

SCHOOL COUNCIL ACTIVITIES UNDER SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN VIETNAM

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Abstract. The study investigates activities of school council under school - based management at General Schools in Vietnam. A correlation survey method was adopted for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 80 respondents comprising of principals, vice principals, teachers in General schools in Vietnam. SPSS software was used to calculate the frequency, average point and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to process the research results obtained from the questionnaire. The findings revealed that members of School Council only consist of Principals, Vice Principals, Teacher internal schools. There is no external school joint into the School council. The relationship existing between community and school is ineffective. The issue that school council decides is also limited. In the future, the research recommends that school-based management in Vietnam should be set up to foster the participation of communities in school activities.

Keywords: Stakeholder, school based management, school council, activities of school council.

1. Introduction

School-Based Management (SBM) plays a vital role in improving educational quality and school effectiveness [1], [3], [4]. Firstly, School - Based Management – SBM has strengthened the capacity of principals, teachers or enhanced the professional motivation of staff by raising their awareness of the rights to the school.

This reform has strengthened the involvement of parents and the community in school activities [1], [9]. SBM gives parents and students the opportunity to enhance management skills, so they not only become more capable participants in the process of managing the school, but also benefiting from these activities. When communities are involved in monitoring, decision making about school finance, human resources, assessing students, reviewing the relevance of school needs with policies, the process of using the resources is more effectively. SBM is expected to improve student achievement and other outcomes. The school management is accountability and responsibility to promote democracy of the school as well as relates all issues outside the school.

The spirit of SBM relates to increase the participation of stakeholder in decision-making. Participation is the most evident about the School Council in SBM. Financial and personnel areas are two key ones that the School Council participates. The research on SBM in many countries and regions said that success in financial and personnel management emphasized the participation of teachers, parents and other stakeholders who are involved in the school.

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2. Content

2.1. Background

SBM is an organisational model relating to delivery of education in many education systems around the world. Nowadays, the idea of SBM becomes the focus of school's policy-makers from centre, province and district, to school level. Decentralization of school management indicates that there is a shift of authority from central government to regional autonomy, which puts district government as the centre of decentralization. Decentralization in government means there is a shift of authority from regional government to the people. On the other hand, in school management, it means there is a shift of authority to the people or stakeholders to jointly responsible in improving school. 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 [2].

The main goals of SBM in Iran was empowering teachers, principals and emphasis on teachers' participation in main decisions of school, because teachers were the only people who were close to students at school and fully familiar with their interests, demands and psychology [5]. The education decentralisation policy can be seen as a popular policy that has been implemented in many parts of the world since the 1970s [6]. Teacher and parent involvement is generally confined to the advisory council or school executive committee [8].

SBM has been popular throughout the world. World Bank (2007) selected a list of some developed and underdeveloped countries which introduced and implemented SBM reforms [9].

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, decentralize 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 of parents and students and enhance the role of school Committees.
Senegal	2008	Improving teachers training, developing school quality and providing more educational resources into schools.

2.2. Literature review

The goal of SBM is to build an effective school and solve problems rather than avoiding problems. When implementing SBM, stakeholders will share and implement management decisions as well as be responsible for their decisions; Therefore, SBM is suitable for timely detecting problems and solving problems, improving the quality of teaching and education activities. This feature "helps to resolve timely and effectively situations occurring in school activities." [7]. Based on the specific situation of the school, school council will have a plan to develop teaching goals and strategies for management, manpower mobilization, human resource distribution and problem solving resources and reach the section pepper. Along with that initiative, the school through the highest school representative is also responsible for its decisions. School-based management is a part in the decentralized education reform campaign. The role of school management has shifted from passive executive system to system autonomous system, the division of decentralized management at the school level is the school council [3], [4].

****Structure and election of members***

The structure of the school council includes: Principals, teachers, staff, parents, community representatives, representatives of superior management agencies and so on. The school council has its own functions, tasks, principles and organizational structures. In school-based management, depending on the level of school-based management, the role of the school board is different, but the school council is still the main organization responsible for the problems of school. School councils need to be formed to carry out decentralization and ensure the

participation of many people in the decision-making process.

*** Rule**

The decision-making is the creative behavior of the management entity to define the program, objectives and organization of activities of people and subordinates. Sharing in decision-making under school-based management leads to changes in the subject of management decisions. It is the decision of not only the individual principal of the school but also the result of the stakeholders. The decision-making in SBM reform should ensure:

+ It is an open process and ensures all stakeholders understand thoroughly the issue of decision making.

+ In accordance with the practice of the school.

+ Decision issued on the basis of information provided accurately and fully on issues.

+ Principals must create the relevance of different parties and create a separate treaty on management decisions

*** Content of decision making**

The purpose of SBM is to maximize the school's autonomy for planning, managing human resources and other resources, along with the responsibility of creating an appropriate environment for the parties to have related to school participation and development. Under this approach, the role of central government on school issues needs to be reduced.

*** Function**

The School Council focuses on several functions including:

+ Representing the interests of students, parents of students, communities, teachers and staff in the school.

+ Advising school leaders and superior management agencies towards better meeting the needs of those who receive education services.

+ Nurturing cooperation, facilitating the participation of relevant parties in school management.

+ A bridge between family, school and community.

***Mission**

The school council has the following main tasks:

+ Participate in the process of developing goals, policies and strategies for school development, aiming to meet the needs of students and parents.

+ Develop operational mechanism as well as activities to create favorable conditions for stakeholders to participate in managing activities in the school. Along with empowerment is to help stakeholders understand and implement responsibilities with management decisions that needs to be involved.

+ Develop and implement education universalization plan and education socialization.

+ Propose and implement measures for autonomy and responsibility of the school for resources, especially financial resources, at the same time having a regulation on spending and supervision for this activity to take place. White.

+ Develop a multi-dimensional information system between the school, the school and the community, the school with stakeholders, and learners to create an environment of trust and timely reflection with leaders and agencies superior management to better meet the needs of those who enjoy the service.

+ Train for School committee with basic knowledge and skills on autonomy and social responsibility for the school council to develop tasks and functions to achieve the school's development goals.

***How it works**

How the School committee works depending on some specific conditions. However, according to the school year process, the School committee can meet 4 times a year. In addition, there will be extraordinary meetings proposed by the chairman of the council. The school council demonstrates functions and tasks in the following ways:

- + The issue is discussed, then the board members vote.
- + The school council makes a decision after consulting the community.
- + The school council seeks agreement of the community before making a decision.
- + The school council makes its own decisions on the basis of considering the community's reactions.

***Fields of consultation or decision-making of School Council**

The School Council often participates in the following basic areas: School development planning; finance, assets and human resource mobilization; organization and personnel; communication and community relations; education program; supervise the implementation of the School Council decisions.

Table 1. Fields of consultation or decision-making of School Committee

No	Field of participation	
1	<i>School development planning</i>	1.1. Mission, vision
		1.2. Strategic plan, action plan
		1.3. Operational objectives: Orientation on core issues: human resources, finance, programs
2	<i>Human Resources</i>	2.1. Recruitment and dismissal of teachers
		2.2. Introduce and elect principals
3	<i>Finance</i>	3.1. Instructions and guidelines for use
	<i>Facilities</i>	3.2. Attract and enhance resources
		3.3. Report using the welfare fund
4	<i>School curriculum</i>	4.1. Select textbook and learning materials
		4.2. Program implementation
5	<i>Communication and community relations</i>	5.1. Method of notification, contact between family, school and society
		5.2. The method attracted the participation of the parties involved in the school's activities
		5.3. Report activity with superior management agencies
		5.4. Improve the reputation and develop the school brand
6	<i>School rules</i>	

2.3. Case study at General Schools in Vietnam

2.3.1. Purpose of the study

This study aimed at investigating the analysis and evaluation of issues relating to the school council through the opinions of the members in general schools in Vietnam. Specifically, the

study seeks to:

- i) the level of participation of the members in school council;
- ii) the role of school council in fields of consultation or decision-making;

2.3.2. Research method

The design for this study was the descriptive survey or a correlation type. Attempts was made to investigate the status of the school council's role in activities of school management in Vietnam under SBM approach. The method being used is appropriate for this study because the study examined the effectiveness of the availability of school-community activities combining with fields of consultation or decision-making of stakeholders. Basic descriptive survey consists of the following methods:

*** Investigation method written:**

The study uses a basic survey form to investigate the status of the school council's role in school management under SBM approach based on the level of evaluation of the members in school council in Vietnam General schools

*** Interview method:**

The author interviews managers and teachers of public and non-public schools in Vietnam to clarify issues relating to the role of the school council in school management under SBM approach.

*** Statistical method:**

SPSS software is used to calculate the frequency, average point and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to process the research results obtained from the questionnaire, thereby drawing objective comments on the role of the school council in the school management under SBM approach.

*** Processing survey results:**

- The reseach quantifies the comments of managers and teachers in Vietnam General school with the content related to the role of the school council by marking the levels corresponding to a scale of 1 to 3.

- For survey results, the Cronbach's Alpha index shows that the reliability of the scale is in the range of 0.6-0.8 with reliability and use; From 0.8 - above 0.9 is good, high reliability. This is the basis for the analysis of data tables.

2.3.3. Objects of the survey

The researcher surveyed 80 managers and teachers of public and non-public schools in Vietnam General Schools:

- Chairman has 8 people
- Vice Chairman has 12 people
- Secretary has: 7 people
- Treasurer has: 2 people
- Members have: 51 people

2.3.4. Result

Table 2 show that Principal, Vice Principal, Trade Union representative, Representative of HCM Youth Union, Representatives of professional teams, Representative of office plays an important part in School Council. The educational Law of Vietnam and Circular No. 41/2010 / TT-BGDDT promulgating Charter of Primary School determine the role of them in School Council. Meanwhile, other members do not suggest in the Law or Circular being less effective. They are absent in School Council. For private schools, the members of school council supplies all resources, both academic and non-academic staff and students, who are necessary for the

implementation of school programmes. For Public schools, principal, vice principal, teachers, staff are the members of school council and decide all the issues of the school. The result supports the rule in the Vietnam Educational Law. Community members do not have to work together with the internal member schools to monitor the activities of the schools.

Table 2. Composition of the School Council

Cronbach's Alpha		Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items		N of Items		
0,788		0,825		11		
No	Participants	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of decision-making (%)		
				Never	Sometimes	Always
1	Principal	2,9079	0,37158	2,6	2,9	93,4
2	Parents	1,6842	0,7696	50	31,6	18,4
3	Community representative	1,3947	0,67486	71,1	18,4	10,5
4	Representative of local government	1,4474	0,68107	65,8	23,7	10,5
5	Investors	1,1974	0,43266	81,6	17,1	1,3
6	Vice principals	2,8947	0,38571	2,6	5,3	92,1
7	Trade Union representative	2,8421	0,49133	5,3	5,3	89,5
8	Representative of HCM Youth Union	2,8684	0,44248	3,9	5,3	90,8
9	Total charge of team	2,0395	0,98578	46,1	3,9	50
10	Representatives of professional teams	2,8684	0,47165	55,3	2,6	92,1
11	Representative of office	2,7237	0,60219	7,9	11,8	80,3

Table 3. Role of the School Council in managing activities

Cronbach's Alpha		Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items		N of Items		
0,853		0,854		12		
No	Issues decision- making	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of decision making (%)		
				Total	Apart	Never
1	Mission Vision	2,5132	0,66319	60,5	30,3	9,2
2	Strategic plan, action plan	2,6053	0,61273	67,1	26,3	6,6
3	Operational goals	2,5658	0,63949	64,5	27,6	7,9
4	Finance	2,0658	0,69925	27,6	51,3	21,1
5	Rules for learners, teachers,	2,4474	0,61956	51,3	42,1	6,6

	and staff					
6	Construction and development of facilities	2,3421	0,644	43,4	47,4	9,2
7	Take the principal's trust	2,1974	0,74868	39,5	40,8	19,7
8	Selection of teachers and staff	1,5789	0,57185	3,9	50	46,1
9	Selection of references, textbooks	1,7763	0,72293	17,1	43,4	39,5
10	Select the curriculum for students	1,8684	0,73652	21,1	44,7	34,2
11	Ways to implement the program for teaching and learning	2,0921	0,67681	27,6	53,9	18,4
12	Management of welfare fund	1,8684	0,7544	22,4	42,1	35,5

Table 3 reveals that stakeholders make the highest decision relating to Mission Vision; Strategic plan, action plan; Operational goals. All the Items focus on School development planning. The lowest role of stakeholder in school council relates to: Selection of teachers and staff; Selection of references, textbooks; Selection of the curriculum for students. In Vietnam, the schools do not have the right for resources such as: finance, personnel, textbook. The issues are in the right of district level with Primary and Lower secondary schools, in Province level or Ministry with other kinds of schools. Furthermore, textbooks for all schools also reform in the country, from design to content.

2.3.5. Discussion

Bringing SBM to apply in schools in Vietnam means that it is necessary to reform the existing school committee model. Nowadays, it lacks the participation of related members outside schools formally. The change of school council needs a roadmap. The involvement of stakeholders have to increase: parents, the community, and senior management with a variety of issues. If possible, it should be put into pilot application before mass application. The process of establishing a school council towards increasing participation has the following basic steps:

- + Prepare
- + Raise awareness, importance and necessity of school committees
- + Select members
- + Train for members
- + The meeting declares the decision to establish
- + Monitor and evaluate, train management skills for members

Along with the steps, in the process of establishment, there should be a legal document that clearly defines the components, selects members, rules of operation, functions, roles and tasks of the Council of Education, etc.

The way to decide whether or not to achieve is based on the complexity of the problem. The more complex the problem is, the more consensus of the stakeholders is. In Vietnam, with the political, cultural, economic and social characteristics, corresponding to each type of public or non-public schools, schools choose the appropriate school committee model.

For private schools, some with school committees with the participation of parents, some parents express their views on school activities, the rest mainly in accordance with the

Education Law. To upgrade the level of SBM, school Council needs to give more decision-making power to the school's issues such as human resources, finance, curriculum, etc. The school council will decide or participate in the decision making to decide the issues of the school instead of just only principal or the chairman of the board decides.

Currently, the school council in Vietnam has not yet clearly demonstrated the spirit of SBM, it is just a collection of internal members of the school, the attendance of parents is extremely limited. The role of the school council is low. In the future, the school committee needs to be promoted to become a selective organization between the stakeholders involved in school management including: parents, principals, teachers, students, community representatives, etc towards improving student learning outcomes

3. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that the involvement of the community in the administration of Vietnam General schools through School council activities is very limited. That community-school relations do not encourage positive contributions of school development relating to all the activities in School such as: personnel services and sponsoring programmes, financial issues, school based curriculum development.

Autonomy schools is a popular trend, in line with the innovation of Vietnam's general education curriculum. In an autonomy school, the school council is expresses the spirit of this model the best. Therefore, further studies are needed to explore in-depth and broader the impact of the School Council on the autonomy school level. Factors affecting the effectiveness of School Council operations.

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