمل جزء من هذا النموذج التحول من المركزية إلى اللامركزية في إدارة المدارس، حيث تم تفويض وأحياناً تحويل سلطة اتخاذ القرارات إلى المدرسة. وبناءً على ذلك، جاءت هذه الدراسة للتحقق من درجة ممارسة العاملين في مدارس النموذج المدرسي الجديد لعناصر الإدارة الذاتية للمدارس. وكان الهدف الثاني للدراسة هو استكشاف أثر المسمى الوظيفي للعاملين (معلم و إداري) على درجة تطبيق الإدارة الذاتية للمدرسة. وتمثل الهدف الأخير في تحديد أهم الممارسات التي تحتاج إلى تطوير من خلال وجهة نظر العاملين في هذه المدارس. تم إستخدام منهجية البحث الكمي الوصفي من خلال تطبيق استبانة على ٣٥١ من العاملين في مدارس النموذج المدرسي الجديد لبحث أسئلة الدراسة. تم بناء الإطار النظري لهذه الدارسة من خلال الدراسات في مجال الإدارة الذاتية للمدارس وخصائص النموذج المدرسي الجديد لمجلس أبوظبي للتعليم، وقد تضمن هذا الاطار العناصر التالية: (أ) القيادة المدرسية الفعالة، (ب) الميزانية، (ج) استراتيجيات الإدارة، (د) التطوير المهني، (ه) المناهج وطرق التدريس، و (و) المصادر. والجدير بالذكر أن مجلس أبوظبي للتعلم قام بمنح صلاحيات للعاملين في المدارس لإتخاذ القرارات التي تتعلق بإستراتيجيات إدارة المدارس والتطوير المهني للعاملين بها والمناهج وطرق التدريس والمصادر، بينما كانت الصلاحيات في مجالي القيادة المدرسية الفعالة والميزانية قليلة أو منعدمة في بعض الأحيان. وقد راعت الدراسة هذا عند تحليل النتائج. وقد دلت النتائج على أن درجة ممارسة العاملين في المدارس لعناصر الإدارة الذاتية للمدارس كانت أكبر في الأمور التي كانوا يتمتعون فيها بصلاحيات إتخاذ القرار منها في الأمور التي كانت صلاحياتهم فيها قليلة أو منعدمة. وقد توافق ذلك مع رغبتهم القوية للمشاركة في إتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بنفس الأمور. بالإضافة لذلك فإن ممارسات العاملين الفعلية ودرجة رغبتهم في المشاركة في إتخاذ القرارات كانت أقوى في الأمور المتعلقة بالتعليم عنها في المهام الإدارية. ودلت النتائج كذلك على وجود فروقات في

التطبيق بناءً على المسمى الوظيفي في ثلاث عناصر شملت المناهج وطرق التدريس، استراتيجيات الإدارة، والمصادر. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الممارسات في جميع عناصر الإدارة الذاتية للمدارس بحاجة للتحسين فيما عدا العنصر الخاص بإعداد خطة تطوير المدرسة الذي إتسم بدرجة مقبولة من المشاركة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الإدارة الذاتية للمدارس، النموذج المدرسي الجديد، مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم، اللامركزية في التعليم، إتخاذ القرار، السلطة.

## Acknowledgements

All praise and thanks be to Allah without whom nothing is achieved. I wish to gratefully acknowledge the people who have contributed ideas, assistances, and relevant support in the completion of this thesis. First and foremost, it is with deep respect I express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Dr. Ali Ibrahim. His expert advice and enormous encouragement has totally enhanced my capacity and guided me to complete this study. Thankfulness is also expressed to Dr. Ali Al Kaabi, Dr. Hassan Al Khamiri, and Professor Mohamed Abdeldayem for their appropriate promptness in assisting me to gain a comprehensive knowledge of research methodology.

I am also in debt to my school; I wish to thank the principal and all my colleagues for their generous support, encouragement, participation and contribution to this study. Moreover, I am thankful to ADEC for their approval to conduct and facilitate the distribution and collecting of data from schools. I wish also to thank all the participants who agreed to participate in this study for their enthusiastic responses during data collection.

Finally, the love and encouragement of my family have propelled me to arrive at this point in my studies. Their understanding and sacrifices made it possible for me to reach this personal and professional goal. To my children, Eid and Maitha, thank you for all the times you were quiet so Mama could study. To my husband, Abdulla, thank you for your continuous support and encouragement. To my relatives who kept asking "When you will finished?". You always knew I would someday celebrate my achievement with you.

# Dedication

*This thesis is dedicated to*

*My Father*

*A strong and gentle soul who taught me to trust in Allah and believe in myself*

*My Mother*

*Who affection, love, encouragement and prays of day and night make me able to get*

*such success and honor*

*My Family*

*Who have provided the extra motivation to finish my Master Degree*

*Along with all hard working and respected*

*Teachers*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

Public education worldwide has experienced periodic trends where the school management emphasis shifted from centralization to decentralization influenced by the modern management in industrial and commercial organizations. The dissatisfaction with the central approach of education and the move towards decentralization introduced various school reform movements, all of which aimed at improving efficiency, equity, and quality of education. Many researchers affirm that one of the most significant reforms in the current restructuring of school systems has been the devolution of decision-making authority to school levels through the move towards School-Based Management (SBM) (Zajda & Gamage, 2009; Caldwell, 2005; Ogawa & White, 1994; Cheng Cheong, 1996).

Unlike the traditional approaches, SBM was designed to provide an accountability system between the beneficiaries (students and parents), and the agents (teachers and policy makers), in order to improve the quality of education. According to Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, and Patrinos (2009, p. 15) SBM is "the decentralization of levels of authority to the school level". Moreover, Gamage (1996) points out that SBM is primarily concerned with a system of educational decentralization in order to strengthen and empower school communities. Thus, SBM empowers stakeholders within school communities, increases participation in decision-making, and provides opportunities to share power and authority at the school level. SBM was driven by the belief that people who are responsible for the education of children, and who are closest to where implementation will occur are in the best position to decide how implementation should take place at the school level (Oswald, 2014). The stated purpose of SBM is to improve school performance by

making those closest to the delivery of services (teachers, principals, and community) more independent, more involved, and therefore more responsible for their decisions. Although moving authority down to the school level is crucial in SBM, schools have to operate within a set of policies determined by the central government (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, Patrinos, & Santibáñez, 2009). Thus, both the central government and the schools have distinctive roles to perform in a SBM system, and only when they work collaboratively can SBM be truly successful.

There is no universally used method of applying SBM and therefore each SBM program has unique features. According to Ogawa and White (1994, p. 55), "SBM programs vary on several dimensions: the level of authority delegated to schools, the domains over which school-level decision makers have discretion, the groups of stakeholders involved on decision-making bodies, and the purposes served by school-level decision-making bodies". In short, SBM differs in terms of who has the power over decision-making, and in terms of the amount of autonomy devolved to the school's level. In some SBM programs, the power is devolved to the school principals, in others, it is devolved to the parents and community, while others are devolved to the principal and teachers. According to Burns, Filmer, and Patrinos (2011), the amount of autonomy in the SBM can be divided into three types; strong, intermediate and weak. A strong SBM exists when "almost full control of schools by councils, parents, and school administrators (including full choice such as creation of new public schools) or high degree of autonomy given to councils over staffing and budgets". In an intermediate SBM, "councils have authority to set curricula but have limited autonomy regarding resources". In a weak SBM, "school councils are established but serve mainly as an advisory role". The distribution differs according to the need of local school, and the culture of the community. On the other hand,

Abu-Duhou (1999, p. 17) asserts that decision-making at the school level usually includes the following activities: "curriculum, budget and resource allocation, staff and students, and in some instances assessment". These activities were the basic activities of SBM, however, other researchers added more elements like information, organization and management, knowledge, technology, time, and admission, (Shackleton, 1992; Caldwell & Spinks, 1998; Bullock & Thomas, 1997). In sum, SBM with sufficient autonomy, ownership, and flexibility can facilitate the schools to achieve their goals and maximize the school's effectiveness.

Several studies have found that SBM can empower schools in order to develop a better quality educational process, healthier teaching-learning environments, stronger parental and community involvement, and improved student outcomes (Khattri, Ling, & Jha, 2012; Bandur, 2012; Lindgerg & Vanyushyn, 2013; Zajda & Gamage, 2009). Werf, Creemers, and Guldemond (2001) found that parental involvement within SBM has been the most efficient intervention in improving the quality of education, and has a positive effect on academic achievement of students. Bandur (2012) found that devolving power and authority to school level has created several changes in schools, including in-school culture changes, and increased participation of school communities. According to Bandur, these factors have led to improvements in the teaching-learning environment and student achievement. The research is clear when stating that SBM can provide an alternative model for managing schools in order to achieve autonomy, participation, effectiveness, productivity, and accountability.

It should be noted that the popularity and the diversity of SBM together with the dissatisfaction with the central approach has increased the implementation of the SBM in the developed and developing countries. Today, "more than 800 school-

based management programs have been implemented in more than two dozen countries ranging from Australia and the United States to Spain, Mexico, Cambodia, and Mozambique" (World Bank, 2007).

Like many other countries, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) education system is involved in reform efforts to improve the performance of public schools and increase student achievement. The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the government of the UAE have implemented different initiatives, which focused on improving the standards of education in public schools across the UAE. Most of these early initiatives were centralized in nature and focused on improving curriculum and teaching-learning strategies in the classroom. According to Harold (2005), the MoE made some local efforts to develop the curriculum for subjects such as Arabic and Islamic Studies. While in other subject areas such as Mathematics, Science and English, the text-based curriculum was 'borrowed'. There has also been a movement towards shifting teaching methodology approach from a more teacher-centered to a more learner-centered (Tabari, 2014). The MoE initiatives to reform were similar to that of the United State's early unsatisfactory reform. This reform was primarily driven by a top-down effort and was focused on promoting curricula and new teaching approaches without taking into consideration the specific local needs of schools and stakeholders. Therefore, despite tremendous financial investments by the UAE government, the result was unsatisfactory for the policymakers.

In 2005, the Government of Abu Dhabi began pursuing decentralization in education management through establishing Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). The Council "seeks to develop education and educational institutions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, implement innovative educational policies, plans and programs that

aim to improve education, and support educational institutions and staff to achieve the objectives of national development in accordance with the highest international standards" (ADEC, 2013b). Augmenting reform at the school level, ADEC announced ambitious plans that attempted to reform the school system. Part of this reform was the introduction of the Public Private Partnership (PPP), whereby foreign consultancy companies were invited to provide professional development to school staff with a remit to improve pedagogy and encourage best practice within the classroom (Dickson, 2012). At the same time, ADEC announced the adoption of a new set of curriculum standards. The PPP advisors were then expected to raise levels of English-language proficiency, model delivery of the new curriculum and train local teachers to deliver it effectively (Thorne, 2011). The PPP project empowered school staff in terms of teaching and learning and laid the foundation for the New School Model (NSM).

In 2010, ADEC introduced the NSM, a new teaching and learning approach aimed at improving student learning experiences and raising academic outcomes of Abu Dhabi students to an internationally competitive level. The NSM objectives include fostering a child-centered learning environment with the support of teachers, family and community, developing Arabic and English language abilities, critical thinking, national identity, standardizing the curriculum, pedagogy, resources and support across all ADEC schools, (ADEC, 2014b). Similar to the SBM, the NSM key features include effective school organization, staffing structure, child-centered learning environment, designing and delivery of curriculum, managing resources, community involvement, and school evaluation (ADEC, 2012f).

In order to help implement the NSM, ADEC started to empower school principals and school teams through launching the Empowering Educators' Program

(Tamkeen), that aims to build local capacity within school leadership teams so that each team can deliver training and professional development to all staff within their schools and to parents within each school community.

According to the NSM, the authority of the school principal increased to include for example the selection, orientation, and termination of reserve teachers. School principal in the NSM serve as instructional leader who "provides leadership and direction, enables a shared vision for the school, and ensures that it is managed and organized to meet its aims and targets" (ADEC, 2010). Additionally, "ADEC requires better achievement from the schools and grant greater autonomy to schools in designing curricula and managing resources" (ADEC, 2012c). After the great reliance on the Ministry textbooks to provide the curriculum, the NSM curriculum "provides a set of detailed learning outcomes for all subjects" and required teachers to "design and use a variety of resources and methods as a part of the curriculum" (ADEC, 2013a). The inclusion of families, teachers, and community in support of student learning is strongly voiced in the NSM. Thus, the guidelines of the NSM draw attention to the enhancement of home-school relationships emphasizing, "close partnership between schools and families to improve learning outcomes and ongoing and effective home-school communication" (ADEC, 2014b).

Finally, ADEC launched school self-evaluation and the Irtiqa'a inspection as mechanisms for holding schools accountable. Through self-evolution, "schools are asked to make their own judgments on how well they are doing" (ADEC, 2012b). The aim of the a program, according to (ADEC, 2012b), is to support the school principals to reach a degree of "honesty and openness to use the self-evaluation as a management tool, through updating their self-evaluation forms regularly and linking it with their improvement plan". The need for high performance from Abu Dhabi

schools has never been greater, but at the same time, the demands placed on schools are increased.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

ADEC educational reform witnessed several initiatives including the current initiative of the NSM. The implementation of the NSM affects management strategies, the decision-making process, leadership styles, use of resources, role of stakeholders, curriculum and instructions, staff development, school climate, and parental involvement. In line with the educational reform of Abu Dhabi, and voicing the rising demands from schools, ADEC's Strategic Plan for the 2009-2018 period focuses on six priorities: elevate school quality in Abu Dhabi to international standards, improve access to P-12 education, provide students with affordable options of high quality private education, preserve UAE culture and heritage, develop successful careers, build ADEC capabilities, and actively engage the stakeholders (ADEC, 2012f).

There is a common belief in ADEC that "the school staff are the best people to offer feedback and suggestions to the education reform" (WAM, 2015). Therefore, the management structure in the NSM is becoming more decentralized and gradually involves participation in decision-making. According to the NSM, the roles of principals, teachers, and parents are changing. Principals are no longer managers but leaders who have visions and lead their schools for the benefit of their students. Teachers are curriculum designers and creators of learning resources. Parents are advisors to their children's education and consultants who provide data and participate in decision-making. Staff development is another essential key in the changing series of the NSM. Recently, ADEC encouraged schools to analyze, define, and plan their own professional development according to the need of each

individual school. Thus, although there is no clear declaration that ADEC in using

the SBM approach, the implementations of the NSM shows that ADEC is

establishing a pattern of school self-management.

  The application of NSM inevitably caused tensions to school staff and faced

some difficulties and challenges. These difficulties may begin with misunderstanding

and unaccommodating the program because it is not yet part of the education system.

To reach the success of the NSM program, it must become part of the school norm

for all employees and stakeholders, which will take time. In addition, the long history

of the central education system in the UAE will certainly affect the implementation

of the model as employees and stakeholders are required to take on new and

challenging roles. Various groups and teachers within schools will resist and will try

to keep their old norms and practices. According to ADEC's survey study (2009),

many principals lacked the necessary leadership skills and a large percentage of

teachers were not willing to participate in decision-making and exert extra effort in

schools.  Therefore, while the NSM as a SBM approach has started for sometime in

Abu Dhabi schools, its implementation might be facing some challenges.

  In sum, the NSM changed the roles of principals, teachers, and parents and

required them to participate more in school reform. However, the long history of

central education system, the lack of the necessary leadership skills, and the low

level in desire to participate in decision-making of teachers bring some difficulties

and challenges to the implementation of the NSM as a SBM approach. Therefore,

this study attempts to investigate and describe the extent of the SBM practices in the

NSM schools in Al Ain, and to identify the areas where school staff wants to

participate to implement the SBM in their schools.

**1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This study has multiple purposes. The first purpose is to investigate the degree to which SBM has been practiced in the NSM schools in Al Ain. The second purpose is to investigate the influence of staff position on the practices of the SBM. For the second purpose, the actual practices of administrators (principals, vice principals, and HoFs) and teachers will be analyze and compare to find the differences. The final purpose of this study is to identify the main areas of SBM practices that need improvement.

**1.4 Questions of the study**

This study was guided by three questions:

1.  How does school staff practice SBM in the NSM schools in Al Ain?

2.  Are there any significant differences in SBM practices of teachers and administrators?

3.  What are the practices of SBM that need improvement based on the perceptions of school staff?

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

Since the establishment of ADEC in 2006, schools in Abu Dhabi have witnessed many different initiatives of educational reform within a short period of time. The onset of the reform brought greater expectations, scrutiny and accountability from the officials' perceptions. However, it has inevitably caused tensions amongst school staff. Some of these tensions came from the changing in school staff roles in the NSM. The role of school staff is changing from just a receiver and implementer of polices to become consulters and participate in decision-making. The incremental focus on schools as a major partner on the decision making process beside the changing in school staff roles shows the NSM as a kind of SBM

programs. Hence, the importance of this study is that it aims to reveal the practices of

the SBM in Al Ain schools from the perspective of their staff. The findings might

provide insights into how the NSM schools are close to SBM and shared-decision

making. The findings highlighted major accomplishments and obstacles in

implementing SBM. Therefore, the findings might be used as a guide for officials in

ADEC who wish to enhance the implementation of the NSM.

**1.6 Scope of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the practices of SBM in Abu Dhabi

schools. However, since there was no explicit and declared application from ADEC

of SBM in Abu Dhabi schools, the researcher tried to examine the SBM practices in

schools, which applied the NSM. The reason for targeting NSM schools was because

they may have more opportunity to practice SBM since they adopted policies, which

corresponded with SBM. The choice of conducting the study in kindergarten and

cycle one schools only was because the NSM has not yet been fully implemented in

other schools and cycles yet.

**1.7 Limitations of the Study**

There are several potential limitations to this study. First, there is no clear

declaration of using the SBM as an approach in the NSM schools in Abu Dhabi. The

study was built on the assumption that the NSM is an approach, which utilizes SBM

because of the large similarities of the features between both approaches. Schools

that did not fully implement NSM were excluded from the sample. The sample

included only kindergarten and cycle one schools in Al Ain. Therefore, the results of

the study cannot be generalized to the emirate of Abu Dhabi or all of the UAE

schools. Another limitation comes from using only the questionnaire as the tool for

data collection. Some respondents are not serious enough when completing the

questionnaires. In some schools, one person can complete more than one questionnaire. However, the researcher excluded any suspicious cases of questionnaire completion.

**1.8 Definition of Terms**

For clearer understanding of the terms used in this study, below are their meanings:

**School-based Management (SBM)** is an approach that emphasizes, "delegating authority to the school instead of central office, shared decision-making model engaging various stakeholders and facilitative rather than directive leadership" (Cromwell, 2000). SBM is a management framework, which is school-based, student-centered and quality-focused (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2006). For the purpose of this study, school-based management is defined as an approach or a strategy by which authority is delegated from central administration to individual schools. The domains of this authority are: effective school leadership, budget allocation, management strategies, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and resources. These domains were assessed by different questions in the questionnaire.

 **The New School Model (NSM)** is an approach to teaching and learning aimed to improve students learning experiences and to raise the academic outcomes of Abu Dhabi students to internationally competitive level (ADEC, 2012c). This model is based on a student-centered learning approach, where students learn in a resource and technology-rich environment within modern teaching facilities (ADEC, 2014b). The NSM is a comprehensive foundation for learning that enables desired student outcomes by developing major components of the educational experience: school leadership, learning environment, teaching quality, professional development,

curriculum design, resource and parental involvement.

**Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC)** is the educational authority for the emirate of Abu Dhabi. ADEC was established in accordance with law No. 24 of 2005, issued by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the UAE President, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. The Council seeks to develop education and educational institutions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, implement innovative educational policies, plans and programs that aim to improve education, and support educational institutions and staff to achieve the objectives of national development in accordance with the highest international standards.

**Irtiqa'a** is inspection program lunched by ADEC in 2012 to assure the quality of education in public and private schools in emirate of Abu Dhabi. The program aims to meet the highest international performance standards. It comes in line with ADEC's vision calling for high quality education in all schools and for all students.

**Al Ain** is the second largest city in the emirate of Abu Dhabi and the fourth largest city in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). With a population of 568,221 (2010), it is located approximately 160 km east of the capital Abu Dhabi and about 120 km south of Dubai. Al Ain is the birthplace of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the first president of the United Arab Emirates, and it has the country's highest number of Emirati nationals.

**1.9 Organization of the Study**

In Chapter I, the background, definitions, features of the SBM and the NSM together with the purpose of the study were presented. The study questions, significance, definitions of terms, and limitations of the research were introduced. The features of the NSM implemented in schools and corresponding with the features of SBM were identified and explained. Chapter II includes, the relevant research

studies and literature were discussed. Central issues, ideas, and other pertinent

information regarding SBM and NSM were presented within seven subtopics: the

concept of school-based management (SBM), importance of SBM, characteristics of

SBM, models and approaches of SBM, international practices in SBM, ADEC's

reform and the NSM, and the NSM as SBM approach. Chapter III covers the

research methodology presented, the description of the research setting,

instrumentation, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques. Chapter IV

presented the results. Finally, Chapter V provided interpretation of the results and

presented conclusions and recommendations for further research and practice.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In many education systems, school-based management (SBM) has emerged as an important way for improving the quality of education. However, the structure of the education system with the central government playing many roles affects how SBM activities are conceived and implemented.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of literature on school reforms focusing primarily on SBM. For this purpose, the chapter is divided into eight major sections. The first section reviews the concept of SBM, with an emphasis on decentralized education systems through delegation and devolution of power and authority. The second section identifies the need of SBM and what it offers to improve the school system. The third section will identify the SBM characteristics and features. The forth section will describe the conceptual framework of the study. The fifth section will review models and approaches of SBM. The sixth section summarizes some SBM international practices. The seventh section provides a historical background of education reform in Abu Dhabi and ADEC's New School Model (NSM). The last section connects between ADEC's NSM as a SBM approach.

### 2.1 The Concept of School-based Management (SBM)

The world that surrounds us has changed. This change has forced organizations, including educational organizations to redesign themselves to ensure their prosperity in the twenty-first century environment. This is done through dramatically changed expectations and requirements. As the educational tasks have become more complicated and changeable "educators and researchers detected growing dissatisfaction with the pattern of governance that centralizes authority in the district office, concepts such as decentralized management and shared decision-making began to be applied in schools" (Oswald, 2014, p. 2).

During the past several years, the educational system in most countries around the world have been evolving from largely centralized structures to more decentralized ones. However, restructuring in the educational system through decentralization has to pass by several stages until it end up with SBM as one way of school reform. As described by White (1988), "previous attempts to decentralize were aimed at shifting authority from a large, central board of education to smaller, local boards". The early reform was primarily driven by top-down efforts and was intended to "turn a loose educational system into one with stricter roles of engagement and stiffer standards for academic programs" (Brandao, 1995, p. 15). The reform initiatives mainly focused on promoting curricula and new teaching approaches without taking into consideration the specific local needs of schools and stakeholders. The results often seemed unsatisfactory until "the eighties when there was successful development of modern management in industrial and commercial organizations, that people began to believe that to improve education quality, it is necessary to jump from the classroom teaching level to school organization level, and reform the structural system and management style of schools" (Cheng Cheong, 1996, p. 43). That introduced various school reform programs each one focused on one or more components such as budget, curriculum, staff development and school effectiveness. The focus on decentralization of authority from central education offices and the beliefs that "people can be trusted and those who are closest to where implementation will occur are in the best position to decide how implementation should take place" (Oswald, 2014, p. 3), were the driving forces behind introducing SBM.

SBM has various names, such as "local management of schools, site-based management, self-managing school, school-site autonomy, school-based budgeting,

school-based curriculum development, shared decision-making, restructuring and decentralized management" (Herman & Herman, 1992). The differences in names are less important than the shifts in authority implicit in the process.

SBM has many different of meaning; SBM can be defined as "a program or philosophy adopted by schools or districts to increase school staff autonomy to make school decisions in order to improve education" (White, 1989). Similarly, Anderson (2006) defines SBM as "the shifting of decision-making authority from the district office to individual schools". Thus, in SBM, responsibility for any decision-making authority over school operations are transferred to principals, teachers, parents, and sometimes to students and other school community members. In his complex definition Neal (1991, p. 17) defined the major elements necessary for an advanced form of SBM as following:

> "School-Based Management is a … decentralized method of operating the school district … by transferring the preponderant share of the entire school system's budget, along with corresponding decision-making power, to the local schools on an equitable lump-sum basis, based upon a differentiated per student allocation to be spent irrespective of source in the best interests of the students in those schools according to a creative local school plan and local school budget developed by the principal collaboratively with trained staff, parents and students as stakeholders, and approved by the superintendent; such plans being designed to achieve approved goals of improving education by placing accountability at the individual school, and evaluated more by results than by methodology."

Thus, SBM mean that the school management tasks are set according to the characteristics and needs of the school itself, and therefore school members including supervisors, principal, teachers, parents and students have a much greater autonomy and responsibility for the use of resources to carry out effective education activities and solve problems. Although it "has been carried out with different goals, strategies and outcomes" (Hanson, 1998), the common ground in all places where SBM has

been implemented is that there has been an "increase in authority and responsibility at the school level, but within a centrally-determined framework that ensures that a sense of system is sustained" (Caldwell, 2005). Therefore unlike the previous top-down management, SBM has been defined as being both bottom-up and top-down at the same time.

## 2.2 Importance of school-based management

There is no justification for converting from one management form to another if there is no advantage in the change. In many education systems recognition has emerged that SBM has the potential to bring improvement in the quality of education. Also the positive outcomes of the SBM as a form of decentralization make it superior to centralization. With SBM schools will develop a management system to ensure the quality of teaching and learning.

Most SBM programs try to empower principals and teachers and "strengthen their professional motivation, thereby enhancing their sense of ownership of the school" (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, Patrinos, & Santibáñez, 2009, p. 3). The principal's role as the primary decision maker is dramatically changed under SBM to involve combination of principals, teachers, parents, and other school members in responsibility and decision-making. Therefore, SBM flourishes leadership skills by allowing competent individuals in the schools to make decisions that will improve learning. Likewise, it will increase the accountability of the school leader to the school members, students and parents, as there are fewer orders from above. As Lindgerg and Vanyushyn (2013) suggests on their study on Swedish school principals "the combination of SBM and instructional leadership facilitates school success".

The participatory nature of SBM may encourage teachers and other school

members to become committed to school decisions and to acquire influence over the decisions that affect them. Pettigrew (as cited in (Dondero, 1993, p. 36) found that "participation in decision making expands the influence of all organizational member". As "with ownership in decisions comes commitment; with commitment comes improved quality of work" (Neal, 1991, p. 35). As a result, when teachers become part of the decision-making process they will be more committed to support those decisions and ultimately the school.

SBM seeks to involve parents and local community members in school decision-making in a meaningful way to improve schools. The expectation underlying the community involvement is that "the schools will be more responsive to local demands (for example, for better teaching methods or more inputs) and that decisions will be taken in the interests of children rather than adults" (World Bank, 2007, p. 15). The participation of community may also improve the morale of teachers. For instance, "parental participation in school management has reduced teacher absenteeism in a number of diverse countries (such as India, Nicaragua, and Papua New Guinea)" (Caldwell, 2005).

There has been a growing realization among SBM proponents that a major reason for proposing SBM is the achievement of better student results. This might explain why "most governments have adopted it as part of their educational reform policies" (Caldwell, 2005). Many scholars also affirm that the movement toward SBM is often assumed as the approach to serve students better by "improving the school practices in meeting the diverse expectations of the stakeholders in a changing environment toward increasing student performance and achievements" (Anderson, 2006). In his study on Indonesian schools Bandur (2012) concludes that greater school autonomy has a positive impact on the teaching-learning environment and

student's achievement.

To sum up, most countries have adopted SBM to empower principals and teachers by devolution of authority. This system is used to increase their commitment and accountability, or to increase the participation of parents and communities in schools, or to raise student achievement level. In any case, the hope is that giving power to the people who are close to the core of service will increase the efficiency and improve the quality of the service.

## 2.3 Characteristics of School-based Management (SBM)

The characteristics of SBM are the collection of practices, decisions and features that distinguish SBM from more centralized management. The characteristics of SBM are varying according to its implementation, practices and process. They also differ according to the range of power or authority that provided to each school from few, limited areas to nearly everything. However, it included several common core features. Perhaps the definition of SBM that was proposed by Herman and Herman (1992, p. 262) provides a general summary of these characteristics; it defines SBM as "a structure and process which allows greater decision making power related to the areas of instruction, budget, polices, rules and regulations, staffing, and all matters of governance; and a process which involves a variety of stakeholders in the decisions related to the local individual school building". Therefore, SBM includes many components that make it different from the central management.

In order to understand the difference, Cheng Cheong (1996, p. 48), suggested that the theory and characteristics of SBM are different from those of the traditional external control management in eight key dimensions which are: school mission, nature of school activities, management strategies, use of resources, role differences,

human relations, quality of administrators, and index of effectiveness. These are

shown in Table 1.

Table 1: School-based management vs. external control management

| Characteristics | External control management | SBM |
|---|---|---|
| School mission | The school mission is given by the senior management. Members do not need to develop and accept it and may not responsible for it. | The school mission is developed and shared by all members who are willing and committed to realize it |
| Nature of school activities | The content and methods of management and education are determined by external factor. | The content and methods of management are based on the school's own characteristics and needs |
| Management strategies | Centralization of authority: decisions are made by administrative staff | Decentralization of authority: teachers (even parents and students) participate in decision making |
| Use of resources | The government regulates strictly how to use resources. It is hard to meet the school needs, solve problems in time, and find new resources | The school has its autonomy to use resources according to its needs, solve problems in time, and find new resources for education |
| Role differences | The school executes the tasks assigned by government according to administrative procedures and avoids mistakes | The school role is initiative-developing style: exploit all possibilities for development of the school, teachers, and students |
| | The roles of administrative staff are goal keepers, personnel monitors, and resources controllers | The roles of administrative staff are goal developers and leaders, human resources drivers and coordinators, and resources developers |
| | The roles of teachers are | The roles of teachers are |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | employees and passive executers | partners and active developers |
| | The roles of parents are passive receiver, and they cannot participate in and cooperate with the school | The roles of parents are partners and supporters, and they actively cooperate with the school |
| Human relations | In school, there is a hierarchical climate and inevitable disagreements between staff because of diversity in interests | In school, staff have team spirit, cooperate openly, and share responsibilities |
| Quality of administrators | School is a career place. The staff are employees whose stay depends on their usefulness | School is a place for growth where the staff have opportunities to develop |
| Index of effectiveness | The school emphasizes the achievements from the final examinations, and ignores process and development in education. Evaluation is a means for administrative monitoring | The school evaluation emphasizes multi-aspects and multi-indicators. Academic achievements are just one of indicators. Evaluation is a learning process and a means for improvement |

Developed from (Cheng Cheong, 1996)

At the beginning, SBM focused on decentralizing the decisions that are directly related to the students at the school level. For example, White (1989) focused on three kinds of decisions that directly affect students: budget, curriculum, and personnel. After that, the decentralization of decisions has been evolved to include more elements. For instance, Schackleton (1992) suggest that the indication of measures, which might characterize SBM, include information, resources, organization and management, relationships, and quality and development. Shackleton argued that information technology is not deterministic; it can be used to build knowledge-based organizations, support students' learning, and to expand the

staff-student interaction and student-related information (P. 38). More broadly,

Caldwell and Spinks (1998) view SBM as "decisions at the school level bing made

within a framework of local, state or national policies and guidelines" and it

involves: knowledge (decentralization of decisions related to curriculum, including

decisions related to the goals or ends of schooling), technology (decentralization of

decisions related to the means of teaching and learning), power (decentralization of

authority to make decisions), material (decentralization of decisions related to the use

of facilities, supplies and equipment), people (decentralization of decisions related to

the allocation of people in matters related to teaching and learning), time

(decentralization of decisions related to the allocation of time), and finance

(decentralization of decisions related to the allocation of money) (p. 5). Here,

knowledge and technology represent the resources on a broader definition to include

the human and physical resources that are transformed into the learning and

curriculum experiences. In addition, Bullock and Thomas (1997) suggested that in

order to review all the responsibilities, which might be delegated to a school it

requires some additional items to those suggested by Caldwell and Spinks. They

suggested the inclusion of four further items: admissions: decentralization on

decisions over which students are to be admitted to the school, assessment:

decentralization of decisions over how students are to be assessed, information:

decentralization of decisions over the selection of data to be published about the

school's performance, funding: decentralization of decisions over the setting of fees

for the admission of students (p. 8).

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework: The SBM areas

Although authors differ on specific characteristics of SBM, all suggest that

purposes, processes, structures, and roles must all be improved. Thus, six areas of

SBM will be distinguish in this study based on the literature related to SBM and the features of the NSM: (1) Effective school leadership, (2) budget allocation, (3) management strategies, (4) staff development, (5) curriculum and instruction, and (6) resources.

**2.4.1 Effective School leadership**

The role of the principal and school staff and their relationships are very important in determining the success of SBM. Unlike leaders under a centralized system, leaders in SBM do not perform the same leadership roles at all times. The roles will vary according to the situations, tasks, and individuals they work with. Accordingly, the new roles and responsibilities within SBM have required the principal to be an effective leader with a strong and positive instructional and administrative competence as well as a collaborative and collegial relationship. Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore (1995) explain that there are several features of an effective leader. First, a leader develops goal by "taking lead to establish vision and values to develop and set new goals, polices, plans and budgets" (p.13). Second, a leader is a manpower coordinator who "communicate, motivate, train, support and encourage teachers' commitment and initiative to achieve school goals and find appropriate leadership roles for teachers" (p.21). Finally, a leader is a resources developer "acquiring extra resources to promote school development" (p. 19). In this perspective, the leader helps create the conditions within which teachers and students take responsibility for their quality of teaching and learning and engage in leadership activities. Some scholars assert that distributed leadership contributes to a sustainable improvement of schools in terms of achieving higher levels of student achievement and teacher accountability.

In particular, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (2007)to undertake an independent research study on school leadership for examining the roles, responsibilities, structures and reward systems for school leaders in England and Wales. The primary goal of the study was to provide a comprehensive and independent account of existing, emerging and potential models of school headship and the wider leadership team, which are effective in raising standards for all students. The study was based on an intensive program of quantitative and qualitative research. Accordingly, an empirical survey was used, involving 3,260 school leaders consisting of head-teachers, members of the governing bodies, and teaching and senior support staff of the senior leadership team. In addition to the survey, interviews and meetings involving 50 schools throughout England and Wales were conducted. The findings of the study indicated that distributed leadership impacts on increased student achievement in schools. In this case, the successes of achieving high student performance and achievements in schools were affected by the behaviors of the school leaders who have distributed their leadership responsibilities effectively throughout the organization, and have a strong strategic focus on developing their people. The findings also suggest that greater capacity through more distributed leadership have impacted on student performance. It is clear with SBM leaders are required to be more flexible in creating collaboration, higher levels of commitment, motivation, trust, ownership, and healthier school climates which will lead to greater productivity and increased student achievements.

Meanwhile, SBM has had its greatest impact on the role of teachers, as it empowered teachers at the school to make decisions. Goldman, Dunlap, and Conley (1993) conducted a study on the administrators and teachers in 16 schools to explore how they used facilitative power to develop nonstandardized site-specific

restructuring programs as part of the statewide school improvement effort. The study found that the legislatively mandated teacher leadership of site activities generated changes in the authority and accountability structures of the schools. The study concluded that the more teachers got involved in the decision making process, the more they began to understand that they were responsible for the decisions. Specifically, the teachers felt part of the decision making structure and had direct responsibility and accountability for developing and implementing programs. Finally, the results showed that when principals stepped back from the decision making process to allow teachers to make their own decisions and mistakes, the teachers exercised facilitative power and behaved more politically and did more group problem solving.

The participation of teachers within the bounds of SBM occurs when they exercise facilitative power and engage in different activities. According to (Mosoge & van der Westhuizen, 1998; Todd, 2003; Cheng Lai-Fong, 2004), these activities include, first, leading curriculum change in their classrooms to allow effective teaching and learning to take place. Second, participating in professional development beyond what is provided by the system. Third, developing collegiality. Forth, building a school community to enhance instructional goals of school and participating as members of the school committees. Fifth, designing and implementing school-improvement plans. Finally, establishing partnerships with community members beyond the immediate school community. Thus, the new roles of teachers in SBM cannot be practiced without collaboration with the school leadership. According to Cheng Cheong (1996) the "changes which are planned by teachers and administrators together are more likely to succeed as human relations are open, cooperative and emphasizing partnership". The human relationship

between the principal and school staff that tend to be open and cooperative helps in
building a climate of team spirit and mutual commitment.

**2.4.2 Budget allocation**

Decentralization of budget is one of the most important parts of SBM that is
delegated to schools. Decentralized budgeting means "the allocation of funds in a
lump sum rather than predetermined categories of expenditures (e.g. a certain amount
for books, a certain amount for salaries) giving the school the opportunity to spend
money to achieve its goals" (Cheng Lai-Fong, 2004). The key factor for financial
reform in decentralized systems is the system-wide cost implications. For instance, in
some centralized systems most of the resources and expenditures of public schools
come directly from the government in order to carry out public education for all
students. However, despite the higher expenses, there is insufficiency in using the
provided resources effectively because of lack of training or it dose not serve the
individual needs of the school.

Therefore, in order to support the priorities and programs in SBM building
adequately, the staff needs to have some degree of control over budget. According to
Cheng Cheong (1996, p. 55) "decentralized budgeting may provide an important
condition for schools to use resources effectively according to their own
characteristics and needs to solve problems in time and pursue their own goals".
However, it is important to note that within SBM the authority over budget is not
fixed for every school. For example, it is unlikely that an individual school could
exercise any control over items such as teachers' annual salaries. Yet there remain
some decisions each school can make such as how to spend the fixed costs around
the school. The decentralization of budget authority to school level from countries
experiences differs as follows: (1) the school determines curriculum, schedule, and

instructional practices; (2) the school assigns personnel to responsibilities (teachers, non-teaching professionals); (3) the school allocates resources across categories (student support, administration, extra curricular); (4) school controls number of teachers; (5) the school controls teacher compensation; and (6) the school has full fiscal authority (REL West, 2009).

Schools cannot take on most of the added responsibilities without taking some authority over budget allocations. In fact, "the ability to allocate resources made it possible to have more direct control over the curricula and personnel" (Cheng Lai-Fong, 2004, p. 23). Therefore, more control over the school budget will provide flexibility for the school to carry out curriculum development and teacher training. However, for decentralized budgeting initiative to be successful, it needs training on the correct uses. School administrators must be provided with time and suitable training in financial planning and resource allocation.

**2.4.3 Management strategies**

The transition to SBM is a intense change, because it entails fundamental changes in people's understanding of the school structure and their role and responsibilities. White (1989), in her discussion of SBM authority structure, says, "the purpose of SBM is not simply to reorganize administrative responsibilities, but to make changes in traditional structures of authority, with new relationships among teachers, administrators, parents, and students" (p. 19). In centralized systems, educational ministry functions usually cover the whole gamut of planning, program implementation, coordination, personnel supervision, monitoring, and evaluation. But in a decentralized system like SBM, the central ministry role changes from implementer to technical consultant and coordinator responsible for policy formulation, and overall quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation. The role of

the central office is more to consult than to supervise schools. Therefore, the central office is responsible for improving the performance of schools under its supervision; on the other hand, they delegate some power and authority to schools to make decisions according to the interests of different schools.

With regard to the change in the central office, SBM has changed the concept of school and the traditional roles of the school members (principal, teachers, parents, community, and students). According to Cheng Cheong(1996) "the school as an organization should not only be a place for the preparation for the future of children, but also a place for students, teachers and even administrators to live, grow and to pursue development"(p.53). Thus, the school is a primary unit of improvement relying on the redistribution of decision-making authority through which improvement in school is stimulated and sustained.

Since the basic component of SBM is participatory decision-making, a lot of attention focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the participating members such as principal, teachers, parents, and the students. According to White (1989), the principal under SBM has more authority and responsibility in three areas: "school programs, shared governance, and district decision-making". In particular, the newest roles of principals are to be a communicator with parents, staff, and students and to find ways to empower all staff to maximize their contributions to successfully attain the school's goals. On the other hand, teachers' role changed in a fundamental way. Their influence shifted from individual control over their classroom to participating in shaping the school environment, exercising collective forums, including councils, problem-solving groups, and taking responsibility for resource allocation and use. Additionally, parents and the communities' role shifted to becoming a partner and supporter. Their participation makes schools more responsive to the student's need.

In general, with the management strategies of SBM, the authority and responsibility have been distributed between the central or government authorities and individual schools. Redistributing the authority and shared decision making changes the school structure and the role and responsibilities of school members. Accordingly, the participation in decision-making has established an effective network of communication between staff, students, parents, community, and government authorities to improve school and students performance.

### 2.4.4 Staff development

In successful SBM schools "the development of knowledge and skills is an ongoing process oriented toward building a school-wide capacity for change, creating a professional learning community, and developing a shared knowledge base" (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003). Moreover, researches have found that "successful schools placed a very high priority on professional development that aligned with school's reform agenda, especially in developing knowledge in teaching, learning, curriculum, and assessment" (Lee & Smith, 2001). Thus, successful SBM schools selected professional development activities that directly addressed their students' needs and fit in with the school's particular reform agenda.

The professional development topics that addressed in SBM are related to shared decision-making as well as improving student performance. Shared decision-making topic should be designed to emphasize interpersonal skills and management skills like "problem-solving, follow-up assistance, peer observation, professional dialogue, and professional growth planning" (Cheng Lai-Fong, 2004, p. 22). These skills may help in reduce teacher isolation by fostering a cooperative supportive relationship between teachers and principals, and to heighten collegial effort and support among teachers as colleagues.

Furthermore, the development programs should be delivered to multiple school stakeholders to have school wide impact. According to (National College for Teaching & Leadership, 2015) training within the school should be provided within three levels: for the school as a whole; for teachers and departments within the school as groups; and for individual staff member to cover their individual need. Additionally, school-level participants, include parents and community members needs also some training to help them become more capable participants in the school's planning and decision-making efforts. According to Briggs and Wohlstetter (2003), SBM schools, to varying degrees, "had authority to design learning opportunities that were tailored to the needs of faculty and students". Therefore, each school should plan for professional development and allow their staff to individually select and design their own training that is connected to school goals. Furthermore, teachers and school staff in SBM are encouraged to participate in professional development outside of the school, like college or university courses and in a community of professionals that value learning and develop shared knowledge.

**2.4.5 Curriculum and instruction**

In centralized systems, the development, revision, instruction, and the selection of materials are the central office duty. In SBM, districts and schools provide the context necessary for learning while enabling participants to generate, implement, and become effective at applying new approaches to curriculum and instruction (Wholstetter, Kirk, Robertson, & Mohrman, 1997). When responsibility of curriculum and instructions are at school level, the principal and teachers will be responsible for determining the change to provide effective curriculum. In order to design an effective curriculum, teachers and administrators should consider the interactions with teachers' competence to facilitate teachers' performance. It also

should help students gain learning experiences that fit their needs and produce expected educational outcomes. Moreover, the curriculum should be under the constraints of pre-existing characteristics such as national goals, school goals, school management, subject content, educational technology and resources (Cheng Cheong, 1996). Therefore, curriculum changes and teacher competence development are important factors in improving teaching and learning activities in schools.

**2.4.6 Resources**

Schools need resources if they are to take on the responsibilities needed for changing teaching and learning practices. Resources may include money, personnel, time, space, building, and equipment. One of the SBM purposes is to make better use of the resources available. According to Neal (1991, p. 23), "SBM works from the premise that resources are used best at the level where they are consumed, assuming accountability is attached to the use of those resources". Therefore, school principal and stakeholders must ensure the allocation and usage of the educational resources to pursue the goals, solve the problems and make decisions according to their own school characteristics and needs to improve their schools.

**2.5 Models and Approaches of school-based management**

SBM programs are far from uniform and encompass a variation in the structure and operation. According to Ogawa and White (1994, p. 55), "SBM programs vary on several dimensions: the level of authority delegated to schools, the domains over which school-level decision makers have discretion, the groups of stakeholders involved in decision-making bodies, and the purposes served by school-level decision-making bodies". Additionally, "SBM reforms are shaped by the reformers' objectives and by broader national policy and social contexts" (World Bank, 2007, p. 92). Therefore, SBM programs are shaped by the degree of autonomy

in decision-making that is devolved, the domains of school management, and who controls the decision-making when it is devolved to the school level. The SBM programs differ in the degree to which decision-making is devolved to the school ranging from limited autonomy to more ambitious "programs that allow schools to hire and fire teachers, to programs that give schools control over substantial resources, to programs that promote private and community management of schools, to programs that may eventually allow parents to create their own schools" (World Bank, 2007, p. 92). The inclusion of school management domains is also differing. For some authors, this autonomy is limited to three areas: budget, curriculum, and personnel (White, 1989). While others expand the self-managing autonomy to include the eight models of school effectiveness: the goal model, the resource-input model, the process model, the satisfaction model, the legitimacy model, the ineffectiveness model, the organizational model, and the total quality management model (Cheng Cheong, 1996).

The other dimension is where the locus of decision-making power lies; with the administrators, school professionals, or members of the community served by the school. This rests on the assumption that school-level members are better positioned than district officials to make decisions for their schools. There are different models to define who is invested with decision-making power in any SBM reform. Some of the common models that is defined by Ogawa and White (1994) are:

Community control: which implies community governance of schools.

Administrative decentralization: which implies a dominant role for both teachers and principals.

Principal control: where the locus of authority lies with the principal.

Additionally, Leithwood and Menzies (1998) suggested the following four

models:

Administrative control: SBM devolves authority to the school principal. This model aims to make each school more accountable to the central district or board office. The benefits of this kind of SBM includes increasing the efficiency of expenditures on personnel and curriculum, and making one person at each school more accountable to the central authority.

Professional control: SBM devolves the main decision-making authority to teachers. This model aims to make better use of teachers' knowledge of what the school needs at the classroom level. Participating fully in the decision-making process can also motivate teachers to perform better and can lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness in teaching.

Community control: SBM devolves the main decision-making authority to parents or the community. Under this model, teachers and principals are assumed to become more responsive to parents' needs. Another benefit is that the curriculum can reflect local needs and preferences.

Balanced control: SBM balances decision-making authority between parents and teachers, who are the two main stakeholders in any school. It aims to take advantage of teachers' detailed knowledge of the school to improve school management and to make schools more accountable to parents.

Existing models of SBM around the world are generally a collection of these models. In most versions of SBM programs, community representatives appear on the school committee. However, in most cases, community members are involved in a way that does not complicate the role of principals and teachers.  In most cases, teachers and principal work together to make decisions for the school, therefore, the administrative control model can never exist in its pure form.

**2.6 International Practices in School-based Management**

SBM programs have been implemented in many developed and developing countries and take many forms as discussed above. There are more than 800 SBM programs that have been implemented in more than two dozen countries ranging from Australia and the United States to Spain, Mexico, Cambodia, and Mozambique (World Bank, 2007). SBM has increasingly become a worldwide movement towards autonomy for shared-decision making and a partnership within the school community for the purposes of achieving school improvements. As a movement, SBM is considered as an effective system for empowering local schools in decision-making by which school stakeholders are given greater power and authority to manage a school (World Bank, 2007; Anderson, 2006; Vernez, Karam, & Marshal, 2012). There is a trend towards increasing autonomy, devolving responsibility, and encouraging responsiveness to local needs with the objective of raising performance levels. However, experience of implementing SBM programs in several countries suggests that it is not a quick fix. In fact, "it is shown that SBM needs about five years to bring about fundamental changes at the school level and about eight years to yield changes in difficult-to-modify indicators such as test scores" (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003).

This study reviews experiences of three countries that have the most interesting implementation of SBM in the developed and developing countries. For each of these countries, a brief description of the SBM reform has been noted along with any evidence regarding its impact on a variety of indicators, ranging from student results to parent and teacher perceptions of the reform's benefits.

**2.6.1 The United Kingdom**

Reforms in the education system in the United Kingdom (UK) had been

steady and incremental since the 1944 (Abu-Duho, 1999). Throughout the 1980s and

1990s, the British government increasingly devolved authority and autonomy to

parents and teachers. The 1980 Education Act created a centrally controlled national

curriculum, levels of attainment, a process of assessment, and inspection and

reporting of results (Abu-Duho, 1999). The authority of the delivery of the

curriculum, the management of personnel, financial, resources, and accountability to

parents and community were devolved to school governing bodies. According to

Chapman (as cited in (Bandur, 2008) the development of SBM in the UK, in England

and Wales in particular, was redefined in the 1988 by the implementation of the

Thatcher Government policies. The Education Reform Act provided autonomy,

power, and accountability to education in "two categories of schools: locally

managed and grant-maintained schools" (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, Patrinos, &

Santibáñez, 2009, p. 70). The Act adopted some structural changes to facilitate SBM:

a national core curriculum; provision for national testing and reporting; increasing

parental choice by fostering diversity and increasing access; and allowing state

schools to opt out of Local Education Authority (LEA) control on a majority vote of

parents, with grants from the national government being made directly to the school

(Abu-Duho, 1999).

Caldwell (1990) asserts that the devolution of budget authority and

responsibility to schools created greater responsiveness. In turn, the shift in budget to

the school level resulted in weakening the local authority. Scholars have also

reported that school governing bodies have been given greater powers to manage

their own affairs within clearly defined national frameworks (Bush & Gamage,

2001). They clarify that the power has been typically devolved to school level

governing bodies, comprising of the representatives of relevant stakeholders, while

operational management is devolved to the principal. They claim that the transfer of powers to governing bodies can be viewed as willingness to empower parents and business interests. As a result, it is reported that parents have had increased representation on governing boards since 1999 especially in England and Wales (Bush & Gamage, 2001).

In UK the devolution of authority and responsibility of schools meant more autonomy and flexibility in decision-making besides increasing accountability to the parents and community. The mechanisms for holding schools accountable included "inspections, publication of student records and achievements, students report cards, and annual reports (Abu-Duho, 1999, p. 43). Schools that fail to reach the acceptable standards come under stewardship of group of experts for improvement and, if the school results are not satisfactory the school is closed.

## 2.6.2 Hong Kong

In mid 1990, Hong Kong, which was a British colony for nearly 150 years, began to introduce its school management initiative (SMI) with a view to develop SBM in a gradual process mirroring experiences in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom (Dimmock & Walker, 1998; Wong, 2003; Zajda & Gamage, 2009; Zajda & Gamage, 2009). There were two kinds of school reforming in Hong Kong; the first one "aimed at reforming the administrative, managerial, and governmental aspects of school, and the other targeted curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment" (Dimmock & Walker, 1998, p. 477). Thus, the move was to decentralize decision-making from the central government to the local school level and the sharing of decision-making among the principal, teachers, parents, community members and students at the school level, and to enhance the education quality.

In 1991 Hong Kong lunched the School Management Initiative (SMI) to provide quality education to students (Dimmock & Walker, 1998). SMI aimed to increase school effectiveness by establishing new roles and relationships among the education department, school management committees, sponsors, supervisors, principals, teachers, and parents. Moreover, it sought to provide greater flexibility in school finance, increase accountability, and encourage collaborative decision-making (Dimmock & Walker, 1998). However, SMI was not a compulsory policy and schools may opt into SMI voluntarily. The scope of the reform broadened in 1997 by recommending SBM as practice for all schools, and empowered School Management Committees (SMC) regarding personnel procedures, financial matters, the design and delivery of the curriculum (Wong, 2003). Schools were pushed to practice SBM by 2000, so that they could find their own ways to achieve quality education and to develop their own individuality and characteristics (Lam, 2006). The principle of SBM was that "schools are not homogenous in goals, practices and effectiveness" (Cheng Cheong, 2000, p. 29). The Hong Kong government eventually made SBM a compulsory policy and hoped that all schools, whether they were the most or the least able academically, by means of SBM, could improve and raise the quality of education in Hong Kong.

A number of evaluation studies have been conducted on the effects of educational reform in Hong Kong. Cheng Cheong (1992) in his study found that school personnel complained of time pressures and constraints related to unrealistic expectations of introducing change across the board in very short time frames, and felt lack of support from the system level. Dimmock and Walker (1998) found in their review of some studies that: (1) most studies agreed that SBM provided better opportunities and contexts for building school cultures in which teachers and

principals feel professionally empowered and motivated to improve the management of schools; (2) there was no evidence that the reform actually had penetrated the classroom to affect the work of teachers and students; (3) the parents and alumni involvement was minimal after the reform has been implemented.

**2.6.3 New Zealand**

New Zealand commenced the most dramatic educational change implemented in the developed world in 1988, when the government accepted the recommendations of the Picot Report and published Tomorrow's School, which shifted responsibility for budget allocation, staff employment, and educational outcomes from government departments and education boards to individual schools along with building partnerships between the teaching staff and school communities, encouraging greater local decision-making, promoting equity and fairness (Wylie, 1994; Abu-Duho, 1999; Zajda & Gamage, 2009). Thus, the old education board and the department of education were dismantled and authority was devolved to individual schools and communities almost overnight.

The devolution package of the Education Act of 1989 included the implementation of a determination of salary points, negotiation of industrial agreements, allocation of funds in a way that would most benefit students, and maintenance and improvements to buildings (Zajda & Gamage, 2009). In New Zealand the reasons for shifting to SBM was to improve parental and community involvement in education, achieve systemic efficiency by making schools more accountable for their spending of public money and their activities more measurable by government, and to make schools centers of community development (Wylie, 1994). The implementation of SBM results in creating the Board of Trustees that control each school and consisted of "five elected parents, the principal, one member

elected by the staff, and four co-opted members" (Abu-Duho, 1999, p. 45). The reform results in a major change in the roles of inspectors, advisors, officers, and principals in a way that there was much opposition for the changes but, as an understanding of the scheme became more widespread and training developed, much of the opposition began to evaporate (Wylie, 1994). The New Zealand reforms now offer a balanced model of SBM. In order to make sure that the SBM goals are achieved, "every 3 years, the Review Agency would place each school under scrutiny, in order to ascertain how well the school was achieving the national and local aims and objectives set out in its individual charter" (Zajda & Gamage, 2009, p. 13).

The New Zealand reforms were considered very interesting worldwide for its further and faster implementation. Therefore, many studies were conducted on the implementation of SBM in New Zealand. For instant, the results of an early study of Wylie (1994), conducted on the fifth year of implementing SBM in New Zealand, results show: improved children learning, high parents satisfaction with learning quality, the relation between teaching staff and trustees is positive in most schools, most trustees are confident about their role but show little interest in increasing their responsibilities, many of principals find their school funding inadequate, and there are resource problems especially in low income areas. Another study of Piggot-Irvine (2000) has addressed the concerns on increased accountability with the 1996 Draft National Guidelines for Performance Management in Schools (DNGPMS). The results of the study contradict the predicted negative impacts of appraisals (evaluation). The result revealed that the tightening of requirements for appraisal and training had an overall positive impact on almost all aspects of appraisal systems implementation (for example policy development and process establishment), but

there were variable implementation of these processes in schools. It is clear,
therefore, that the stakeholders are prepared to be accountable when the
responsibility is devolved to the school level because no one wants to go back to the
old system.

Various models of SBM have been implemented in different countries around
the world. Most of SBM programs involve some sort of transfer of responsibility and
decision making to a combination of principals, teachers, parents, and other school
community members. Models of SBM have become largely accepted as a major
reform initiative both in developed countries including United Kingdom, New
Zealand and developing countries such as Hong Kong. In the UAE, the education
system has witnessed several reform initiatives to improve school performance and
increase student achievement. Perhaps the most tangible initiative was the
establishment of ADEC in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

**2.7 ADEC's Reform and The New School Model**

As part of its efforts to become a knowledge based economy, the Emirate of
Abu Dhabi views the education sector as a cornerstone of economic
development. Education is an important key sector identified by Plan Abu Dhabi
2030, to build competent human capital and effective governmental capacities that
will place the Emirate among the five top governments worldwide (ADEC, 2014a).
The reform plans announced by the Emirate in the education sector are well aligned
with the federal education strategy aimed at the decentralization of education and a
greater involvement of the private sector in enhancing quality and competitiveness.

In 2005, the Government of Abu Dhabi began pursuing decentralization in
education through establishing Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). The Council
"seeks to develop education and educational institutions in the Emirate of Abu

Dhabi, implement innovative educational policies, plans and programs that aim to improve education, and support educational institutions and staff to achieve the objectives of national development in accordance with the highest international standards" (ADEC, 2013b). Thus, ADEC was responsible for managing, guiding, adopting and implementing various educational development strategies and initiatives in Abu Dhabi. It is also "the licensing authority for individuals, institutions and bodies to engage in any kind of activity in the field of education and higher education in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi" (ADEC, 2014a). After the launch of ADEC, the administration of public schools in Abu Dhabi remained under the authority of the Ministry of Education, while ADEC continued to provide the public sector with considerable support and generous spending from the Abu Dhabi government. In January 2010, ADEC became responsible for the administration of all public schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, following a decision to transfer the employees of public schools in the Abu Dhabi Emirate, including teachers and administers from the Ministry of Education to ADEC with the aims to encourage decentralization and enhancing the performance of the education system (ADEC, 2014a; ADEC, 2014b). Additionally, in 2011 ADEC started the Future School Program to phase out old and small schools and open new schools with more space, high quality facilities and infrastructure to provide better learning environments (ADEC, 2012a).

In 2006, ADEC started a Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative whereby foreign consultancy companies were invited to provide advisory to schools. The partnership started with 30 kindergarten and primary schools from the public sector and aimed to work with teachers and school administrators to improve the quality of instruction and increase student achievement in public schools (ADEC, 2014a; Stringer & Hourani, 2013). The program is designed to benefit from the experience

of the private sector in improving the quality of education output in the public education sector in Abu Dhabi. The project unrolled in cycle 1 schools in 2006, cycle 2 schools in 2007, and cycle 3 schools in 2008, reportedly for a three year in-school advising period per cycle (Dickson, 2012). The purpose of these advisors was to provide professional development to schools staff and encourage best practice within the classroom such as student-centered learning. Shortly after the PPP began, a new set of curriculum standards adopted from the New South Wales curriculum in Australia was introduced, and advisers were then responsible for easing this delivery by training local teachers to use it effectively (Thorne, 2011). Additionally, teachers' English proficiency levels were targeted with an English Language Trainer included in the package of on-site advisers, and the announcement by ADEC that Math and Science subjects were going to be taught by English medium teachers (Dickson, 2012). In 2011, ADEC announced the phase out plan of its PPP project after achieving its goals successfully (Olarte, 2011). ADEC was keen to help schools shift from reliance on operators to a rather independent approach while performing their various operations based on the experience acquired from the PPP program in terms of teaching and learning. The PPP project was designed to lay the foundations for the New School Model introduced in the lower grades and designed to boost education standards.

In 2010, ADEC introduced the New School Model (NSM), a new learning approach that addresses the current challenges in the public school sector and brings about tangible improvements in the delivery of education. ADEC planned to implement the NSM in phases, starting with KG-Grade 3.  Gradually, ADEC plans to migrate all schools in Abu Dhabi to the NSM by 2016 (ADEC, 2014b). The key elements of the NSM were that "a child-centered environment would be fostered

which would be supported by families, teachers, community", that there would be a "standardization of curriculum, pedagogy, resources and support across all ADEC school types", "develop Arabic and English language abilities, critical thinking skills, and cultural and national identity through the consistent use of rigorous learning outcomes and pedagogy" (ADEC, 2014b). As a result, ADEC developed new curricula and teaching methods aimed at making students creative, independent thinkers, and problem-solvers.

The development of new curriculum required qualified teachers who are able to design and deliver the curriculum. For that purpose in 2009, as part of the implementation plan of the new curriculum in the NSM, ADEC employed thousands of English Medium Teachers (EMTs) from predominantly USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand to take over, as generalists, the teaching of the English medium subjects of Math, Science and English (Dickson, 2012). The EMTs teachers replaced the Emirati teachers in teaching the three subjects, while the Emirati teachers of English, Math, and Science Emirati teachers have been assigned to teacher-training programs. The teacher-training programs aimed at preparing Emirati teachers to teach the subjects of English, Mathematics and Science through the medium of English. Moreover, since the beginning of the 2012-2013, academic year ADEC started to employ Emirati EMTs who have graduated from teacher-training colleges where courses have been aligned to the NSM (Dickson, Tennant, Kennetz, Riddlebarger, & Stringer, 2013). Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi, the Director General of ADEC, stated that "ADEC is pleased to increase the number of Emirati talent across its public schools by 26 percent, as part of the UAE's wise and prudent leadership's vision to empower and recruit quality Emirati professionals in the work-force" (WAM, 2014). ADEC often publicly reiterate their commitment to prioritizing

recruitment of Emirati teachers, emphasizing that Emirati staff are the best to understand the local environment and culture and hence the presence of national teachers is key to developing the emirate's educational system.

**2.8 The NSM as a SBM Initiative**

Decentralization is a feature of school-reform virtually worldwide, which is aimed to develop an effective teaching and learning environment, improve academic performance and enhance student outcomes. In the context of the UAE, ADEC was the vehicle of educational reform toward decentralization in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Like in many other countries, ADEC reform initiatives took many phases and came with different names. The NSM is the last and current initiative to reform education in public schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. According to ADEC (2012c), the key features of the NSM are: (1) effective school organization and guiding principles; (2) staffing structure; (3) students as learners; (4) curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (5) child-centered learning environment and resources; (6) family and community involvement; and (7) evaluation of school programs. Beside the decentralization theme, the features of the NSM are similar to the components of the SBM. Therefore, the researcher believes that the NSM is an approach of the SBM.

The NSM is consistent with the SBM in the assumption that both of them are approaches to serve students better by improving the school practices in meeting the diverse expectations of the stakeholders in a changing environment towards increasing student performance and achievements. Additionally, the NSM consists of two dimensions of the SBM, which are the devolution of authority through decentralization and the participation of stakeholders. In the NSM, the distribution of authority and responsibility had a major impact on's management structure and the

roles and responsibilities of the schools stakeholders (principals, teachers, and community).

The application of the NSM changed the management structure from hierarchy and highly centralized management to a more decentralized and participatory decision-making management. Since the application of the NSM, ADEC organized several initiatives to encourage transparency, new ideas, and inputs of school staff because they are part of the decision-making process. For instance, the "Shaping the Future" initiative aimed at engaging as many schools as possible to come up with ideas and solutions that can help guide ADEC's strategic reform efforts in education (WAM, 2015). Moreover, during Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi welcome speech of shaping the future forum explained that the school staff are the best people to offer feedback and suggestions, and can definitely help promote strategy development and project plans in the education system because they are in the field day in and day out (WAM, 2015). ADEC's belief about the importance of school staff, which is consistent with the theory of SBM, results in empowering school principals.

Zajda and Gamage (2009) assert that the implementation of SBM requires principals to play new roles, have new responsibilities, and face new challenges. Similarly, in the NSM, the principal leads t professionals in the school while supporting the decision-making at ADEC's main office. The NSM changed the role of the traditional principal who was vested with the total authority to manage the school and supervise the personnel. According to ADEC (2010) the principal of the NSM provides shared leadership, management and decision-making, enabling a shared vision for the school, managing teaching and learning, establishing a culture that promotes excellence, equality and high expectations of all staff and students. The

NSM increased the responsibilities of the school principal. Now, the principal of the NSM, while working with others, is responsible and accountable for: (1) evaluating school performance to identify the priorities for continuous improvement and raising standards; (2) ensuring equality of opportunity for all; (3) developing policies and practices; (4) ensuring that resources are efficiently and effectively used to achieve the school aims and objectives and for the day-to-day management, organization and administration of the school; (5) building the leadership capacity within the school; and (6) engaging all parents and community stakeholders in the education of students (ADEC, 2010). Additionally, the authority of decision-making of the principal is partially increased. For instant, beside orientation and supervision of reserve teachers at the school, the principal has the authority to select them and end their work. However, ADEC is responsible for their financial dues.

Moreover, the NSM increased the school principal responsibilities to work as advisory at ADEC because they believe that school principals will better understand their own problems and needs. For this purpose, ADEC established Principals' Advisory Committee (PAC) to develop recommendations and provide feedback to ADEC directors and policymakers on ADEC policies, procedures, and initiatives, and on any other matters it identifies as priorities; and to act as a liaison promoting engagement between ADEC and the school community (ADEC, 2013a). PAC is composed of 15 principals across Abu Dhabi regions, cycles and genders; it meets once a month during the academic year. Thus, the NSM empowers the principal with the authority to manage their school, however, it requires them to share authority and leadership with teachers and other stakeholders.

Teacher empowerment and accountability are major ingredients of the NSM. The NSM approach expects teachers to make careful observations and professional

judgments, based on the needs of each student in order to plan learning opportunities (ADEC, 2014b). Consequently, teachers influence decisions by participating in planning, developing, monitoring, and improving instructional programs within the school. Moreover, teachers in the NSM are responsible for student learning and are expected to take responsibility for their own professional development, work together as a team, and create a healthy learning environment (ADEC, 2012c). Thus, the NSM has provided teachers with greater flexibility and opportunity to make changes related to instructional matters. Moreover, the NSM expand the teachers' authority from their classrooms to participate in school management. The NSM principals are encouraged to provide teachers with opportunities to lead by delegating decision-making and distributing leadership roles and responsibilities (ADEC, 2010). Areas of teacher decision-making in the NSM include decisions about school improvement plan, behavior management policies, school climate, selection of materials in accordance with ADEC policy, teaching methods and strategies, and staff development. Furthermore, teachers are asked to reach out to parents as partners to support students' learning.

The involvement of parents and community is one of the NSM's key features. ADEC believes that parents play an essential role in their children's education and they share the responsibility of their children's education with school staff (ADEC, 2013a). Therefore, ADEC asked each school to create a policy on parent involvement. The policy includes the frequency and content of communication between parents and school and the way of communication. According to ADEC (2013a), all ADEC schools are expected to establish School Parent Councils. School Parent Councils are advisory bodies, which may make recommendations to school administration on communication, policies and guidelines, parental involvement, and

school improvement planning. However, School Parent Councils may not make recommendations on personnel matters, the security of property, commercial matters, negotiations or litigation affecting ADEC, and individual student issues.

In addition, the NSM includes many changes for which teachers and school leaders will require support. Accordingly, a key component of the NSM is regular professional development activities (ADEC, 2012c). ADEC has distinguished between professional development and professional activities. According to ADEC (2013a), professional development is a comprehensive and sustained effort to improve educators' effectiveness in raising student achievement. The primary bases of professional development efforts are the professional standards for teachers, the professional standards for principals, curriculum, and all elements of the NSM. Professional development maybe developed and delivered by external professional development providers, school leaders, Head of Faculty, subject area coordinators, Academic Quality Improvement (QAI) Officers, and/or selected teachers. Professional activities are activities assigned by the school administration to meet specific school operational goals, and include, but are not limited to, activities such as faculty meetings, collaborative planning between teachers and/or administrators, and information sessions. ADEC expected school leaders and teachers to participate and be committed to the professional development. Additionally, ADEC encouraged teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development and seek additional development activities to augment their personal and professional growth. Furthermore, teacher professional development is essential to keep up with the changes in the curriculum.

According to Dickson (2012) there were some shifts in the curriculum and resources before and after applying the NSM. She asserts that before the NSM the

curriculum was based entirely on textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education, where there were little or limited creation of teachers' own resources. After the implementation of the NSM, the curriculum is based on a slightly adapted version of the Australian NSW curriculum, with substantial new content, and teachers are expected to create the majority of resources. According to ADEC (2013a), the NSM curriculum is oriented around a set of standards, indicators, and learning outcomes for each subject area. The curriculum is delivered through an integrated bi-literate approach that incorporates 21st century learning skills. Students are expected to demonstrate a specific set of approaches to learning, skills, and understandings in each grade. Teachers are responsible for student-centered instruction through continuous assessment, differentiated instruction, and scaffolding of the curriculum to enable all students to achieve the learning outcomes. Teachers also are responsible for using instructional techniques that meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELL). To fulfill the teaching requirements, teachers are using a variety of resources and methods to implement curriculum. ADEC provide schools with teaching and learning resources for every classroom and teachers design additional resources when necessary to ensure students are meeting the learning outcomes. While textbooks may be a learning resource in some subject areas, the textbook is not the curriculum (ADEC, 2013a). In the NSM, students are expected to learn by doing and exploring, rather than simply listening and watching. Thus, the increased demand on the resources as a vehicle to deliver the curriculum requires some changes in budget allocation.

ADEC is the main provider of the resources and expenses of Abu Dhabi public schools. The budget is allocated according to the school cycle, number of students, number of classrooms, and school location. In addition to ADEC's funding,

there are two types of revenues; school activities revenues and donations, but the public schools cannot accept any of them without ADEC approval. ADEC takes the responsibility of distributing the annual budget on the expenditure items of schools. More specifically, ADEC distributes the annual budget of schools over eight budget lines with specific percentages. ADEC's financial representative at each school is responsible of supervising the expenditure of the budget. Although the schools budget is centrally managed and distributed by ADEC, each school principal has to consult with staff regarding the school needs and plan for managing the budget (ADEC, 2013a). Additionally, school principals can move certain amounts of expenditure from one budget line to another according to the school needs.

In sum, the NSM approach is consistent with the SBM in some major features. These features include management strategies, shared decision-making, staff role differences, designing and delivery of curriculum, managing resources, and community involvement.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the degree to which SBM has been practiced in the NSM schools in Al Ain. The study described the practices of the SBM by principals, teachers, and other school staff from their perceptions and compared between administrators' and teachers' practices. Moreover, the study provided an account of the main practices of SBM that need improvement based on the perceptions of school staff.

This chapter presents the research methodology utilized to investigate the SBM practices in the NSM schools. Therefore, it will describe the research method or design, population and sampling technique, data collection tools (instruments), data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations considered in conducting this study.

## 3.1 Research Design

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) state that the method used in research must follow the research questions. This research was guided by three questions: (1) how does school staff practice SBM in the NSM schools in Al Ain? (2) are there any significant differences in SBM practices of teachers and administrators?, and (3) What are the practices of SBM that need improvement based on the perceptions of school staff?

Research questions of this study were intended to provide description and explanation of school staff perceptions of SBM implementation. In additions, the research questions were intended to generalize the results. For these purposes, the most appropriate method was the quantitative method. The quantitative method is known as the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe current conditions, investigate relations; and explain, predict, and study cause-effect phenomena of

interest (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The other reason for choosing the quantitative method was the desire to generalize the results of the study by conducting the research on a representative sample. The questionnaire as an instrument helped produce numerical data (mean, standard deviation, and frequencies) in a way that allowed the researcher to explain the results, determine the extent to which SBM is practiced in Al Ain schools and the similarities and differences between the perceptions of teachers and administrators in this regard.

Vogt (2007) pointed out that the quantitative method should be used for more than merely calculating statistics; quantitative research should also be used to provide an understanding of those statistics. The researcher used the data to describe the areas of strength and the areas of weakness in the implementation of the SBM. The data was also used to describe the challenges to implementing the SBM in the NSM schools. Additional reasons for choosing a quantitative instrument was the easy and objective qualities of the questions, and the short time it takes for a participant to complete.

## 3.2 Population of the Study

The targeted population of this study encompassed all school staff in Al Ain public schools that implemented the NSM. When the study was conducted all kindergarten, cycle 1, and part of cycle 2 schools implemented the NSM. However, public schools that partly implemented the NSM were excluded from the population because not all school staff had the chance to practice the NSM. According to ADEC research department, the total number of school staff in the targeted schools in Al Ain was 2346, breakong the number of kindergarten staff to 686 and the number of cycle 1 staff to 1660. This total number worked in 46 schools, 26 of them were cycle 1 schools while the other 20 were kindergarten. One school where the pilot study was

conducted was excluded. The number of staff in this school was 59. Therefore the population was 2287 staff. Table 2 shows a breakdown of schools and number of staff.

Table 2*:* Population number of school staff in kindergarten and cycle 1 in Al Ain

| School cycle | Number of schools | Number of school staff | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kindergarten | 20 | 686 | 30 |
| Cycle 1 | 25 | 1601 | 70 |
| Total | 45 | 2287 | 100 |

**3.3 Sample of the Study**

The sample of this thesis should be 330 staff or 14% of the population at a confidence level of 95%, according to the sample size calculations. The actual sample consisted of 351 staff at 15%. The questionnaire was distributed in 28 schools of the 45 schools. Specifically, the researcher distributed the questionnaire on 17 cycle 1 schools and 11 kindergartens. Only one kindergarten refused to participate in the study. The number of school staff at these schools was 1345. At schools, the questionnaire was submitted to the school administrators who distributed it to the available participants. Thus, making this sample a convenient sample. A convenient sample is one of the main types of nonprobability sampling. A convenient sample comes from the process of including whoever happens to be available at the time of the distribution. Table 3 gives more details on the breakdown of the sample.

Table 3*:* Description of Participants (Frequencies and Percentages)

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 38 | 10.8 |
| Female | 313 | 89.2 |
| Position | | |
| Principal | 8 | 2.3 |
| Vice principal | 16 | 4.6 |
| HOFs | 23 | 6.6 |
| Teacher | 263 | 74.9 |
| Other staff | 41 | 11.7 |
| Nationality | | |
| Emiratis | 221 | 63 |
| Arabs | 48 | 13.7 |
| Foreigners | 82 | 23.4 |
| School cycle | | |
| Kindergarten | 117 | 33.3 |
| Cycle 1 | 234 | 66.7 |
| Experience | | |
| 0-8 in KG | 74 | 21.1 |
| 9 and more in KG | 35 | 10 |
| 0-8 in Cycle 1 | 109 | 31.1 |
| 9 and more in Cycle 1 | 119 | 33.9 |
| KG and Cycle 1 | 14 | 4 |

## 3.4 The Instrument

The questionnaire was the data collection instrument used to survey the perceptions of school staff about SBM. The content of the questionnaire was based on the elements identified as central to SBM, which were developed from the literature review, ADEC's policies in the NSM, and other SBM questionnaires. The questionnaire was constructed based on the Decisional Participation Questionnaire

(DPQ) developed by Alutto and Belascon (1972) (as cited in (Dondero, 1993)).

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part asked the respondents to indicate their gender, position, nationality, school cycle, and the number of years they have been employed at the school. Since the SBM is based on shared decision-making, the second part of the instrument examined the areas of joint decision-making, and the status of school staff experience participation when implementing the SBM. The questionnaire was built based on six characteristics of SBM: (1) effective school leadership, (2) budget allocation, (3) management strategies, (4) staff development, (5) curriculum and instruction, and (6) resources. Specifically, the questionnaire sought responses to the following decisional domains: planning budgets and expenditures, planning and use of facilities, resolving administrative problems, participating in school development plan, adopting and managing school programs, hiring new faculty, resolving faculty grievances, planning and developing teachers professional development, determining staff assignments, adapting new instructional methods, selecting new resources, participating in extra-curricular activities, resolving student problems, determining school policies, and involving parent in school operations.

For each question, responses were elicited as section A) a yes or no as to whether or not they presently make a decision, section B) a yes or no as to their desire in participation in such a component of SBM, and section C) a choice of 0, 1, 2, or 3 to identify the degree they feel the decision is important to them. These choices mean; very unimportant, unimportant, important, and very important. For example, the following item appears regarding participation in planning budgets:

When school or department budgets are planned, are you involved in such planning?

☐ Yes              ☐ No

Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes              ☐ No

How important is it that you participate in this decision? (Circle one number)

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

The questionnaire was first written in English and then translated into Arabic and revised by a specialist in the Arabic language for those staff whose first language is Arabic.

**Validity**

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was sent to six professors in the College of Education to check its content validity. They reviewed the relevance of the instrument to the study's purpose, the clarity of the questions, the wording of the items, and the length of the questionnaire. At the same time, the questionnaire was given to two teachers in cycle 1 to check its language and contents. In a joint session with the advisor, remarks and suggestions for improvement were discussed and an agreement was made to make changes, when the reviewers agreed to a 75% rate in changes. The researcher made the necessary changes in both versions of the questionnaire (Arabic and English) and the final copy

was reviewed and approved by the advisor.

**Reliability**

 To establish the questionnaire reliability, a pilot study was conducted on 32 school staff in one cycle 1 school in Al Ain. This pilot sample was excluded from the real sample of the study. School staff responded to the 21 items in the questionnaire, which focused on the SMB practices. The reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which was calculated for each sub-question individually and for all questionnaire items together. Table 4 summarizes the results.

Table 4*:* Cronbach Alpha coefficient for school staff sample

| | Cronbach's Alpha | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Questionnaire sections** | **Pilot study** | **Real sample** |
| Section A: would you be involved in making a decision? | .883 | .885 |
| Section B: do you want to make such a decision? | .875 | .851 |
| Section C: how important is this decision? | .884 | .922 |
| All items | .646 | .675 |

As the table showed, all coefficients for test results were above 0.7 for the subsections, which indicated a high reliability and consistency among questionnaire items. The coefficient for test results for the whole questionnaire was slightly under 0.7 because of the different style of responses, which were yes and no for the first two questions and a 4-point scale for the third question.

**3.5 Data Collection Procedures**

A formal letter from the Dean of the College of Education at the UAE University was attached to ADEC's online application form to facilitate conducting this study on public schools (see appendix A). After receiving the approval letter

from ADEC to conduct the study (see appendix B), the researcher distributed the questionnaire to Al Ain kindergartens and cycle 1 schools by herself.  The distribution was based on the list of schools received from ADEC's research department. The researcher submitted an envelope, which contains 20 questionnaires, 5 in English and 15 in Arabic to each school. ADEC's permission letter was attached to each envelope and a cover letter was attached to each questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study, ethical considerations of participation, and instructions on completing the questionnaire (see appendices C and D). When submitting the questionnaire, the researcher clarified that any staff member in the school can participate in the questionnaire. The school administrators monitored the distribution and collection of the questionnaire at each school. Each school was given one week to finish the questionnaire and the researcher collected the questionnaires. Some schools finished within two days and contacted the researcher to collect the questionnaires while others took more than a week. In cases of poor completion of the questionnaire, the researcher went back and re-distributed the questionnaire again. After collecting all the questionnaires the researcher was ready for data entry.

**3.6 Data Analysis Procedures**

The data was coded into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. For the yes-no questions in section A and B, frequencies and percentages were calculated to identify A) whether staff in Al Ain schools practice different elements of SBM and B) whether they showed a desire to participate in these domains in the future. Section C questions targeted identifying the degree of importance in participation, the mean and standard deviation were calculated.

Another round of analysis was conducted to determine the differences between the administrators (principal, vice principal, and HoFs), and teachers on

their practices of SBM. The mean of the practices on Section A used for this purpose.

## 3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher conducted the study in a manner that protected the anonymity of the respondents. To protect their confidentiality, respondents did not identify themselves by names. Furthermore, the questionnaires submitted and collected in a plain envelop without any indication to the school name. All participants were informed that they were free to agree or refuse to participate in the study. In addition, the cover letter to the survey stated that their responses would be kept confidential and the demographic information will not be revealed. All participants were supplied with the researcher contact information in order to allow them to ask questions about the surveys or to inquire about the research findings.

## 3.8 Limitation and delimitation

This study was limited to the NSM schools in Al Ain, so the findings cannot be generalized to schools in other emirates, especially the ones not implementing the NSM. Specifically, the study was conducted in kindergartens and cycle 1 schools. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to any other cycles. In addition, the findings may not be relevant to private schools as well. As usual, the use of a self-administered survey may pose some limitations. This means that some participants might not have taken enough time to complete the surveys properly or they might not have taken it seriously. The surveys might have been affected also by the biases, feelings, relationships, moods, perceptions, and personal judgments of the participants, or by their job satisfaction level at the time of data collection. However, using different types of questions and conducting different types of analysis helped in delimiting those challenges. The researcher was keen to exclude any suspicious questionnaires such as when one person completed more than one questionnaire or

when one person left many questions out.

# Chapter 4: Results Of The Study

In this chapter, the data generated from the survey is described and analyzed. The purpose of this study was to investigate the degree to which SBM has been practiced in the NSM schools in Al Ain. This chapter presents the views of the various school staff (administrators, teachers, and other staff) regarding their practices of the SBM in their schools. This chapter is organized to present the findings of the three questions that guided this study:

1. How does school staff practice SBM in the NSM schools in Al Ain??

2. Are there any significant differences in the SBM practices of teachers and administrators?

3. What are the practices of SBM that need improvement based on the perceptions of school staff?

To answer the research questions survey responses were divided according to the six major areas of joint decision-making, which represents SBM. Each area includes the responses of the participants on three sets of questions: a) whether or not they presently participate in making decisions in those areas, b) whether or not they desire to participate in making those decisions, and c) the degree to which they feel participation is important to them.

## 4.1 Results of Question One

To answer this question, the perceptions of teachers and administrators with regard to their practice of SBM, data of the six major areas of SBM were analyzed. They are: (1) effective school leadership, (2) budget allocation, (3) management strategies, (4) staff development, (5) curriculum and instruction, and (6) resources. The following are the results of each of these areas.

**4.1.1 Effective school leadership**

Results of participation in decision-making at the effective school leadership area are reported in Tables 5-7. Respondents of staff on Section C of each question were assessed on a four point Likert scale where (Very unimportant= 1 - 1.74), (Unimportant= 1.75 - 2.49), (Important= 2.5 – 3.24), and (Very important= 3.25 – 4). Table 5 shows percentages of present practice. Participation on decisions concerning staff assignments scored the highest (47%), while participation on hiring new personnel scored the lowest (10.5%).

Table 5: Participants' practices of effective school leadership (Section A)

| Items | % | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Yes | No |
| 10. When there are problems with administrative matters, such as scheduling, are you involved in making such decisions? | 33.3 | 66.7 |
| 14. When a new faculty member is to be hired in your school or department, are you involved in making such a decision? | 10.5 | 89.5 |
| 15. When a faculty member has a grievance, are you involved in resolving the problem? | 45.3 | 54.7 |
| 18. When your teaching assignments as a teacher or your administrative tasks as an administrator are considered, are you involved in making such decisions? | 47 | 53 |

Table 6 shows participants' desire to participate in effective school leadership area. The highest participation desire was on decisions concerning staff assignments scoring at (81.2%), while the lowest participation desire was on hiring new personnel scoring at (10.5%). The highest and lowest areas of the actual participation were similar to the areas of participation desire.

Table 6: Participants' practices of effective school leadership (Section B)

| Items | % | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Yes | No |
| 10. When there are problems with administrative matters, such as scheduling, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 65.8 | 34.2 |
| 14. When a new faculty member is to be hired in your school or department, do you want to be involved in making such decisions | 32.5 | 67.5 |
| 15. When a faculty member has a grievance, do you want to be you involved in resolving the problem? | 59 | 41 |
| 18. When your teaching assignments as a teacher or your administrative tasks as an administrator are considered, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 81.2 | 18.8 |

Table 7 shows the mean and standard deviation of staff perceptions of the importance of participating on the effective school leadership area. The highest cumulative mean (*M =3.35*) was on decisions concerning staff assignments, which was seen as a very important practice. While participation in hiring new personnel has the lowest cumulative mean (*M =2.43*) which is seen as an unimportant practice. This mean that the degree to which staff felt their participation is important matched actual and desired practices presented previously.

Table 7: Participants' responses on effective school leadership (Section C)

| Items | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 10. When there are problems with administrative matters, such as scheduling, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 2.97 | .838 |
| 14. When a new faculty member is to be hired in your school or department, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 2.43 | .855 |
| 15. When a faculty member has a grievance, how important is it that you participate in resolving the problem? | 2.87 | .838 |
| 18. When your teaching assignments as a teacher or your administrative tasks as an administrator are considered, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 3.35 | .771 |

**4.1.2 Budget allocation**

The actual participation levels on budget allocation area are reported in

Tables 8-10.

Table 8: Participants' practices of budget allocation (Section A)

| Items | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 6. When school or department budgets are planned, are you involved in preparation? | 22.2 | 77.8 |
| 7. Are you involved in decisions concerning the expenditure (such as what to purchase for the school or the department)? | 37 | 63 |
| 8. When new building facilities are needed or if existing facilities need upgrading, are you involved in making such decisions? | 36.5 | 63.5 |

Table 8 shows percentages of actual participation in the budget allocation

area. Staff participation in decisions concerning both the expenditure (37%) and the

planning for new facilities or the upgrading of existing facilities (36.5%) were low.

However, the planning for department budgets has the lowest actual participation

(22.2%).

Table 9: Participants' responses on budget allocation (Section B)

| Items | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 6. When school or department budgets are planned, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 63.5 | 36.5 |
| 7. Do you want to be involved in decisions concerning the expenditure (such as what to purchase for the school or the department)? | 70.1 | 29.9 |
| 8. When new building facilities are needed or if existing facilities need upgrading, do you want to be you involved in resolving the problem? | 66.4 | 33.6 |

Table 9 shows results of staff desire to participate in budget allocation area.

Participants expressed desire to participate in all three areas. (70.1%) was the highest

percentage scored, this was for the desire to participate in decisions concerning expenditures. However, planning for department budget scored at a (63.5%). While this category was the lowest actual participation it still shows a high desire for participation.

Table 10*: Participants' responses on budget allocation (Section C)

| Items | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 6. When school or department budgets are planned, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 2.92 | .840 |
| 7. How important is it that you participate decisions concerning the expenditure (such as what to purchase for the school or the department)? | 3 | .796 |
| 8. When new building facilities are needed or if existing facilities need upgrading, how important is it that you participate in resolving the problem? | 2.91 | .805 |

Table 10 shows the mean and standard deviation of the staff perceptions of the importance of participating on budget allocation areas. Decision concerning the expenditure was seen as an important practice, which has the highest cumulative mean ($M = 3$) in this category. Decisions concerning planning of new facilities and upgrading existing facilities are still seen important.

**4.1.3 Management strategies**

Participation levels at management strategies area are reported in Tables 11-13.

Table 11: Participants' practices of management strategies (Section A)

| Items | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 22. When new student-related policies and procedures are suggested, such as discipline, are you involved in making such decisions? | 63 | 37 |
| 23. Are you involved in decisions concerning the students such as | 50.7 | 49.3 |

how to solve the problem of students' frequent absenteeism?

| Items | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 25. Are you involved in decisions concerning the school's policies regarding students with special needs? | 39.3 | 60.7 |
| 26. Are you involved in decisions concerning the communication between school and community? | 68.4 | 31.6 |

Table 11 shows percentages of actual participation at management strategies area. On average participation at this category was moderately to low. The highest level of staff participation was on decisions concerning communication between school and community (68.4%), while the lowest participation was on decisions concerning the school policies regarding students with special needs (39.3%). The involvement of staff in decisions concerning the students such as how to solve students' frequent absenteeism (50.7%) was lower than their participation in decisions concerning student-related policies and procedures such as discipline (63%).

Table 12: Participants' responses on management strategies (Section B)

| Items | % Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 22. When new student-related policies and procedures are suggested, such as discipline, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 88.3 | 11.7 |
| 23. Do you want to be involved in decisions concerning the students such as how to solve the problem of students' frequent absenteeism? | 76.6 | 23.4 |
| 25. Do you want to be involved in decisions concerning the school's policies regarding students with special needs? | 76.6 | 23.4 |
| 26. Do you want to be involved in decisions concerning the communication between school and community? | 88.9 | 11.1 |

Table 12 shows results of staff desires to participate in management strategies area. Overall, the results indicate a high desire for participation in all practices. The

desire to participate in decisions concerning communication between school and community was very high, this scored at (88.9%). They also showed strong desire to be involved in decisions regarding student-related policies. Both the desire to be involved in decisions concerning the students and the school's policies were equal with a score of (76.6%).

Table 13: Participants' responses on management strategies (Section C)

| Items | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 22. When new student-related policies and procedures are suggested, such as discipline, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 3.44 | .686 |
| 23. How important is it that you participate decisions concerning the students such as how to solve the problem of students' frequent absenteeism? | 3.24 | .781 |
| 25. How important is it that you participate decisions concerning the school's policies regarding students with special needs? | 3.28 | .801 |
| 26. How important is it that you participate decisions concerning the communication between school and community? | 3.53 | .667 |

Table 13 shows the mean and standard deviation of staff perception of the importance of participating on management strategies area. The results show that they perceive their participation in this area as very important. Decision concerning communication between school and community was the most important content of this area with the highest cumulative mean ($M = 3.53$) and standard deviation was ($SD = .667$). Decision concerning students such as how to solve students' frequent absenteeism has the lowest cumulative mean ($M = 3.24$) but is still seen as an important issue.

**4.1.4 Staff development**

Participation levels on staff development area are reported in Tables 14-17.

Table 14: Participants' practices of staff development (Section A)

| Items | % | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Yes | No |
| 11. Are you involved in the preparation of school development plan? | 81.2 | 18.8 |
| 16. When teachers' professional developments are planned, are you involved in such planning? | 67.2 | 32.8 |
| 17. Are you involved in decisions concerning developing the performance of your colleagues in the department or school? | 45.9 | 54.1 |

Table 14 shows levels of actual participation in staff development area. The involvement in decision concerning the preparation of school development plan was very high (81.2%). The staff participation in planning teachers' professional development was (67.2%). However, the lowest participation was on decisions concerning development of other staff in the department or school (45.9%).

Table 15: Participants' responses on staff development (Section B)

| Items | % | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Yes | No |
| 11. Do you want to be involved in the preparation of school development plan? | 89.5 | 10.5 |
| 16. When teachers' professional developments are planned, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 86.9 | 13.1 |
| 17. Do you want to be involved in decisions concerning developing the performance of your colleagues in the department or school? | 64.4 | 35.6 |

Table 15 shows results of staff desires to participate in staff development area. The desire to participate in the preparation of school development plan was very high (89.5%). However, the desire to be involved in decisions concerning the

development of colleagues has the lowest percentage (64.4%). These results match

the actual practices in this area.

Table 16: Participants' responses on staff development (Section C)

| Items | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 11. How important is it that you participate in decisions concerning the preparation of school development plan? | 3.41 | .674 |
| 16. When teachers' professional developments are planned, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 3.36 | .723 |
| 17. How important is it that you participate in decisions concerning developing the performance of your colleagues in the department or school? | 3.03 | .857 |

Table 16 shows the mean and standard deviation of the staff perceptions of

the importance of participating in staff development areas. Decision concerning

planning of teachers' professional development was the most important content of

this area with the highest cumulative mean (*M =3.36*) and standard deviation was

(*SD =.723*). Participation in decisions concerning the development of colleagues is

still seen important, but it has the lowest cumulative mean (*M =3.03*) and standard

deviation (*SD =.857*).

**4.1.5 Curriculum and instruction**

Participation in curriculum and instruction area is reported in Tables 17-19.

Table 17 shows percentages of actual participation in curriculum and instruction

area. In general, participation in this area was moderate to low. The highest level of

staff participation was in decisions concerning the adoption of new instructional

methods (65.5%), which indicates a moderate participation. Low participation is

reported in areas such as students' assessment policies and extra-curricular activities.

Table 17: Participants' practices of curriculum and instruction (Section A)

| Items | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 12. When new programs or projects are to be adopted or implemented in your school, are you involved in making such decisions? | 60.1 | 39.9 |
| 13. When one of your school programs is found to be ineffective, are you involved in deciding how to resolve the problem? | 59.5 | 40.5 |
| 19. When new instructional methods are suggested, are you involved in making decisions whether to adopt them or not? | 65.5 | 34.5 |
| 21. Are you involved in decisions concerning the type of extra-curricular activities in your school? | 56.7 | 43.3 |
| 24. Are you involved in decisions concerning the policies and procedures of students' assessment? | 57.5 | 42.5 |

Table 18 shows results of staff desires to participate in curriculum and instruction area. Overall, participants showed a high or very high desire to participate in this area. The desire to participate in the decisions concerning the new instructional methods had an extremely high score of (89.5%). However, the desire to be involved in decisions concerning the type of extra-curricular activities has the lowest percentage.

Table 18: Participants' responses on curriculum and instruction (Section B)

| Items | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 12. When new programs or projects are to be adopted or implemented in your school, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 86.6 | 13.4 |
| 13. When one of your school programs is found to be ineffective, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 82.9 | 17.1 |
| 19. When new instructional methods are suggested, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 89.5 | 10.5 |

| 21. Do you want to be involved in decisions concerning the type of extra-curricular activities in your school? | 76.9 | 23.1 |
| 24. Do you want to be involved in decisions concerning the policies and procedures of students' assessment? | 83.5 | 16.5 |

Table 19 shows the mean and standard deviation of the staff perceptions of the importance of participating on curriculum and instruction area. In general, participants agreed that participation in this area ranged from important to very important. Decision concerning the new instructional methods were very important to them with the highest cumulative mean (*M =3.40*) and standard deviation of (*SD =.733*). Other very important areas are participation in student assessment decisions and decisions concerning new programs and projects at their schools. Other issues are seen important but not too important. An example includes decision concerning the type of extra-curricular activities which has a mean (*M =3.20*) and standard deviation of (*SD =.815*).

Table 19: Participants' responses on curriculum and instruction (Section C)

| Items | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 12. When new programs or projects are to be adopted or implemented in your school, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 3.29 | .673 |
| 13. When one of your school programs is found to be ineffective, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 3.23 | .714 |
| 19. When new instructional methods are suggested, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 3.46 | .657 |
| 21. How important is it that you participate in decisions concerning the type of extra-curricular activities in your school? | 3.20 | .815 |
| 24. How important is it that you participate in decisions concerning the policies and procedures of students' assessment? | 3.40 | .733 |

### 4.1.6 Resources

Participation in resources area is reported in Tables 20-22. Table 20 shows levels of actual participation in the resources area. Participation in this area was low. For example, staff participated with a (56.1%) in decisions concerning the adoption of new educational resources and with a (47%) in decisions concerning the use of school facilities.

Table 20: Participants' practices on resources (Section A)

| Items | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 9. Are you involved in any decision concerning the use of school facilities? | 47 | 53 |
| 20. When new educational resources is to be adopted for your subject or other subjects in your school, are you involved in making such a decision? | 56.1 | 43.9 |

Table 21 shows results of staff desire to participate in resources area. As expected, the desire to participate in the decisions concerning the adoption of new educational resources was very high (88.3%). However, the desire to involve in decisions concerning the use of school facilities was high (72.4%).

Table 21: Participants' responses on resources (Section B)

| Items | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 9. Do you want to be involved in any decision concerning the use of school facilities? | 72.4 | 27.6 |
| 20. When new educational resources is to be adopted for your subject or other subjects in your school, do you want to be involved in making such decisions? | 88.3 | 11.7 |

Table 22 shows the mean and standard deviation of the staff perceptions of the importance of participating in resources area. Staff perceives that their participation in the adoption of new educational resources is very important with a mean of ($M =3.48$) and perceive their participation level in the use of school facilities as important with a mean of ($M =2.98$). These results support the previous results of actual and desired participation.

Table 22: Participants' responses on resources (Section C)

| Items | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 9. How important is it that you participate in any decision concerning the use of school facilities? | 2.98 | .763 |
| 20. When new educational resources is to be adopted for your subject or other subjects in your school, how important is it that you participate in this decision? | 3.48 | .671 |

**4.2 Results of Question Two**

To answer the second question, the perceptions of administrators (principals, vice principals, and HoFs) and teachers with regard to their actual practice of SBM were analyzed and compared. Mann-Whitney U test used to compare the mean of administrators and teachers to test whether there are significant differences. Table 23 shows the results (Section A).

Table 23: Comparison between administrators and teachers mean of actual practices of SBM

| SBM areas | Differences |
|---|---|
| Effective school leadership | |
| Administrative matters | .000 |
| Hiring | .000 |
| Grievances | .000 |
| Assignment | .000 |

Budget allocation

| | |
|---|---|
| Planning | .000 |
| Expenditure | .000 |
| Facilities | .001 |

Management strategies

| | |
|---|---|
| Student-related policies | .004 |
| Student problems | .122 |
| Student with special need | .000 |
| Community | .012 |

Staff development

| | |
|---|---|
| School development plan | .016 |
| Teachers professional development | .001 |
| Development of a colleague | .000 |

Curriculum and instruction

| | |
|---|---|
| New programs | .000 |
| Ineffective programs | .000 |
| Instructional methods | .000 |
| Extra-curricula | .385 |
| Student assessment | .010 |

Resources

| | |
|---|---|
| School facilities | .000 |
| Educational resources | .100 |

As Table 20 shows, there were no significant differences between the perceptions of school administrators and teachers about their actual practices of the SBM elements except in three areas. The area that has the most significant difference ($M =.385$) was in the curriculum and instruction area. The administrators believed that teachers were involved in decisions concerning the type of extra-curricular activities in the school more than what the teachers actually believed. The other difference was the management strategies area with ($M =.122$). The teachers reported that their involvement in decisions concerning the students such as how to solve the

problem of students' frequent absenteeism was less than what the administrators believed. The last difference in practices was with the resources area with (*M= .100*). The administrators believed that teachers were involved in decisions concerning the adoption of new educational resources for their own subjects or other subjects, while teachers believed that their authority over that decision was limited.

**4.3 Results of Question Three**

To answer this question the perceptions of school staff about their actual practices of SBM elements in the six areas was used. The areas that need improvement were the areas that their practices have the lowest percentages. However, the level of acceptable performance differs from one area to another. This is because after ten years of ADECs' school reform and 5-7 years of implementing the NSM there are some areas, which were directly targeted by ADEC, and therefore their level of practice should be higher than the levels of other areas that are not directly targeted. In other words, with the NSM, principals have more authority over certain areas than others. As a result the practices of school staff on those areas are expected to be higher than their practices on the areas with little or no authority given to the schools. The areas over which schools gained authority during the implementation of the NSM were management strategies, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and resources. For these areas, the researcher believes that the acceptable level of practices should be 70% and above. On the other hand, the areas that received little or sometimes no authority are effective school leadership, and budget allocation. For these two areas, the researcher believes that the acceptable level of practices should be around or above 50%. Overall, most of the elements within each area were in need of some improvement. Table 24 summarizes elements in need of improvement.

Table 24: Summary of areas that need improvement

| Items | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Effective school leadership | | |
|     Administrative matters | 33.3 | 66.7 |
|     Hiring | 10.5 | 89.5 |
|     Grievances | 45.3 | 59.7 |
|     Assignment | 47 | 53 |
| Budget allocation | | |
|     Planning | 22.2 | 77.8 |
|     Expenditure | 37 | 63 |
|     Facilities | 36.5 | 63.5 |
| Management strategies | | |
|     Student-related policies | 63 | 37 |
|     Student problems | 50.7 | 49.3 |
|     Student with special need | 39.3 | 60.7 |
|     Community | 68.4 | 31.6 |
| | | |
| Staff development | | |
|     Teachers professional development | 67.2 | 32.8 |
|     Development of a colleague | 45.9 | 54.1 |
| Curriculum and instruction | | |
|     New programs | 60.1 | 39.9 |
|     Ineffective programs | 59.5 | 40.5 |
|     Instructional methods | 65.5 | 34.5 |
|     Extra-curricula | 56.7 | 43.3 |
|     Student assessment | 57.5 | 42.5 |
| Resources | | |
|     School facilities | 47 | 53 |
|     Educational resources | 56.1 | 43.9 |

On average, participation at the areas of effective school leadership and

budget allocation, over which principals had little authority, were low and need improvement. Although, the area of effective school leadership has the lowest practice percentage, even over all areas on hiring new personnel element, it shows signs of improvement in some other elements. For example, the participation of school staff in determining their assignments was (47%). Moreover, all of the elements in the area of budget allocation are in need of improvement.

On the other hand, the average of the other four areas that have more authority was moderate to low. The participation in school development plan was the only acceptable practice on the area of staff development with (81.2%). However, the other two elements in the area of staff development are still in need of some improvement. Additionally, all of the elements in the area of resources need an improvement. In the curriculum and instruction area, the decisions that need more authority are the decisions concerning how to resolve the problems of ineffective programs, the type of extra-curricular activities, and the policies and procedures of students' assessment. In the school management strategies area, teachers need more authority over decisions concerning the students such as how to solve the problem of students' frequent absenteeism. Moreover, the staff decisions concerning the school's policies regarding students with special needs need improvement.

# Chapter 5: Discussion And Recommendations

This study has multiple purposes. The first purpose is to investigate the degree to which SBM has been practiced in the NSM schools in Al Ain. The second purpose is to investigate the influence of staff position on the practices of the SBM. For that purpose, the actual practices of administrators (principals, vice principals, and HoFs) and teachers are analyzed and compared to find the differences. The final purpose of this study is to identify the main areas of SBM practices that need improvement. This chapter explains the findings of the study and clarifies the implications of this study for practice and future research.

## 5.1 Discussion of Research Question One

The first research question investigated the practices of SBM in the NSM schools based on the perceptions of school staff. The findings indicate that participation of school staff of SBM practices in areas where staff has more authority was greater than their participation in areas with no or some authority. In addition, the staff desire to participate in decision-making was strong and compatible with their actual participation in the areas of authority and non-authority. Moreover, the staff desire and actual participation was stronger in the areas that have direct relations to teaching than to the administrative tasks. Finally, the only area of acceptable participation of staff in decision-making, based on the SBM, was in the preparation of the school development plan.

### 5.1.1 Effective school leadership

This area investigates the authority of the school principal over decisions concerning administrative matters, the hiring and assignment of new personnel, and grievances of school members. On the other hand, it investigates the degree of shared leadership with school staff by the school principal. The practices varied from the

daily school decisions, such as scheduling, to the more complicated and little authorized decisions like hiring new personnel. On average, participation in this area was low. One of the major reasons for this result is that this area was one of the areas that have limited authority according to ADEC policies. On average, school staff had little or no participation in the area of hiring new personnel because of ADEC's policies. However, ADECs' restructure of staff positions played an essential role in improving some elements within this area.

The staff believed that their involvement in decisions concerning determining their assignment was very important and matched their actual and desired practices. ADEC's restructuring could be the reason behind this result. In the first years of ADEC's establishment, and to fulfill their school's needs, some teachers were forced to teach subjects other than their specialty. For example, some Arabic language teachers were teaching Islamic, and some Math teachers served as homeroom teachers and were forced to teach math and science. As a result, most of the teachers had no authority over their teaching assignment decisions. With the implementation of the NSM in the last few years, ADEC reviewed and modified the status of teachers. Teachers were assigned and sometimes reassigned to teach subjects that were compatible with their specialty. The restructuring wave helped create a sense of awareness between some school staff about their rights and responsibilities. Additionally, the school principal played an essential role in this area by giving the staff the opportunity to participate in this decision.

The relationship among school staff and the principal is an important indicator of school readiness for reform. In this study, the relationship between principal and staff was measured by the degree of trust the principal gives to staff to participate in solving leadership problems such as those related to faculty grievances

or scheduling. Unfortunately, although the staff pointed out that participation in these matters was important, the results showed that their actual participation was low. This indicates a lack of 'trust' between the principal and staff because they expressed a desire for more participation. The reason could be because some principals have difficulties changing their old management style to the new style, which emphasize shared leadership. In fact, this finding is consistent with Cheng Cheong (1996), Lindgerg and Vanyushyn (2013), and PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007).

Additionally, a decision concerning the hiring of new personnel shows the lowest desire and actual participation in this area by school staff. New employees are referred to as the reserve teachers, because schools have no authority over hiring new staff yet. School staff considers this decision unimportant. There are different reasons for this. First, the idea is a new one to school staff who used to believe that ADEC is the only authority responsible for such a decision. Second, this decision will come with more responsibilities for school staff. Some teachers and principals may refuse to participate in this decision process because it may increase their workload. However, some school principals during the Shaping the Future conference expressed their desire to participate in such a decision. On the other hand, although participation in this decision was very low, it shows that in some schools the administrators practice some authority over selecting and hiring new personnel. With the fact that principals have the authority over this decision and some of them actually practice it, there is an opportunity to increase the practice of this element by principals. Moreover, the practice of hiring reserve teachers may provide school principals with good experience when hiring new staff in the future.

**5.1.2 Budget allocation**

The content of this area includes participating in decisions concerning

planning of school/department budget, expenditures, and new building facilities or upgrading existing facilities. This area of decision-making has the lowest overall actual participation among all areas of SBM. However, school staff considers their participation in these decisions as important which is reflected in their desire to participate. The result of actual participation, according to ADEC's policies, is expected because the school has limited authority over such decisions. ADEC is responsible for allocating school budgets, providing schools with the necessary resources, and doing building maintenance.

The lowest participation in this area was planning of school or department budget. This is because ADEC provides all schools with a general budget plan broken down over lines according to specific percentages. In most cases, school principals follow the plan without any changes because of their concerns about the accountability and strict financial supervision of ADEC. In some cases, schools realign their budgets according to their goals and programs. This requires a transfer of some amounts between the budget lines and an approval on these changes from ADEC. The result shows that the number of principals who have the initiative to reallocate the school budget according to their school goals and programs was very limited (22.2%). On the other hand, the desire to participate in planning and reallocating the school budget was high.

The results show a lack of participation in decisions concerning expenditure such as what to purchase for the school or the department. The lack of participation in this area could be because decisions are predetermined in some cases. For example, ADEC provides schools with most resources needed for schools and classrooms. However, a school has the authority to determine resources used on a daily basis, such as stationary. If we consider the moderate to high desire to

participate in this decision and the view that participation is important, this calls for a rethink about participation in this decision. Therefore, staff should have more authority to participate in such a decision to understand their responsibilities. This is consistent with Goldman, Dunlap, and Conley (1993).

Participation in decisions concerning building facilities was low with (36.5%). That is logical because with NSM reform, there was a re-building or renovation of most schools. Therefore, the need for building new facilities or upgrading existing ones is already limited. It should be noted that most schools that participated in this study were in new buildings. The results might have been different if schools and facilities were old or not in a good shape.

### 5.1.3 Management Strategies

This area includes participation in decisions of school management strategies and policies that are related to students and community. Participating in decisions concerning this area is very important according to staff perceptions. Their desire to participate in this area was high, while their actual participation was moderate. The features of the NSM are one important reason of this result.

The result of school staff participation in decisions concerning communication between school and community was moderate to high while their desire to participate was very high. This result could be for various reasons. First, parents' involvement is one of the main features of the NSM. ADEC encourages teachers and schools to communicate with parents and encourages parent to participate in their children's education. For this purpose, ADEC provides school staff with training on how to effectively communicate with parents. Second, the awareness of school staff, especially teachers, about the importance of communication with the parent enhances student learning. Third, communication

with the community is a major component of teachers, principal, and other staff performance evaluation. Moreover, it is a major component of school improvement plan and the Irtiqa'a program. Therefore, the participation of school staff in this decision was moderate to high. Overall, this result was consistent with World Bank (2007) and Caldwell (2005).

Participation of school staff in decisions concerning students' affairs, such as how to solve the problem of frequent absenteeism, was lower than their participation in decisions concerning student-related policies and procedures, such as discipline. On the other hand, their desire to participate in such decisions was high. This result is surprising, especially since most student-related policies come directly from ADEC. Each school can readjust the policies according to its needs but generally schools do not have much freedom, while in decisions concerning students, problems are expected to be solve by each school staff. The explanation could be because student-related policies are part of the school improvement plan, so participation in this area could be wider and include all school staff. On the other hand, the social worker and students behavior team are usually responsible for decisions concerning students problems. It should be noted that the participation of social workers and other school staff in this study was (11.7%). Moreover, the high desire of participation reflects the awareness of all school staff about the importance of such participation in students' learning.

The lowest participation in this area was in decisions concerning the school policies regarding students with special needs. The result is reasonable because the experience of integrating special needs students into public schools is still new. In addition, according to ADEC policies, the learning support team (LST) is responsible for decisions concerning the students with special needs in each school. The LST

team includes the principal or designated senior manager, social worker, teacher representative, special education teacher, and school psychologists (ADEC, 2012d). As a result, participation in such decisions is not available for all school staff. However, their high desires to participate calls for some changes.

**5.1.4 Staff Development**

Staff development area indicates the highest participation in decision-making. This area consists of three elements: school improvement plan, teachers' professional development, and developing the performance of other staff. School staff shows a strong desire to participate in such decisions, which was compatible with their perception of the importance of participation in this area. The results are rational because staff development was a factor associated with school reform and one of the most important features of the NSM.

The results show that the desire and actual participation in decisions concerning the preparation of the school development plan was very strong. This result is rational because the development of school plan is one of ADEC's priorities of school reform. School principals and staff have had intensive training in the preparation of school development plans by different parties in the last ten years. The training started with the Private Public Partnership (PPP) companies, then Tamkeen program. Recently, schools were asked to plan and implement school-based development programs based on their own needs. Therefore, participation in the school development plan is mandatory for all school staff in the NSM. At the same time, participation in the development of the school plan is the main criterion of the staff performance evaluation and the Irtiqa'a program. This is compatible with the studies of Lee and Smith (2001), Briggs and Wohlstetter (2003), and Zajda and Gamage (2009).

Similarly, participation of school staff in decisions concerning the planning of teachers' professional development was slightly high. This result matches the staff desire of participation and their perception of the importance of this decision. The previous reasons could be part of this increment. In addition, recently ADEC has changed its policies of providing teacher professional development. They replaced the fixed topic strategy of the development program that was delivered to all teachers in all schools by new strategies. ADEC has asked school principals to provide them with the school improvement plan and with teachers' development topics based on teachers' needs assessment. Then, the topics are categorized on three areas for each school. Two areas: the Irtiqa'a report and school improvement plan, are mandatory and all school staff must be trained in them. These two areas are provided to all school staff through Tamkeen training. The last area is optional, where teachers have the chance to choose any topic that is compatible with their need of improvement. All teachers and administrators were asked to complete the professional development form at the beginning of the year. Moreover, the teacher professional development plan became part of teachers' performance evaluation. Every teacher has to complete and submit his or her professional development plan online so that the principal can review and start the teacher performance evaluation. Therefore, the result of this area of decision-making was slightly high.

On the other hand, participation of school staff in decisions concerning developing the performance of other colleagues was low compared to the other two areas. Although school staff felt that this decision was important, their desire to participate in this decision was less than their desire to participate in the other two elements of this area. ADEC considers participation in the development of other colleagues as one of the performance evaluation criteria. According to ADEC's

teacher performance evaluation, the teacher deserves "accomplished" rank in the area of demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy related to student development and needs, if he or she supports other staff members in understanding the content or children they teach through tutoring, workshops, or demonstrations. However, most of the teachers provide a workshop in any topic for all schoolteachers in order to fulfill this requirement. The other reason for not participating in the development of other colleagues can be the increase in teachers' workload. In addition, the isolation of teachers and the competition among teachers could justify the weak willingness of their participation in this area. In fact Cheng Lai-Fong (2004) in his study suggested that to overcome this problem the topics of the professional development should include subjects like peer observation and professional dialogue.

**5.1.5 Curriculum and instruction**

The elements of this area include participation in decisions concerning the adoption of new programs, resolving ineffective programs, the adoption of new instructional methods, the type of extra-curricular activities, and students' assessment. The overall participation of school staff in this area was moderate to low. However, their desire to participate was very strong and compatible with their perception of the importance of this area. The slow grant of authority by ADEC to school staff especially teachers in this area could be the reason for the result.

Based on the result, the highest participation was on decisions concerning the adoption of new instructional methods. This result is consistent with the result of the teacher survey that has been conducted by ADEC (2012e). The intensive training that has been provided to teachers on this area could be the reason behind this result. The teachers received various training on delivering the curriculum, improving teaching strategies, creating resources, and student assessment. Moreover, the introduction of

the NSM curriculum which is based on standards, indicators, and learning outcomes has increased the authority of teachers to choose the best instructional and assessment methods that suite their students and improve their achievement. As a result, participation of school staff in decisions concerning the procedures of students' assessment was slightly affected. However, ADEC's policy makers still hold some authority over policies and procedures of student assessment.

The results of participating in decisions concerning the adoption of new programs or projects and resolving ineffective programs were convergent. Most of the school programs or projects are implemented to achieve instructional goals. In most cases, teachers are responsible for planning, implementing, evaluating, and resolving the problems of ineffective programs. That explains the result of these two areas. Moreover, decisions concerning the type of extra-curricular activities have the lowest participation over the elements of this area. The reason for this result could be because the extra-curricular activities are not a priority as the standard curriculum for some staff.

It should be noted that in all elements of this area, there is a big difference between the desire and the importance of participation, and the actual participation. The authority of school staff over these elements granted by ADEC and their desire to participate in this area highlights the responsibility of the school principal; who is responsible for providing staff with authority. In addition, he or she is responsible for the appropriate implementation and revision of these authorities. According to White (1989) the principal is responsible for school programs, shared governance, and district decision-making. Thus he or she must find ways to empower all staff to maximize their contributions to successfully attain the school's goals.

**5.1.6 Resources**

Participation in this area includes decisions concerning the use of school facilities and the adoption of new educational resources. Overall, participation in this area is low while the desire to participate is very strong. Although ADEC provides teachers with the authority to create and design their own resources and to adopt new resources to fulfill their students' learning needs, actual participation of school staff in decisions concerning the adoption of new educational resources for the subject was low. One reason for this result could be because ADEC delivers most school resources. As a result, school principals and supervisors direct the teachers to use the available resources instead of new ones to make the best of existing resources because new resources are expensive. Moreover, the planning team sometimes enforces the use of specific available resources especially if the supervisor is in that team. The high level of desire to participate in this area compared with low actual participation sheds light on the influence of school leadership on decisions in this area.

**5.2 Discussion of Research Question Two**

Research question two sought to investigate the differences in the SBM practices based on the position of school staff. The result showed that there were no significant differences between the perceptions of school administrators (principal, vice principal, and HoFs) and teachers about their actual practices of the SBM elements except in three areas. These areas are curriculum and instruction, management strategies, and resources.

In the area of curriculum and instruction, the administrators believed that teachers were involved in decisions concerning the type of extra-curricular activities in the school more than what the teachers actually believed. While in the area of

management strategies the teachers believed that their involvement in decisions concerning the students, such as how to solve the problem of students' frequent absenteeism, was less than what the administrators reported. Lastly, in the area of resources, the administrators believed that teachers were involved in decisions concerning the adoption of new educational resources for their own subjects or other subjects. While teachers believed that their authority over that decision was limited.

One explanation of these findings is that school administrators might have overestimated the level in which they share decision-making with teachers. In fact, they might have perceived their responses to the survey items as related to evaluation of their performance or that they want to project an ideal image for the school principal. In addition, for the element of extra-curricular activities, the school administrators perhaps did not distinguish between the extra-curricular activities and ADEC's new curriculum activities. In other words, they might have considered teachers' designed activities, which are based on ADEC's standards and outcomes as extra-curricular activities since teachers implement them without textbooks. One reason for this conflict might be that school principals and vice principals are not heavily involved in the curriculum planning and implementation and might have thought that this is the job of HoFs in the new system.

The difference in the areas concerning students, such as how to solve students' problems and the adoption of new educational resources, perhaps comes from the difference in understanding such decisions. Perhaps school principals believe that teacher participation in students' problems is limited by implementing the procedures to solve such problems. While teachers believe it is wider than that. They may explain their participation by planning and designing these procedures in addition to implementing them. On the other hand, for the adoption of new

educational resources, the principals believe that teachers participate in such decision for two reasons. First, the teachers are responsible for determining their need of educational resources. Second, ADEC provides schools with a variety of resources and teachers are responsible for choosing the suitable resources for their subjects. However, teachers believe that they have little authority over this area because sometimes they are forced by their supervisors to use specific resources. Additionally, schools do not always provide teachers with needed educational resources because of the budget allocation. This is consistent with the result of Cheng Chong (1996).

**5.3 Discussion of Research Question Three**

The third question provides suggestions for the practices of SBM that need improvement based on the perceptions of school staff. The results show that most of the SBM practices are in need of improvement. According to the amount of authority provided by ADEC during the implementation of the NSM, the six areas of SBM discussed in this study was divided into two main areas. Two domains of effective school leadership and budget allocation witness limited authority granted to staff. In the other four areas, school staff has more authority and sometimes full authority over their elements, which are management strategies, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and resources. In addition, some areas overlap with other areas, like effective school leadership. Therefore, the level of improvement on each area is influenced by the amount of authority, its own settings, and the impact of leadership style.

The results show that the area of effective school leadership has a low level of participation and needs some improvement. Although the element of hiring new personnel has a limited level of participation as the results show, the other three

elements show better levels of participating. The reason is that in decisions concerning the administrative matters, solving grievances, and determining staff assignments, the big part of improvement depends mostly on the principal leadership style. Therefore, three elements can be improved by enhancing the practices of school shared leadership. The interesting point is that ADEC is very much engaged in developing shared leadership, management and decision-making within the school by clarifying the responsibilities and expectations of the principal. According to ADEC (2010), the principal is responsible for building the leadership capacity within the school and a culture of teamwork and sharing. Moreover, ADEC advocates an image of principals who believe in change and who guide and trust staff.

In the area of budget allocation, all the elements were in need of improvement. The authority over these elements was the least among all other areas. The creation of the school budget, which is predetermined by ADEC and divided into certain lines with specific percentages, reduced the ability of school staff to participate in budget decision-making. However, with the possibility of moving certain amounts of the school budget from one line to another, the principal and school staff can share some authority to adjust the budget according to their school's instructional goals and programs. Based on the result, (22.2%) of participants have practiced this authority. In addition, the principals have little and sometimes no authority over building new facilities. However, ADEC requires the principals to continue to update facilities according to their students' learning needs. On the other hand, since the school expenditure budget is predetermined, participation of school staff in this item was expected to be higher. ADEC requires the principals to consult with staff regarding their needs (ADEC, 2010). Therefore, the principals should improve their practices of leadership in order to improve the staff practices in this

area.

The third area that needs improvement is that of school management strategies. All of the elements in this area need improvement. However, there are some elements that need improvement more than others. Participation in decisions concerning communication with the community and student-related policies were the best between the elements of this area. These two elements are among the major standards of the school improvement plan and the Irtiqa'a program. The Irtiqa'a program, which started in Abu Dhabi public schools in 2012, inspects schools to identify strengths and priorities for improvement. Then, it works with schools to maintain their strengths and support their work in the areas of improvement. On the other hand, participation in decisions concerning students with special needs was the lowest in this area. ADEC started the integration of special needs students in public schools in the last few years. ADEC believes that all children can learn and that the responsibility for educating all students to their fullest potential rests with school staff working within a supportive educational environment. The results show that this integration is implemented gradually and cautiously. However, staff strong desire to participate in decisions concerning this integration open the doors for more improvement. The last element that needs improvement in this area is participation in decisions concerning students, such as how to solve their frequent absenteeism.

Some of the elements in the area of staff development was acceptable, however there were still two elements that need some improvement. One of these is participation in decisions concerning teachers' professional development. Teachers' professional development is one of the important features of school reform and the NSM program. Since the implementation of the NSM, ADEC continues to provide school staff with the required development to improve leadership, teaching and

learning skills of school staff. These efforts help to improve some elements in the area of staff development. However, ADEC went deep into this area when they engaged schools in planning and implementing their school based on the development plan. At the same time, ADEC provides teachers with the opportunity to choose their own needs of training topics. However, participation in the development of a colleague needs more improvement. Teachers tend to work in isolated environments. Therefore, the principal is responsible for creating a collaborative culture and to encourage teamwork.

The fifth area that needs development is curriculum and instruction. The entire element in this area needs improvement. These elements include the participation in decisions concerning the adoption of new programs, solving ineffective programs, the adoption of new instructional methods, the type of extra-curricular activities, and student assessment. The school staff, especially teachers, has the greatest authority of decision-making over the elements of this area. According to ADEC (2014b), the NSM curriculum is linked to student learning outcomes, where the new teaching methods enhance student learning by developing the student as a communicator, a thinker and a problem solver. Within the NSM, teachers are responsible for delivering instruction through a variety of instructional materials and methods that enable all students to achieve the learning expectations. In addition, the NSM recognizes that continuous assessment of students is useful to help teachers understand what students have learned and what teaching methods and resources needed to enable students to meet the learning outcomes. Moreover, the principal is responsible for building teachers' commitment to the learning process by ensuring a culture of challenge and support in which all staff can participate and engage in learning to achieve success.

The last area that needs improvement, according to school staff perceptions, was the area of resources. The two elements in this area, which are participation in decisions concerning the use of school facilities and the adoption of new educational resources, were in need for some improvement. Within the NSM, textbooks are part of the learning resources, teachers are expected to use additional resources to supplement and enrich each subject's content. In addition, the principal is expected to encourage the use of school facilities to enhance the learning process. Therefore, the principal and teachers are responsible for improving this area.

## 5.4 Implications and Recommendations

Since the implementation of the NSM in 2006, the management of public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi has changed from centralized management to a more decentralized one to improve educational quality. From this study, one may find that the NSM is related to SBM in their features and goals to improve learning quality to meet students' needs and empower staff. The staff participation in decision-making of SMB areas can be witnessed within the NSM. This participation is related to the areas of effective school leadership, budget allocation, management strategies, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and resources. The results of the study clearly indicate that participation of school staff in the authorized areas was greater than their participation in the unauthorized or less authorized areas. Thus, in order to improve the implementation of the NSM, principals, teachers, and other school staff have to change their traditional roles and work collaboratively to fit with decentralization in schools. Because school staff are frontline workers, their participation is important to improve their school and students' achievement.

The result of this study have significant implications for stakeholders including ADEC and the MoE in terms of empowering school staff and improving

public school management. Specifically, the officials at ADEC should provide more effort to monitor the implementation of NSM to overcoming the obstacles. The other implication is the obvious need to train school principals on specific issues of leadership such as empowering school staff and teams, shared leadership, and how to create a collaborative culture in the school.

Based on the results of this study, the researcher provides the following recommendations:

1. Concerted efforts should be made to monitor the actual level of NSM implementation and to direct the efforts to increase the authority over some areas and overcome the obstacles delineated in this study.

2. All schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi should be brought together through networking. Networking will provide an opportunity for sharing expertise and suggestions concerning the daily operations of the school. This will help improve implementation of the current reform and raise the spirit of competition.

3. Efficient and sufficient professional development and support should be given to school principals to improve their leadership styles in a way that will help in implementing the NSM.

4. School principals should provide ample opportunity to all staff members to engage in the decision-making process and ensure that they actually participate through evaluations and data analysis.

5. Considering decentralization in individual schools, school principals should try to break the school to smaller SBM teams to help in giving all school staff the opportunity to participate in decision-making. This decentralization may also help in empowering school staff to play leadership roles.

6. Developing a good reputation can secure community support. Therefore, school staff should involve parents and community members at all levels to guarantee additional income through donations. This money can be used to implement school programs which need an additional budget.

7. Given that not all current principals, especially those who tend to use traditional leadership, are able to support the reform efforts and implement the NSM, officials must realize that some decisions are very sensitive in nature, such as in the dismissal of a principal, but sometimes this decision becomes a must, especially if those principals are holding the reform back.

8. Universities should begin to prepare prospective teachers and educational administrators in the theory and process of SBM through undergraduate and post-graduate programs.

The following are some recommendations for further research:

First, this study was conducted in Al Ain Kindergartens and cycle one schools, conducting a replication on different locations and NSM cycles would provide validation of the findings of this study and would make it possible to generalize the findings to all NSM schools.

Second, studies that examine the implementation of the NSM are few; thus, conducting research through using different methodologies would be useful. For example, a qualitative study would provide in-depth understanding of areas of strengths and obstacles of SBM implementation. Another related area for research might examine individual schools to learn if any staff or specific groups resist the implementation of this program. Moreover, a comparative study between two schools with high and low level of NSM implementation may help in improving the practices and overcoming the obstacles.

Finally, this study addressed the SBM practices in public schools; conducting further research on private schools would serve the validity of findings and could make it possible to generalize the findings all over UAE schools. Moreover, the results can be used to support the implementation in public schools.

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# Appendix A

## Permission Letter

## To Collect Data from ADEC's school

**UAEU** College of Education

جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
United Arab Emirates University

Letter of Cooperation for Data Collection in Schools

September 17, 2014

To Whom It My Concern:

Shaikha Ali Abdulla Al Kaabi is requesting permission to collect research data from your school to complete her study at the College of Education master's program. The research entitled (An Evaluation of The New School Model in light of the School-Based Management Approach: A study on Al Ain Schools).You will be informed of the purposes of the study and the nature of the research procedures by the researcher. You will be also been given an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher.

As a Master's program coordinator at the College of Education at the UAEU, I hope that you can grant Shaikha permission to collect the necessary data from your school. Your support is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (halae@uaeu.ac.ae)

Thanks for your cooperation

Sincerely,

Hala Elhowe

Hala Elhoweris

Master's Program Coordinator

**College of Education**
**Assistant Dean for Research and Graduate Studies**
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# Appendix B

## Approval Letter

## To Collect Data from ADEC's school

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Date: November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 | | التاريخ: 5 نوفمبر 2014 |
| Ref: | | الرقم: |
| | | |
| **To: Public Schools Principals,** | | **السادة/ مديري المدارس الحكومية** |
| | | |
| **Subject: Letter of Permission** | | **الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة باحثين** |
| | | |
| **Dear Principals,** | | **تحية طيبة وبعد،،،** |
| The Abu Dhabi Education Council would like to express its gratitude for your generous efforts & sincere cooperation in serving our dear students. | | يطيبُ لمجلس أبوظبي للتعليم أن يتوجه لكم بخالص الشكر والتقدير لجهودكم الكريمة والتعاون الصادق لخدمة أبنائنا الطلبة. |
| You are kindly requested to allow the researcher/ **Shaikha Ali Abdullah Al Kaabi**, to complete her research on: | | ونود إعلامكم بموافقة مجلس أبو ظبي للتعليم على موضوع الدراسة التي ستجريها الباحثة/ **شيخة على عبد الله الكعبي** ، بعنوان: |
| **An evaluation of the new school model in light of the school-based management approach: A study on Al Ain Schools** | | **An evaluation of the new school model in light of the school-based management approach: A study on Al Ain Schools** |
| Please indicate your approval of this permission by facilitating her meetings with the sample groups at your respected schools. | | لذا، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحثة ومساعدتها على إجراء الدراسة المشار إليها. |
| For further information: please contact **Mr Helmy Seada** on 02/6150140 | | للاستفسار: يرجى الاتصال بالسيد/ **حلمي سعدة** على الهاتف 02/6150140 |
| Thank you for your cooperation. | | شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم |
| Sincerely yours, | | وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير،،، |

محمد سالم محمد الطاهري
المدير التنفيذي لقطاع العمليات المدرسية

# Appendix C

Survey Cover letter



Dear Colleague;

I am working on a field study about school-based management. The study aims to identify the most important aspects of school-based management that are practiced by the staff of the new model schools in Al Ain (Principals, Vic principals, HOFs, Teachers, and other jobs in the school).

I will be grateful if you could answer the following questionnaire accurately and objectively. Please know that the duration of completing this questionnaire may take about15 minutes. I confirm that all data and information you are giving will be handled confidentiality and will be used for the purposes of this research only.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. For more information and inquiries, please contact me on my email: alshaikha@me.com

Yours very truly,

Shaikha Ali Al Kaabi

Master of educational leadership

United Arab Emirates University

# Appendix D

School-Based Management Survey

**PART ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

**Directions:** Please answer the following items about yourself. Place a check mark next to your answer.

1. Gender:

   ☐ Male          ☐ Female

2. Position:

   ☐ Principal          ☐ Vice Principal          ☐ Head of Faculty          ☐ Teacher

   ☐ Other (…………………………………………..)

3. Nationality:

   ☐ UAE          ☐ Arabic          ☐ Foreigner

4. Your school cycle:

   ☐ Kindergarten          ☐ Cycle 1

5. Number of years that you have been teaching in the UAE? Please count this school year as a full year and write the number next to the cycle.

   ☐ Kindergarten (-----------)          ☐ Cycle 1 (-----------)

**PART TWO:**

**Directions:** <u>Please answer the following items about your participation in decisions concerning the school management.</u>

6. When school or department budgets are planned, are you involved in preparation? (Check one)

   ☐ Yes            ☐ No

   A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

      ☐ Yes            ☐ No

   B. How important is it that you participate in this decision? (Circle one number)

   | Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
   |:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

7. Are you involved in decisions concerning the expenditure (such as what to purchase for the school or the department)?

   ☐ Yes            ☐ No

   A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

      ☐ Yes            ☐ No

   B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

   | Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
   |:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

8. When new building facilities are needed or if existing facilities need upgrading, are you involved in making such decisions?

     ☐ Yes         ☐ No

   A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

     ☐ Yes         ☐ No

   B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

9. Are you involved in any decision concerning the use of school facilities?

     ☐ Yes         ☐ No

   A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

     ☐ Yes         ☐ No

   B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

10. When there are problems with administrative matters, such as scheduling, are

you involved in making such decisions?

☐ Yes　　　　　☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes　　　　　☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| 4              | 3         | 2           | 1                |

11. Are you involved in the preparation of school development plan?

☐ Yes　　　　　☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes　　　　　☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| 4              | 3         | 2           | 1                |

12. When new programs or projects are to be adopted or implemented in your

school, are you involved in making such decisions?

☐ Yes                ☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes                ☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

13. When one of your school programs is found to be ineffective, are you involved

in deciding how to resolve the problem?

☐ Yes                ☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes                ☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

14. When a new faculty member is to be hired in your school or department, are

you involved in making such a decision?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

  A.  Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

  ☐ Yes          ☐ No

  B.  How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

15. When a faculty member has a grievance, are you involved in resolving the

problem?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

  A.  Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

  ☐ Yes          ☐ No

  B.  How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

16. When school teachers' professional developments are planned, are you involved in such planning?

      ☐ Yes         ☐ No

  A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

      ☐ Yes         ☐ No

  B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

17. Are you involved in decisions concerning developing the performance of your colleagues in the department or school?

      ☐ Yes         ☐ No

  A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

      ☐ Yes         ☐ No

  B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

18. When your teaching assignments as a teacher or your administrative tasks as an administrator are considered, are you involved in making such decisions?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

    A.  Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

    B.  How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

19. When new instructional methods are suggested, are you involved in making decisions whether to adopt them or not?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

    A.  Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

    B.  How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

20. When new educational resources is to be adopted for your subject or other

subjects in your school, are you involved in making such a decision?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

21. Are you involved in decisions concerning the type of extra-curricular activities

in your school?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes          ☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

22. When new student-related policies and procedures are suggested, such as discipline, are you involved in making such decisions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

    A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

    B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

23. Are you involved in decisions concerning the students such as how to solve the problem of students' frequent absenteeism?

☐ Yes ☐ No

    A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

    B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

24. Are you involved in decisions concerning the policies and procedures of students' assessment?

☐ Yes ☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes ☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

25. Are you involved in decisions concerning the school's policies regarding students with special needs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

☐ Yes ☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

26. Are you involved in decisions concerning the communication between school

and community?

    ☐ Yes           ☐ No

A. Do you want to be involved in making such decision?

    ☐ Yes           ☐ No

B. How important is it that you participate in this decision?

| Very Important | Important | Unimportant | Very Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |