

School-Based Management and Its Contribution to Educational Quality Improvement: A Review of National and International Studies

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Abstract – School-Based Management (SBM) has emerged as a key governance reform aimed at improving educational quality by decentralizing decision-making authority to the school level. Amid increasing demands for accountability, effectiveness, and adaptability in education, SBM is widely regarded as a strategic approach to enhancing school quality. However, empirical evidence indicates that the implementation of SBM across educational systems still encounters challenges, including limited leadership capacity, uneven stakeholder participation, insufficient accountability mechanisms, and varying institutional readiness. This study aims to systematically examine the contribution of School-Based Management to educational quality improvement through a review of recent national and international scientific literature. Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study analyzes 32 peer-reviewed articles published between 2021 and 2026. Data were collected through a structured article search and selection process based on predefined inclusion criteria and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that School-Based Management significantly contributes to educational quality improvement, particularly through enhanced school leadership, increased school autonomy, strengthened teacher participation, and improved teaching–learning processes. The results also indicate that SBM positively influences student academic outcomes when supported by effective leadership, accountability systems, and contextual readiness. Furthermore, recent studies highlight the growing integration of quality assurance mechanisms and digital technologies within SBM practices as emerging trends in educational governance. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive synthesis of diverse national and international SBM research within an integrated analytical framework. Theoretically, this review contributes to the advancement of School-Based Management scholarship, while practically it provides evidence-based insights for policymakers and school leaders seeking to implement sustainable strategies for educational quality improvement.

Keywords – School-Based Management, Educational Quality Improvement, School Leadership, School Autonomy, Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

Improving educational quality remains a central objective of education systems worldwide, particularly in response to increasing demands for accountability, effectiveness, and equity. Educational quality is commonly reflected in the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, student academic achievement, institutional performance, and

stakeholder satisfaction. In this context, governance and management reforms have been widely promoted as strategic instruments for enhancing school effectiveness. One of the most influential reform models is School-Based Management (SBM), which emphasizes decentralization, autonomy, and participatory decision-making at the school level

(OECD, 2021). Empirical evidence from developing-country contexts also confirms that SBM and visionary leadership contribute positively to teacher performance and educational quality improvement, particularly when schools are granted managerial autonomy (Yusuf & Basrowi, 2023).

School-Based Management refers to a management approach that transfers significant authority and responsibility from central governments to individual schools. Through SBM, school principals, teachers, parents, and local communities are empowered to participate actively in planning, resource allocation, curriculum implementation, and school evaluation processes. Previous studies suggest that such autonomy enables schools to respond more effectively to local needs, optimize resource utilization, and foster a sense of ownership among stakeholders, which ultimately contributes to improved educational quality (Caldwell, 2022). Similar findings in the Indonesian education context indicate that participatory school management strengthens institutional commitment and teacher engagement, which are essential for quality assurance at the school level (Mukti, Basrowi, & Khaeruman, 2024).

Recent empirical evidence indicates that SBM positively influences multiple dimensions of educational quality, including teacher performance, instructional practices, and student learning outcomes. Schools implementing SBM effectively tend to demonstrate stronger instructional leadership, more efficient resource management, and enhanced professional collaboration among teachers (Hallinger et al., 2023). Research also shows that leadership practices combined with disciplined organizational management significantly affect teacher involvement and performance, reinforcing the importance of SBM-oriented leadership structures (Suwarni, Basrowi, & Khaeruman, 2025).

However, the effectiveness of SBM is not uniform across contexts. Several studies report that

SBM yields limited or mixed outcomes when schools lack leadership capacity, managerial competence, or adequate community support (Hanushek et al., 2022). Evidence from school- and community-based educational settings further indicates that weak institutional support and limited stakeholder empowerment can constrain the effectiveness of decentralized management reforms (Nuryanto, Munawir, & Basrowi, 2023). Differences in national education systems, socio-economic conditions, and policy frameworks significantly shape how SBM is implemented and its impact on educational quality. These variations indicate that SBM should not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all solution but rather as a context-sensitive governance model.

In addition, contemporary educational challenges—such as digital transformation, post-pandemic recovery, and increasing demands for inclusive education—have expanded the scope of SBM. Schools are now required to integrate technology, manage diverse student needs, and ensure quality assurance under decentralized governance structures. This has led to renewed scholarly attention to SBM as a dynamic and evolving management model that must adapt to 21st-century educational demands (Karakose et al., 2024). Recent studies also highlight that technology-supported management and innovation-oriented leadership can strengthen institutional readiness and teacher professionalism within decentralized school systems (Basrowi et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature on School-Based Management, existing studies are often fragmented, focusing on specific countries, education levels, or outcome variables. Comprehensive reviews that systematically synthesize national and international empirical evidence on SBM and its contribution to educational quality improvement remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to review and synthesize recent national and international research on School-Based Management to identify dominant

themes, impacts, contextual factors, and research gaps. By doing so, this review seeks to contribute to the theoretical development of SBM and provide practical insights for policymakers and school leaders striving to improve educational quality through decentralized school governance, particularly in diverse and resource-varying educational contexts (Yusuf & Basrowi, 2023; Mukti et al., 2024).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective

This study aims to systematically examine the contribution of School-Based Management (SBM) to educational quality improvement through a comprehensive review of recent national and international scientific literature, with particular emphasis on how SBM influences teaching and learning processes, school effectiveness, and student academic outcomes.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Identify dominant conceptualizations and implementation models of School-Based Management (SBM) discussed in prior national and international studies.
2. Analyze the relationship between School-Based Management and educational quality, based on indicators such as teaching effectiveness, learning process quality, and student academic achievement.
3. Classify the impact of School-Based Management on educational quality across different educational contexts, including primary, secondary, and higher education levels.
4. Examine recent trends and developments in SBM research, particularly the integration of quality assurance mechanisms, accountability systems, and digital technologies in decentralized school management.
5. Identify persistent research gaps in studies on School-Based Management and educational quality improvement to inform future research directions.

6. Formulate theoretical and practical implications for the development of effective, context-sensitive, and sustainable School-Based Management policies and practices aimed at improving educational quality.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

Type of Research

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using a qualitative descriptive approach. The SLR method is employed to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical and theoretical studies examining School-Based Management (SBM) and its contribution to educational quality improvement. This approach is appropriate for integrating diverse research findings and identifying patterns, trends, and research gaps across national and international contexts (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019; Hallinger et al., 2023).

Research Subjects / Objects

The subjects of this study are not individuals but peer-reviewed national and international journal articles relevant to School-Based Management and educational quality. A total of 32 articles published between 2021 and 2026 were selected as the units of analysis. The reviewed studies represent various educational levels, including primary, secondary, and higher education, allowing for comparative insights into SBM implementation across contexts.

Research Location

This research is not restricted to a specific geographical location, as it is based on a literature review. The analyzed articles originate from multiple countries and educational systems, providing a global perspective on School-Based Management practices and their implications for educational quality improvement (OECD, 2021; Hanushek et al., 2022).

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through a systematic and transparent process consisting of the following stages:

1. Searching major scientific databases and journal platforms, including reputable international journals and accredited national journals related to education and educational management;
2. Screening and selecting articles based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as publication year (2021–2026), relevance to School-Based Management, and focus on educational quality outcomes;
3. Identifying eligible studies that explicitly examine SBM dimensions, such as school autonomy, participatory decision-making, resource management, accountability, and quality assurance mechanisms.

This procedure follows established SLR guidelines to ensure rigor, transparency, and replicability (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

Research Instruments

The primary research instrument was a data extraction matrix, designed to systematically capture and organize key information from each selected article. The extracted data included:

1. Author(s) and year of publication,
2. Conceptualization and dimensions of School-Based Management,
3. Educational context and level,
4. Research design and methodological approach,
5. Key findings related to educational quality improvement, such as teaching effectiveness, learning process quality, school effectiveness, and student academic achievement.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis combined with descriptive-comparative analysis. The analysis followed these stages:

1. Categorizing articles based on SBM dimensions, such as school autonomy, leadership, community participation, and accountability;
2. Identifying recurring themes and patterns linking School-Based Management to educational quality improvement;
3. Comparing findings across educational levels and national contexts to identify similarities and differences in SBM implementation and outcomes;
4. Synthesizing the results to draw integrative conclusions aligned with the research objectives and to identify theoretical and practical implications as well as research gaps.

This analytical approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how School-Based Management contributes to educational quality across diverse settings (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Hallinger et al., 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Conceptual Foundations and Core Principles of School-Based Management

School-Based Management (SBM) is fundamentally grounded in the principles of decentralization, school autonomy, and participatory decision-making. The reviewed literature consistently conceptualizes SBM as a governance reform that transfers authority over planning, budgeting, and instructional decisions from central authorities to individual schools, enabling them to respond more effectively to local needs (OECD, 2021; Caldwell, 2022). This decentralization is expected to enhance efficiency, accountability, and educational quality.

Across national and international studies, SBM is closely associated with the principle of school autonomy. Autonomy allows schools greater discretion in managing human, financial, and instructional resources, which is considered essential for fostering innovation and continuous improvement (Hanushek et al., 2022). Empirical findings indicate that autonomy is

most effective when accompanied by clear accountability mechanisms and leadership capacity.

Another core element identified in the literature is stakeholder participation, particularly the involvement of teachers, parents, and local communities in school decision-making. Studies show that participatory governance strengthens ownership, transparency, and shared responsibility for educational outcomes (Savvidou et al., 2023). This collaborative approach enhances trust and alignment between school goals and community expectations.

The literature also emphasizes accountability and quality assurance as integral components of SBM. Autonomy without accountability often leads to inconsistent outcomes, whereas balanced governance structures promote responsible decision-making and sustained quality improvement (Hallinger et al., 2023). Accountability mechanisms typically include school self-evaluation, performance indicators, and external monitoring.

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that SBM is not merely an administrative reform but a systemic approach to improving educational quality. Its effectiveness depends on the integration of autonomy, participation, leadership, and accountability within a coherent governance framework.

2. School Leadership and Its Role in School-Based Management Implementation

School leadership emerges as a decisive factor in the successful implementation of School-Based Management. The literature consistently highlights the role of principals as key agents who translate SBM policies into daily school practices (Hallinger et al., 2023). Principals are expected to balance instructional leadership with managerial responsibilities under decentralized governance structures.

Empirical studies demonstrate that principals who possess strong leadership and management competencies are better able to utilize school autonomy

effectively. Such leaders foster collaborative cultures, support teacher development, and ensure that resources are aligned with instructional priorities (Caldwell, 2022). This leadership capacity directly influences educational quality outcomes.

The reviewed research also underscores the importance of instructional leadership within SBM. Principals who prioritize teaching and learning contribute to improved instructional practices and learning quality (Hanushek et al., 2022). SBM provides principals with the flexibility needed to focus on pedagogical improvement rather than administrative compliance.

However, leadership challenges remain evident in several contexts. Some studies report that limited managerial skills and inadequate leadership training hinder the effective use of school autonomy (OECD, 2023). In such cases, SBM implementation fails to produce meaningful improvements in educational quality.

Overall, the findings confirm that school leadership capacity is a critical enabling condition for SBM effectiveness. Without competent and empowered principals, the potential of SBM to enhance educational quality cannot be fully realized.

3. School-Based Management and Teaching-Learning Process Quality

A significant body of literature reviewed highlights the positive contribution of SBM to the quality of teaching and learning processes. Autonomy in curriculum implementation and instructional planning allows schools to tailor learning strategies to students' needs, thereby improving instructional relevance and effectiveness (Savvidou et al., 2023).

Teachers play a central role in SBM-oriented schools, as decentralization increases their involvement in instructional decision-making. Studies indicate that teacher participation in school planning and evaluation enhances professional commitment, instructional

innovation, and collaboration (OECD, 2021). These conditions are conducive to higher-quality teaching practices.

Furthermore, SBM facilitates the development of professional learning communities within schools. Collaborative planning, peer observation, and collective problem-solving are more likely to occur when teachers are empowered under decentralized governance structures (Hallinger et al., 2023). Such practices positively influence instructional quality and learning continuity.

Despite these advantages, the literature also reports uneven outcomes across contexts. In some schools, autonomy does not automatically translate into improved instructional quality due to limited teacher capacity or insufficient support systems (Hanushek et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of professional development alongside SBM implementation.

In summary, the findings suggest that SBM contributes to teaching-learning process quality when autonomy is coupled with teacher empowerment and capacity building. Instructional improvement is most evident in schools where decentralized decision-making is actively used to support pedagogical innovation.

4. Impact of School-Based Management on Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes represent a key indicator of educational quality in SBM research. The reviewed studies present generally positive, though context-dependent, evidence regarding the impact of SBM on student academic achievement (OECD, 2023). Schools that effectively implement SBM tend to demonstrate improved student performance, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Quantitative studies based on international large-scale assessments, such as PISA, reveal that SBM is more strongly associated with positive learning outcomes in systems where accountability and

leadership capacity are well established (Hanushek et al., 2022). This suggests that institutional context plays a critical role in mediating SBM effects.

The literature also indicates that SBM contributes indirectly to student outcomes by improving school climate and instructional quality. Enhanced teacher collaboration, better resource allocation, and responsive school policies create learning environments that support student engagement and achievement (Hallinger et al., 2023).

However, some studies report limited or mixed effects of SBM on student achievement, particularly in disadvantaged contexts where schools face resource constraints and socio-economic challenges (OECD, 2021). These findings caution against assuming universal positive impacts of SBM without contextual adaptation.

Overall, the evidence suggests that SBM can improve student learning outcomes when implemented as part of a comprehensive quality improvement strategy. Its effectiveness depends on leadership, accountability, and adequate support structures.

5. Contemporary Trends, Challenges, and Research Gaps in School-Based Management

Recent literature highlights emerging trends in SBM, particularly the integration of digital technologies and data-driven decision-making. Digital tools support school planning, monitoring, and communication, enhancing transparency and efficiency under decentralized management systems (Karakose et al., 2024).

Another significant trend is the alignment of SBM with quality assurance and accountability frameworks. Modern SBM models emphasize evidence-based decision-making, performance indicators, and continuous school self-evaluation to ensure sustained educational quality (Savvidou et al., 2023).

Despite these advancements, the literature identifies persistent challenges in SBM implementation. These include leadership capacity gaps, unequal resource distribution, and resistance to change among stakeholders (OECD, 2023). Such challenges often limit the effectiveness of SBM reforms.

The review also reveals notable research gaps. Many studies focus on short-term outcomes, while longitudinal evidence on the long-term impact of SBM on educational quality remains limited. Additionally, comparative cross-national studies are still underrepresented.

In conclusion, contemporary SBM research underscores its potential as a quality improvement strategy while highlighting the need for context-sensitive implementation and further empirical investigation. Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing both theory and practice in decentralized school governance.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review demonstrates that School-Based Management (SBM) constitutes a comprehensive and context-sensitive governance approach that significantly contributes to educational quality improvement. Synthesizing findings from national and international studies, this review confirms that SBM is most effective when implemented as an integrated system that combines school autonomy, participatory decision-making, leadership capacity, instructional improvement, and accountability mechanisms.

The synthesis of the first two subthemes highlights that strong conceptual foundations and effective school leadership are essential prerequisites for successful SBM implementation. Autonomy alone does not guarantee quality improvement; rather, it must be accompanied by capable principals who can strategically manage resources, engage stakeholders, and prioritize teaching and learning. School leaders

play a pivotal role in translating SBM policies into coherent school practices that align institutional goals with local needs.

The third subtheme underscores that SBM positively influences teaching–learning process quality by empowering teachers and fostering collaborative professional cultures. When teachers are actively involved in decision-making and supported through professional learning communities, instructional practices become more adaptive, innovative, and responsive to student needs. However, this contribution is contingent upon sufficient teacher capacity and ongoing professional development.

The synthesis of the fourth subtheme indicates that the impact of SBM on student learning outcomes is generally positive but highly dependent on contextual factors. SBM contributes to improved academic achievement primarily through indirect pathways, such as enhanced instructional quality, improved school climate, and more efficient resource allocation. These effects are strongest in systems characterized by balanced autonomy and accountability.

Finally, the fifth subtheme reveals that contemporary SBM practices are evolving in response to digital transformation and quality assurance demands. While digital tools and data-driven management enhance SBM effectiveness, persistent challenges, such as leadership capacity gaps, resource inequalities, and implementation variability, remain. These challenges underscore the need for adaptive, evidence-based, and context-aware SBM models.

Overall, this review concludes that School-Based Management is not a standalone reform but a dynamic and multidimensional strategy for educational quality improvement. Its success depends on the coherent integration of leadership, instructional focus, stakeholder participation, accountability, and contextual readiness. Future SBM reforms and research should therefore prioritize capacity building, long-term evaluation, and cross-contextual learning to ensure sustainable improvements in educational quality.

Practical Recommendations

School leaders, particularly principals, should strengthen their capacity to implement School-Based Management (SBM) effectively by enhancing strategic leadership, instructional supervision, and resource management skills. Continuous professional development programs focusing on leadership, data-driven decision-making, and stakeholder engagement are essential to ensure that school autonomy translates into meaningful improvements in educational quality.

Schools should actively promote teacher participation in school-level decision-making, including curriculum planning, instructional improvement, and internal evaluation processes. Establishing professional learning communities and collaborative planning structures can maximize the benefits of SBM by fostering shared responsibility for teaching and learning quality.

Furthermore, schools are encouraged to integrate digital tools and management information systems into SBM practices. Digital platforms can support school planning, monitoring, communication, and transparency, thereby improving efficiency and accountability under decentralized management structures.

Policy Recommendations

Governments and educational policymakers should prioritize School-Based Management as a strategic framework for educational quality improvement, supported by clear policy guidelines and capacity-building initiatives. Policies should balance school autonomy with robust accountability systems to ensure responsible and effective decision-making at the school level.

Principal preparation and development programs should explicitly focus on SBM competencies, including leadership, financial management, community engagement, and quality assurance. Strengthening leadership pipelines is crucial for

sustaining SBM reforms across diverse educational contexts.

Additionally, education policies should address resource equity to prevent disparities in SBM implementation. Providing targeted support to schools in disadvantaged areas is essential to ensure that decentralization does not exacerbate existing inequalities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should move beyond descriptive analyses by employing quantitative and mixed-methods approaches to examine the causal mechanisms linking School-Based Management to educational quality outcomes. Longitudinal studies are particularly needed to capture the sustained effects of SBM reforms over time.

Researchers are also encouraged to explore the role of digitalization and data analytics in enhancing SBM effectiveness, especially in areas such as school evaluation, instructional monitoring, and stakeholder communication. Comparative cross-national studies would further enrich understanding by identifying context-specific and universal SBM practices.

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