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School-Based Management (SBM), Opportunity or Threat (Education systems of Iran)

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Abstract

School-Based Management (SBM) is features educational system in recent decades. SBM refers to increase of involvement of parents, students, teachers, officials, principals and beneficiary groups of the community and local organizations may increase the independency, responsibility and accountability of school. As a result, a key characteristic of SBM can be anticipated to improve student academic achievement and other school outcomes as these local community claims closer monitoring of school staff, better student appraisal, a closer match between the school's requirements and its policies, and a more effective use of resources. The purpose this research was a study of implementing School-Based Management in Iranian Education System.

In this research, have been tried to review school-based management characteristics reviewed, through theoretical principles and methods of field study and library with Iranian education system is adapted. Also, this applied study is done on the basis of descriptive survey method.

The findings of the research indicated that, for implementation of school-based management, indicators such as management of education system, curriculum, budget, educational content, the role of principals, teachers, educators, students and the other factors in Iran should be reconsidered.

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Keywords: School-Based Management, Teaching, Learning, Education, Student's.

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1. Introduction

Education system is managed by different methods throughout the world; including centralized, semi-centralized and decentralized methods that are administrated through different systems. Among such systems School-Based Management (SBM) based on decentralized method could be mentioned.

School-based management (SBM) is the decentralization of authority from the central administration to the school level (Caldwell, 2005). Murphy (1997) argued that, SBM involves a decentralized redistribution of authority from central and region offices to local schools. The basis of school-based management concept is that people, who are closer to students, should decide about their educational programs such as curriculum, equipment, schedule and individuals, facilities and other sources. It is claimed that the increase of involvement of parents, students, teachers, officials, principals and beneficiary groups of the community and local organizations may increase the independency, responsibility and accountability of school. By increase of the level of school responsibility, it is expected that the efficiency of plan is promoted and education effectiveness would be improved (Weng, 2003).

School-based management considered as a factor to increase education effectiveness and efficiency in school level; but really what factors will support this kind of management in schools? Some intellectuals believe that the essential factors for prosperity of a school in SBM reform include the support of principals, teachers, sufficient financial sources, clarified commitment, responsibilities, skills and qualifications of school officials, precise plan, responsibility and accountability. Notwithstanding the variety of standpoints, the decision makers of educational systems shall encounter with problem in choosing of a proper viewpoint. Although the Iran Education System has also experienced this kind of management in schools, it encountered with some problems in implementation of this method in Iran, in fact no comprehensive unanimity has been yet gained. The review of literature indicated that little research was available which investigated how beliefs and values held by key role players (principals and teachers) on the implementation of school-based management reforms. Considering that this research was being applied in Tehran province and usually findings in this city generalize to almost other cities of Iran, so the problem investigation in the study was to review the perceptions and opinions of principals and teachers on the implementation of school-based management concepts in Tehran schools (primary, guidance and high courses) and also indicate that if the implementation of this reform is effective in performance improvement of these people or not? Meanwhile the prerequisite for successful implementation of this concept in schools was the participation, cooperation, responsibility and accountability of this people as to the aid plan.

For this reason, the study has tried to use of the documents, evidence and stakeholder views on the Iranian education, opportunities and challenges of implementing school-based management.

This research has studied the SBM opportunities, threats and implementation in Iran based on the specifications of this system and necessary recommendations have been presented to the Ministry of Education of Iran for implementation of a successful school-based management system.

2. Literature review

Several researches had been carried out regarding specifications, advantages/ disadvantages and strong/ weak points of implementation of school-based management reform in Iran and the world. A review of literature indicated that in the non-centralized education system such as in the USA and most countries in Europe, school-based management had been a common practice in which the school and its surrounding community possessed the power and resources to develop, govern and determine the management of the school in whatever manner suitable. There are many descriptions about SBM concept in different countries.

Some of these terms are includes: school-based management, school-site management, site-based management, school-site decision-making, self-managing school, self-determined school, school-based budgeting, school-shared governance, and participatory management (Abu-Duhou, 1999). At the present time, decentralization is one of the main movements in the developed and underdeveloped countries around the world which calls for increased participation of principals, teachers, staff and students and parental involvement in school development and management and eventually to achieve high school performance. SBM based on assumptions that such a method would increase student's success through organizing (Murphy, 1995). According to Malen, Ogawa and Kranz (1990), the main theory of SBM around the world is that giving actors

of schools more authority over school affairs will result in school improvement as they are in a better situation to decision-making to meet the school requirements in a more effective manner. SBM reform decentralizes accountability and decision-making authorities to local school management committees (World Bank, 2003). In this sense, SBM take many different forms, both in terms of who has the authority to make decision and also the level of decision-making (Gertler et al 2006). Notwithstanding the basic theory of SBM, no theorist disputes the interdependence of government, school administration, teacher classroom behavior, and parental attitudes. However, decentralization of power and transferring to the school level means some groups outside of the school, such as, local education offices, are likely to lose some of their power, thus changing the power dynamics within each school (Cook et at, 2000; and Abu-Duhou, 1999). As a result, a key characteristic of SBM can be anticipated to improve student academic achievement and other school outcomes as these local community claims closer monitoring of school staff, better student appraisal, a closer match between the school's requirements and its policies and a more effective use of resources (Patrinos and Kagia, 2007; and Karim et al.2004).

In this sense, the main outcomes of SBM concepts vary considerably although they typically include: 1) improving the involvement of parents and local communities in schools; 2) empowering principals and teachers; 3) construction local level capacity; 4) establishing responsibility approaches for school-based actors and improving the transparency of processes by delegation of authority; and, 5) improving effectiveness, efficiency and quality of schooling, thus raising student academic achievement levels (Gertler et al 2007). The specifications of school-based management system throughout the world are included in Table (1) as research background that indicates historical development of SBM application in different countries based on the objectives of each country in implementation of the system. Table (1) show purposes and impetus of some developed and underdeveloped countries in implemented SBM.

Table (1): Selective list of some developed and underdeveloped countries which introduced and implemented SBM reforms:

Country	Date first implemented	purposes of/ impetus for reform
United States	1970 and 1980	Increasing budget allocation, empowering teachers, and involve the community in schools; some reforms (such as in Chicago) made improving student achievement an explicit objective.
Canada	1970	Increasing parental and community participation in education and grant schools more autonomy.
Australia	1970	Increasing efficiency through near-total autonomy and provision greater equity among schools.
Brazil	1982	Increasing efficiency in school management, create more democratic process for electing school personnel, and increase community and parent participation.
United Kingdom	1988	Giving schools financial autonomy and increase school effectiveness.
New Zealand	1990	Increasing community autonomy and efficiency, established a national curriculum, and allocation budget.
El Salvador	1991	Increasing access in rural areas, encourage community participation and improve quality of schooling.

Hong Kong, China	1991	Increasing accountability, participatory decision-making and school effectiveness.
Uganda	1993	Increasing powers and resources to local councils and increase democratic participation and control over decision-making by people concerned.
Thailand	1997	Improving quality of education and increase the country competitiveness.
Argentina	2001	Increasing instructional fund to each of the schools in order to cover school operational costs.
Mexico	2001	Increasing parental participation in rural schools.
Qatar	2003	Increasing a variety of schooling alternatives to improve education, decentralization the schooling system, and increase accountability.
Kenya	2003	Increasing accountability of schools and teachers by improving incentives and improve school management.
Iran	2004	Promoting the quality of educational activities at schools and empowering principals and teachers and local community participation in schools decision-making.
Indonesia	2005	Increasing accountability and responsibility to parents and students and enhance the role of school Committees.
Senegal	2008	Improving teachers training develop school quality and provide more educational resources into schools.

Source: The World Bank, (2007); Barrera-Osorio et al, (2009); Di Gropello, (2005); Zajda and Gamage (2009); and Cárdenas, (2008).

Therefore, the main goals of this system in Iran was empowering teachers, principals and emphasis on teacher's participation in main decisions of school, because it was believed that teachers were only persons who were close to students at school and fully familiar with their interests, demands and psychics. Moreover, this reform emphasized on student's outcomes, ethical prosperity and development and promoting during the study. Table (2) shows the historical and development process of school-based management concept in Iran. This table indicates that real implementation of SBM concept occurred in 2004.

Table (2): Historical and development process of school-based management concept in Iran

Years of program	Program description	Program results
1997	SBM concept for the first time discussed by Ministry of Iran Education. The main goals of this concept in Iran is empowering principals and teachers and also transferring some authority from central government to into schools.	In this year this concept did not perform in any school.
2000	Based on Third-Five Year Development Plan of I.R of Iran, IESC approved This reform for implementation in the schools, but did not execute because Some limitation until 2004.	In this year this concept did not perform in any school.

2004	IESC approved implementation of SBM concept in some public and charity schools under name Board of trustees Schools (BTS) throughout the country.	In this year implemented the SBM in 500 schools.
2009	IESC based on Forth Cultural, Social and Economic Plan of I.R of Iran, once again emphases on the continue and implementation of this concept in the country.	In this year implemented the SBM in 1000 schools throughout the country.

Source: Office of Development and Public Participation in Councils Affaire, 2009.

3. Opportunity and Threat of Education systems of Iran:

There were some factors in Education System of Iran such as principals, teachers' council, parent-teachers association, school council and students' council that could specially have been taken into account in implementation of this system. Education System of Iran benefited from many advantages based on the specifications of SBM and its conformity with the above mentioned opportunities.

principals can do these proceedings according to authorities and duties defined by BTS due to school based policy: (1) suggest hiring new teachers and staff at school; (2) developing educational, laboratory area; buy required equipment's based on received fee from parents; (3) hold academic, cultural and recreational camps based on school's budget; (4) hold extracurricular classes out of schools time; and (5) attract students according to entrance examination, average or out of its educational area(Nasre Esfahani, 2001).. Nowadays, teacher's council has relative authority to perform his duties and apply appropriate changes in educational projects and develop appropriate curriculum content according to student's terms and demands; mostly they focus on non-essential issues of school like financial and disciplinary cases of students (Zarhani, 1998)... Another pillar of school is parent-teacher association. This association was created, regarding to school- based management and its emphasis on all interested member's participation specially parents in decisions related to school. This council, along with logical relation with educational staff, principals and parents, holds multiple sessions. Council members were interested people in school affairs such as: principals, teachers, staff, parents and local population. Authorities and duties of this council generally was about educational , financial , executive and technical issues at school, but unfortunately it could not (as it was expected) succeed in decisions related to school policy even by holding multiple meetings. This council is created based on SBM and participating students in decisions at schools. This council helped principal to establish and maintain clarity, present student's ideas and suggestions, consult about school's qualitative and quantitative matters and problems such as required equipment's, teaching method and teacher's behaviour in the class.

On the other hand, there were also some challenges in Education System of Iran such as budget, curriculum, teachers and education regions. Planning and budget control is the core of SBM, and providing curriculum and staff is largely related to budget control (Lindelov, 1995). Recent reviews and findings indicate that one of the problems of lack of SBM policy's proper implementation in the world is budgeting via schools. According to Haderman (1999) Odden and others reports that there is a weak relationship between budget decentralization performance in SBM and increasing student's progress (Haderman, 1999). Teachers have precious information and knowledge about SBM, which can be useful in decisions which affect directly on class activities such as curriculum, budget and even hiring new staff. In these schools (board of trustees), teachers just are like consultant in decisions, provide comments and suggestions about school affairs (staff, financial and executive); Moreover, they have freedom in teaching method and how to teach and select the content in the classroom.

Curriculum is like an axis to take a series of independent decisions for applying prepared curriculum which are selected by principals and teachers. In a broader sense, it is a decision process including codification, performance and evaluation. About codifying curriculum in our country, general policy was realized via MoE, but planning details realized via schools. Considering that new general policies were codified per MoE and transferred through educational districts to schools; therefore, these areas had a decisive role in SBM's realization and performance. One of its duties is determining goals and educational results. In other words, educational regions specify curriculum's goals and criteria and enable schools to select methods, resources and educational instruments (Niknami, 2004). But these areas yet, refuse to entire transfer authorities and immense decisions related to school's affairs.

4. Research objectives:

Research objectives are as follows:

- 1) Studying important characteristics of school-based management.
- 2) Conformity of characteristics of Education System of Iran with SBM structure.
- 3) Infrastructure of conditions for implementation of SBM in Iran.
- 4) Opportunities and threats for implementation of school-based management system in Iran.

5. Research Questions:

- 1) What are the requirements for implementation of school-based management in Iran?
- 2) By Considering the opportunities and threats of education system of Iran, can SBM be implementation?

6. Research Methodology:

This is a descriptive research which has studied the present conditions. The relevant data was collected based on library and observation methods to use the existing documents.

7. Sampling Method:

The statistical universe consist all documents and instruments available with the Iranian Ministry of Education. The samples were taken based on purposive sampling method and the researcher has studied the cases with highest scientific consistency and validity in his point of view.

8. Research Finding:

Question one:

- a) **What are the requirements for implementation of school-based management in Iran?**

To implement school-based management system in Iran and considering the comparison of specifications of this system, in a number of countries, some issues such as increasing budget allocation, empowering teachers, increasing parental and community participation in, increasing efficiency in school management, increasing community autonomy and efficiency, increasing accountability, participatory decision-making and school effectiveness and..... require special attention.

Question two:

- b) **By Considering the opportunities and threats of education system of Iran, can SBM be implementation?**

Education System of Iran has strong and weak points that can be removed and put into operation based on opportunities and threats. If the opportunities existing in education system of Iran are managed and executed

correctly, the threats (including budget, teachers, curriculum and educational regions) could be eliminated. The study of education system of Iran based on the available documents shows that SBM can be implemented; however, some modifications are required in structure, by-laws and instructions.

9. Conclusion

Reviews and findings of research indicated that problems of lack of SBM policy's proper implementation in the Iran are budgeting, Teachers, Curriculum and Educational Districts. Central government should allocate lump sum budget for each school in the first step of budget process in SBM project. Therefore, the main role of locals was allocating financial resources to schools, in budget affairs, not determining how to use these resources. Also, in schools (board of trustees), teachers just were like consultant in decisions, provide comments and suggestions about school affairs (staff, financial and executive); Moreover, they had freedom in teaching method and how to teach and select the content in the classroom. The findings of the research indicated that, for implementation school-based management, indicators such as management of education system, curriculum, and budget, educational content, the role of principals, teachers, educators, students and other factors in Iran should be reconsidered.

Finally, curriculum model in Iran was centralized, that should be general policy realized via MoE, but planning details realized via schools, and MoE and general offices of education in provinces hold conferences and meetings for awareness and promoting participation quality, responsibility via principals and schools personnel and realizing management policy base on school-based across the country.

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