



Effectiveness of School Policies in Improving Quality Through the School-Based Management Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of school policies in improving quality through the School-Based Management (SBM) approach. The method used was mixed methods with an explanatory sequential research design. The first stage was conducted using a quantitative approach, with a Likert-scale questionnaire administered to parents of students (n = 100), and the survey data were analyzed descriptively. The second stage was conducted using a qualitative approach, with interviews to explain the findings from the quantitative data. The results of the study show that the average score of School-Based Management (SBM) implementation was 3.97 (moderate category), with leadership and decision-making scoring 4.16 as the strongest aspect, curriculum and learning management scoring 4.11 in the good category, evaluation and quality improvement scoring 3.98 in the moderate category, financial and facilities management scoring 3.97 in the moderate category, while parental and community participation scored 3.63 in the moderate category. This study indicates that School-Based Management at SMA Ananda Batam plays a strategic role in improving quality through the principal's leadership in decision-making, while parental and community participation still needs to be improved through communication forums with a hybrid system. The driving factors for the implementation of School-Based Management include the principal's transformational-democratic leadership style and a flexible and innovative curriculum, while the inhibiting factors include the absence of a quality assurance team, limited training for improving teachers' competencies, insufficient maintenance of facilities and infrastructure, and limited communication between parents and the school.

Keywords: school policy, school quality, school-based management

INTRODUCTION

School policy can be defined as a set of strategic decisions, rules, and guidelines formulated by the school to manage resources, learning processes, and the achievement of educational objectives optimally and sustainably. Policy is a written provision issued formally by an institution or organization, which is binding in nature, regulates behavior to achieve objectives, and creates new values within the institution. Policy becomes a guideline for members of the organization in taking action. Different from laws or regulations, policy is proactive, functions as a solution to problems, and is more flexible and interpretative in determining what may and may not be done [1]. In this context, policy serves as a guide for action, directing organizational activities and enabling the achievement of established objectives. In other words, policy becomes a general framework for decision-making at all levels of the organization [2].

School policy is very important because it serves as the main foundation for realizing school autonomy, ensuring the efficient allocation of resources, and encouraging stakeholder accountability in addressing

dynamic educational challenges in the era of globalization. With clear and well-directed policies, schools can respond to changes in the educational environment, address existing challenges, and capitalize on available opportunities to improve the quality of education [3]. In the context of national education, this policy not only serves as a guideline for implementing educational policy but also addresses various global challenges, including technological change, labor market demands, and the development of national character [4]. Fundamentally, every school policy is designed to improve quality by increasing access, facilities, and infrastructure (sarpras), developing teachers' competencies, and involving stakeholders such as parents. With these policies, it is expected that school quality can be improved; thus, it can attract students' interest in choosing and continuing their education at the school, the school can provide adequate facilities, optimize teachers' competencies, and build active parental participation. Based on the results of observations conducted at SMA Ananda Batam, internal policies such as teacher development programs have not yet been implemented optimally, the provision of

facilities and infrastructure that support students in the teaching and learning process has received limited attention, there is no specific quality assurance team that monitors academic development, and parental participation in decision-making remains limited.

Fundamentally, school policy is fully integrated with the School-Based Management (SBM) approach, which provides schools with full flexibility to respond to local needs, innovate in the curriculum, and build synergy among stakeholders to achieve superior, holistic educational quality. School-Based Management (SBM) is a management approach that gives schools authority to make decisions, formulate plans, and manage resources while upholding accountability to stakeholders. The provision of broader autonomy enables schools to have greater authority in management, thereby encouraging greater independence. This independence enables schools to be more capable of developing programs that are aligned with their needs and potential [5]. In this context, School-Based Management (SBM) provides broader authority to schools to manage various operational and academic aspects, with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of education through decision-making that is decentralized and oriented toward local needs [6].

The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) is the process of applying programs that have been conceptually formulated to improve the quality of education while remaining grounded in the objectives of national education [7]. The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) enables schools to formulate policies that are more flexible, participatory, and accountable, thereby optimizing performance. One of the main causes of low-quality education is the centralized education management system, which leaves schools without full autonomy to manage and develop the potential of their human resources. School-Based Management enables schools to formulate independent policies that can improve school quality through a safe learning environment, strong leadership, teacher development, transparency, and accountability in decision-making, as well as stakeholder participation in decision-making. Through School-Based Management (SBM), schools obtain greater flexibility to formulate policies that are relevant to students' needs and the surrounding environmental conditions [8].

Previous research conducted by Widya Dwi Anggraini in the *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* emphasized the correlation between the implementation score of School-Based Management (SBM) and quality indicators. Meanwhile, this study

offers novelty by analyzing the effectiveness of school policies in improving quality through the School-Based Management approach, explaining the role of School-Based Management in supporting these policies, and identifying the factors that encourage and hinder their implementation in improving quality. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational management studies and to serve as a basis for consideration in school policy decision-making.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a mixed-methods approach with an explanatory sequential research design [9]. The subjects in this study were the parents of students at SMA Ananda Batam. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling. The qualitative data sources were obtained through interviews with four informants, namely the Principal of SMA Ananda Batam and three teachers, with the data collection technique using purposive sampling [10]. The research was conducted at SMA Ananda Batam, which is located at Taman Indah Street No. 3, Lubuk Baja Kota, Lubuk Baja District, Batam City, Riau Islands.

The data collection process includes a questionnaire survey administered to parents of students, in-depth interviews with informants, and in-depth narratives of quantitative and qualitative data. The survey data consisted of a Google Form questionnaire distributed to parents of students, with five indicators, each containing five statements. Based on the responses from the parents of students, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted in SPSS to measure the average score for each indicator. Then, the average scores were accumulated to determine the mean level of the overall implementation of School-Based Management (SBM). Meanwhile, the interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the main themes related to the supporting and inhibiting factors of SBM implementation. The qualitative findings were utilized to explain the numerical results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire results on the effectiveness of school policies in improving school quality at SMA Ananda Batam, variations were observed across indicators. Overall, the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) through school policies at SMA Ananda Batam was categorized "moderate," with an average score of 3.97 on the Likert scale (1-5). The average score for each indicator is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

SBM Indicator	Sample Size (N)	Average Score	Category
Leadership and Decision-Making	100	4.16	Good
Parental and Community Participation	100	3.63	Moderate
Curriculum and Learning Management	100	4.11	Good
Financial and Facilities Management	100	3.97	Moderate
Evaluation and Quality Improvement	100	3.98	Moderate
Total Average Score		3.97	Moderate

Based on Table 1, the descriptive statistical analysis shows that the leadership and decision-making indicator received the highest score, 4.16, in the good category. Curriculum and learning management obtained a score of 4.11 in the good category. Meanwhile, evaluation and quality improvement had a score of 3.98 in the moderate category. Meanwhile, the financial and facilities management indicator scored 3.97, indicating moderate performance. In contrast to the other indicators, parental and community participation had a score of 3.63. However, it was still included in the moderate category; this score was the lowest among the five indicators. This indicates that the principal's leadership in decision-making influences improvements in school quality.

In the 21st century, rapid technological advancement has created several challenges, including the need for competent educational leaders to manage educational institutions amid global challenges. School leadership is described as a primary target for improving the quality of education in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning in accordance with the UNESCO 2030 agenda [11]. Skilled leadership is essential to advancing educators and society. Enhancing engagement, communicating the vision, and implementing change are three pillars that form the foundation of the principal's leadership in addressing educational change [12].

The findings of this quantitative study were reinforced by interviews with the principal and teachers of SMA Ananda Batam. The results of the interviews with teachers revealed that the characteristics of the principal's leadership in decision-making were very good, as evidenced by openness to suggestions and input from teachers regarding the policies to be implemented. The results of the quantitative study show that the leadership and decision-making indicator reached the highest score of 4.16 on the Likert scale of 1-5, which is categorized as good. This finding was further supported by the results of an interview with the Principal of SMA Ananda Batam, who stated, "Being a leader does not mean becoming a ruler, but a good leader must be able to guide all members; therefore, they understand their respective main duties and functions. A good leader must understand management and leadership." This statement is consistent with transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership is a leadership style characterized by the leader's ability to motivate and inspire subordinates; thus, they can achieve their optimal potential [13].

Transformational leadership is a characteristic of leaders who have a broader vision in addressing systemic factors such as teacher collaboration, assessment regulations, and the effective use of time and space within the school; leaders with this style are very important to be recruited to achieve the widespread adoption of deep learning across schools and the education system [14]. This transformational leadership style was first introduced by James V. Downton and later developed by James MacGregor

Burns, focusing on positive change at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Transformational leadership emphasizes creating a work environment that supports innovation, creativity, and self-development. The principal's leadership style refers to the attitudes, gestures, and language used to mobilize, motivate, manage, and implement programs jointly formulated with teacher colleagues and all existing personnel to achieve the school's objectives, namely its vision and mission. The success of teachers and all educational staff is a characteristic of the principal's success in leading the school [15].

Leadership plays a central role in the development of an inclusive culture [16]. The principal's communicative leadership style in conveying the priorities of a policy to the team becomes a key factor that influences the success of school programs [17]. Collaborative decision-making guided by transformational leaders encourages teachers to become more involved in their schools, thereby enhancing the culture. The increase in the sense of empowerment that they experience leads to greater confidence in their knowledge and abilities to focus on students' learning needs [18]. The influence of the principal's leadership is not only determined by the governance of the overall system, but is also influenced by the level of autonomy (independence) possessed by the school [19].

The high score on this leadership indicator is also reinforced by the assessment of leadership behavior, which is considered good, firm, and wise in dealing with various situations [20]. Based on the results of an interview with Teacher MF, as the curriculum coordinator, he stated that, "The principal is always democratic in making decisions regarding a policy. Every policy and school program is always discussed in a forum and then decided based on mutual agreement. Every policy in the form of a school program is also always communicated to parents." This reflects that the School-Based Management model has been implemented well at SMA Ananda Batam. The principal's decision-making aims to resolve a problem using specific techniques so that it is more acceptable to all parties. Inappropriate decisions will usually cause many problems to arise in the school, both from internal and external perspectives. A democratic leader will use their authority by involving all members in the decision-making process [21].

Democratic leadership is a leadership style that invites group members to play an active role in planning and decision-making. A good leader will provide opportunities for subordinates to express their opinions, propose ideas, and participate in discussions related to policies or common objectives [13]. The parameters used to measure leadership style are observed from the level of trust, compliance, admiration, loyalty, and respect of its members. These parameters are used because followers of transformational leaders will be motivated to continue doing better to achieve the vision and mission to improve school quality [22].

The main findings of this study reveal that the primary factor driving the highest leadership score is the principal's transformational-democratic leadership style in decision-making, as evidenced by openness to suggestions and input from teachers through deliberation forums; this will certainly produce inclusive policies. With such openness to suggestions and input, each team member will certainly feel that they have contributed meaningfully to the overall outcomes of the policies to be implemented.

Curriculum and learning management received a score of 4.11, indicating high effectiveness in implementing School-Based Management (SBM). The results of an interview with Teacher MF, as the curriculum coordinator, confirmed that, "The curriculum currently used at SMA Ananda Batam is the Merdeka Curriculum for Grades X and XI, while Grade XII still uses the 2013 Curriculum. Our curriculum is developed adaptively to produce innovative learning that can improve students' learning outcomes." These findings show how the efforts made by the Ministry of Education support the deep learning process based on the development of soft skills and character in accordance with the eight dimensions of the graduate profile [23].

Certain changes to the curriculum can significantly improve students' scores. The improvement of students' competency outcomes is the main objective of the education system and serves as an indicator of the success of the educational process [24]. Curriculum management itself can be achieved by designing learning experiences that combine experiential learning, group projects, and community service. Thus, the development and implementation of the curriculum can lead to the achievement of educational objectives that are relevant and practical for students and society, while considering various perspectives [25].

One important aspect of educational quality is curriculum relevance. A quality curriculum must meet the demands of the times and the needs of the labor market. In Indonesia, the curriculum often undergoes revisions to adjust to the advancement of science and technology. The main challenge is ensuring that the curriculum is not merely theoretical but also applicable so that it can be applied in everyday life. A relevant curriculum becomes a key factor in producing graduates who are ready to face challenges at the global level [26]. The findings of this study reveal that the factor underlying the score of 4.11 in curriculum and learning management is the implementation of a flexible, innovative curriculum, in which the curriculum is adjusted to students' needs. This success is certainly inseparable from the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) in improving school quality.

This was confirmed through the perspectives of teachers and parents, as evidenced by improvements in students' learning outcomes across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, as measured by students' report cards and the National Assessment conducted by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. This

study aligns with research conducted by Samsul Arifin in 2025, Inda Fani Azzahra in 2025, and Erma Wati in 2025.

The evaluation and quality improvement indicator, with a score of 3.98, is categorized as moderate, although it is slightly lower than the curriculum and learning indicator. Teacher LPS, as the Grade XII homeroom teacher, stated, "Quality improvement is carried out through quarterly evaluations using data from the mid-semester summative assessment results and end-of-semester summative assessment results for continuous improvement. In addition, quality improvement is also carried out through the Kombel forum for teachers." This statement is reinforced by the role of the learning community as a valuable platform for continuous education, teacher professional development, and personal enrichment through collective engagement and knowledge sharing [27]. The assessment of educational quality measures the extent to which educational objectives have been achieved, comprehensively and accurately assesses educational programs, and encourages the development of educational quality to a higher level. [28]. In addition, factors such as teachers' teaching experience and a comfortable school environment also have a strong influence on improving school quality [29]. These quantitative findings are supported by the 2025 School Quality Report Card assessment results from the National Assessment, which show that literacy and numeracy abilities, student character, school safety conditions, and school diversity conditions are in the good category.

Teacher LA, as the History subject teacher, also added that, "The driving factor behind the high score on the evaluation and quality improvement indicator is also supported through quality improvement programs such as the development of teachers' professional competencies through training and workshops organized by the school, one of which is through the MGMP forum." The principal must regularly fulfill responsibilities and give attention to teachers' professional development to improve school quality [30]. This is consistent with the concept of controlling in the management function, where school-based curriculum management ensures alignment between the learning process and national quality standards.

Teacher MF, as the curriculum coordinator, added that, "Evaluation of quality improvement continues to be carried out, especially related to students' learning outcome reports." This theory is reinforced by Deming (1986) through the PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act), which serves as the basis for continuous quality improvement in autonomous schools, thereby supporting the quantitative findings that evaluation is effective but can be improved. The finding of a score of 3.98 in this study reflects that the evaluation and quality improvement indicator lags behind leadership and curriculum indicators. The main limiting factor is the absence of a specific team established by the school to observe, assess, and evaluate school quality; so far, school quality has

become the responsibility of the curriculum unit due to the limited number of teaching staff.

The existence of a school quality assurance team is very important within the framework of School-Based Management (SBM) because the quality team serves as the driving force in every school to ensure continuous quality improvement and also as a guarantee that the school is fully responsible for providing a quality educational process. Another factor is the lack of school-organized training programs to improve teachers' competencies. So far, efforts to improve competencies have relied solely on activities in the Subject Teacher Forum (MGMP), the Teacher Learning Community (Kombel), and the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program.

Schools overlook that training programs to improve teachers' competencies indirectly help each teacher enrich their knowledge and insights, enabling them to continue delivering innovative, optimal knowledge transfer and producing quality outputs that compete globally. This study aligns with the research by Evi Erfiyana in 2024.

Financial and facilities management achieved a score of 3.97, indicating moderate to high effectiveness. The results of an interview with Teacher LA revealed that, "The BOS (School Operational Assistance) budget is managed transparently to meet all students' needs, although there are still laboratory and library facilities whose utilization has not yet been optimal." The distribution of funding from the government in the field of education is an opportunity that must be utilized to significantly improve the quality of education for society [31]. This aligns with the principle of organizing resources in School-Based Management (SBM), where school financial autonomy increases accountability and efficiency in allocation [32]. School-Based Management provides schools with autonomy to manage their budgets and available resources. This authority encourages more transparent and effective management of education funds. Thus, schools can determine priority scales in the use of funds according to their needs, such as the development of facilities and infrastructure, improvement of teachers' competencies, and the provision of appropriate learning materials.

The provision of basic facilities and infrastructure is important not only to meet accreditation requirements but also to support a conducive learning environment, which ultimately affects learning outcomes and the quality of education. The availability of educational facilities will make students feel comfortable and safe, thereby influencing their psychological condition during the learning process [33]. A significant lack of infrastructure and technological equipment at the school level can also disrupt the continuity of learning and the quality of education [34]. Principals and teachers are expected to manage the environment, teaching staff, and students, as well as ensure the use of technological equipment to facilitate the achievement of quality educational goals and objectives [35].

The findings of this study indicate that although BOS funds have been used transparently and appropriately, the school has not paid sufficient attention to maintaining the facilities and infrastructure that support students' learning. As a result, at SMA Ananda, BOS funds flow smoothly like a transparent river, supporting daily processes but being obstructed by outdated facilities, so that the potential of school quality remains at a moderate level (3.97) rather than increasing like the leadership indicator, and therefore requires the reallocation of priorities to support the full transformation of School-Based Management (SBM). This study aligns with the research conducted by Siti Khoiriyah in 2023 and by Ferry Randan in 2025.

Community and parental participation, with the lowest score of 3.63 (moderately effective), becomes a major concern. The results of an interview with Teacher LPS, as the Grade XII homeroom teacher, stated that, "The school always informs all forms of activities and school programs; however, active participation from parents in supporting school activities and programs remains low, which is caused by their work commitments." The principal and teachers are two key figures in the school organization in encouraging parental involvement [36]. The principal and teachers are two key figures in the school organization in encouraging parental involvement [37]. This is supported by Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, which emphasizes parental involvement as a partner in School-Based Management (SBM) to improve school quality.

From the perspective of school management, one of the problems in School-Based Management (SBM) is that schools have not widely involved all parties and external stakeholders in decision-making [38]. Principals and teachers must be able to develop professional competencies in building relationships with parents and encouraging parents to be involved in their children's education [36]. Low parental participation in supporting quality education is driven by a lack of understanding of the importance of education for their children and limited opportunities to be present at school. Busy schedules, such as work or personal matters, often result in limited communication with the school, even though harmonious communication between the school and parents is a key factor in improving educational processes and outcomes [39].

The findings of this study show that the parental and community participation indicator at SMA Ananda Batam falls into the moderate category and is the lowest among the five School-Based Management (SBM) indicators, reflecting potential that has not yet been optimized. The contributing factor is the lack of effective two-way communication, as the communication so far has been limited to one-way information. This is further influenced by external factors, such as limited time and low parental awareness of SBM's role, which are common barriers in urban secondary schools. The resulting consequence is weak external support, which hinders improvements in holistic school quality, even

though leadership is strong with a score of 4.16; thus, the overall SBM mean remains at 3.97. From this, it can be understood that solution-oriented and strategic efforts are needed by the school and students' parents to foster effective and harmonious communication. Despite various obstacles, such as time, place, and work commitments, communication through a hybrid system can be an effective way to overcome these constraints. This study aligns with the research conducted by Unsil Al Huda in 2025 and Dwi Hartati in 2022.

Overall, the strength of this study lies in the integration of results from the quantitative and qualitative approaches within a sequential explanatory design, which confirms the effectiveness of School-Based Management (SBM) policies at SMA Ananda Batam, with leadership as the main driving factor. The principal has a key role in improving school quality, learning, and student well-being [40]. However, in many countries, they face major challenges due to the lack of specialized training, even though this position is very important and expected to serve as an educational leader. In this context, the principal can improve school quality through the School-Based Management approach, but active parental participation still needs to be improved.

This emphasizes that policies for improving school quality do not depend solely on the principal's leadership, decision-making, curriculum, quality evaluation, or facility and financial management. Policies will be effective if they are realized through concrete school programs that involve all stakeholders; thus, systematic and participatory implementation can produce significant improvements in school quality. The limitation of this study is that the statistical test was conducted only at the descriptive stage, without being complemented by inferential testing, and the population consisted of only one school, which is less representative; it would be better to include all senior high school levels in Batam City.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it shows that the average score of School-Based Management implementation is 3.97 (moderate category), with leadership and decision-making scoring 4.16 as the strongest aspect, curriculum and learning management scoring 4.11 in the good category, evaluation and quality improvement scoring 3.98 in the moderate category, financial and facilities management scoring 3.97 in the moderate category, while parental and community participation scores 3.63 in the moderate category. The qualitative results indicate that School-Based Management plays a strategic role through the principal's transformational-democratic leadership in decision-making. The findings of this study also reveal that flexible, innovative curriculum management, where the curriculum is adapted to students' needs, is an effective policy for improving school quality. In this matter, evaluation and quality improvement still require strengthening the system through training programs to improve teachers' competencies. The management of

facilities remains a shared challenge because there are still limited efforts to maintain the facilities and infrastructure that support students' learning. Parental and community participation can be improved through communication forums with a hybrid system. From this study, it is evident that School-Based Management supports school policies through democratic decision-making, autonomy, transparency in the management of BOS funds, and flexible curriculum adaptation.

The driving factors for the implementation of School-Based Management at SMA Ananda Batam include the principal's transformational-democratic leadership style in decision-making and the implementation of a flexible, innovative curriculum. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors include the absence of a specific team established by the school to observe, assess, and evaluate school quality; so far, school quality has become the responsibility of the curriculum unit due to the limited number of teaching staff; the lack of training programs for improving teachers' competencies organized by the school; limited efforts to maintain facilities and infrastructure that support the students' learning process; and the lack of effective two-way communication between parents and the school, as communication currently has been limited to one-way information.

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