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The collapse of democratic principles in implementing school-based management in Islamic elementary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic

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ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, abnormal conditions potentially lessened community partnerships in school-based management (SBM), such as democratic erosion at the decision-making or policy-making levels at school. To address these issues, this study aimed at investigating the implementation of SBM at an Islamic elementary school in Indonesia. In this study, a mixed-method research design was used, with 510 participants surveyed for quantitative data and 50 participants interviewed for qualitative data. During the pandemic, it was discovered that SBM did not perform as expected. Moreover, school principals had to make a majority of important decisions regarding the organization of school activities. They were also in charge of putting decisions and policies into action. These findings indicate that democratic principles were violated in the implementation of SBM during the pandemic. In other words, the principals and school committee partnership did not run well since the headmaster dominated the policy making on any activities without considering the voice of the school committee. Through these findings, it can be recommended that the government conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of SBM at the Islamic school level during the pandemic, and bring together principals and school committees in intense joint meetings.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to providing considerations to be followed up by policy-makers in implementing SBM by fostering collaboration between school principals and the community. This is significant to reduce the school principal workload. Furthermore, the study also showed that the principals' competence, if enhanced, can address authority distribution as an open-minded attitude to counter leadership dominance.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, school-based management (SBM) necessitates a democratic system between the principal and the school committee (teachers and parents). However, due to the delegation of authority to teachers and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic, SBM implementation has caused many conflicts of interest between school principals, teachers, and parents. Some principals are hesitant to delegate their decision-making authority to teachers and the community. Moreover, they are also reluctant to make a decision independently in an environment

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where school district authorities have a strong influence on school policy and practice. According to the Institute (2020), the role of school principals in assisting teachers to conduct distance learning during the pandemic is still underwhelming. A study of 290 elementary school teachers in 25 provinces from April to June 2020 discovered that in addition to principals' roles not being optimal in supporting learning-from-home implementation, teachers were also confused in preparing materials for online learning and lacked funds to teach students in remote areas. It is argued that community involvement is one of the solutions to solve declining learning quality, underwhelming student achievement, and other educational problems in the school environment (Grauwe, 2005; Heyward, Cannon, & Sarjono, 2011).

Studies examining community partnerships usually show an effective SBM implementation. Grauwe (2005) and Heyward et al. (2011) discovered that SBM can improve educational quality by creating a healthier learning environment and increasing student achievement. Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio, and Fasih (2009) surveyed 1,260 Indonesian schools and discovered that the majority of schools improved student discipline, attendance, and grades. Other studies reveal that SBM created a balance of power between school stakeholders and government authorities in school decision-making. The transfer of authority and power to the school seeks to empower school stakeholders to make decisions that were previously reserved for the government of the cities, provinces, and regencies (Bandur, 2012a; Gamage, 2005; Tony & David, 2001). It should be noted that previous studies report successful SBM implementation in normal circumstances. Its implementation in unusual circumstances, such as during the pandemic, has not been thoroughly investigated. For this reason, this study aimed at exploring the implementation of SBM during the pandemic in which the partnership between schools and the community is argued. This is an important topic to investigate because school-community partnerships are one of the solutions to educational problems in school, particularly in dealing with learning difficulties during situations like the pandemic. Two problems were formulated as follows:

1. How was SBM implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How are principals and school committees involved in making school policies or decisions?

This study was expected to reveal the most recent conditions relating to SBM implementation in Indonesia, allowing for the formulation of new policies on community partnership issues based on current needs.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Towards a Democratic School

Increasing the number of personnel involved in decision-making is an important step toward establishing democracy in schools and society (Lárusdóttir & O'Connor, 2017; Woods & Roberts, 2019; Woods & Woods, 2013). Democracy is defined as a collection of political systems to realize justice, prosperity, and peace (Davies, 1999; Preece, 2014). Conceptually, democracy consists of several key elements. First, everyone has the right to participate in decision-making. Second, everyone needs equality, which means being treated fairly and equally regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Third, everyone has the ability to make sound decisions based on relevant data and logic (Schweisfurth, 2020). In this study, participation in school democracy is characterized as a contribution to participating in a program, making decisions, and evaluating school programs (Kuruvilla & Sathyamurthy, 2015; Patra & Gogoi, 2021; Sathyamurthi & Sridhar, 2021). Participation is essential for realizing sustainability because it allows everyone to express their ideas.

2.2. Community Participation in School

Participation is a concept that, depending on who uses it, can change and develop. Participation can also be defined as a contribution to the implementation of a program, involvement in the decision-making process, and involvement in evaluating the program (Kuruvilla & Sathyamurthy, 2015). This is essential for realizing sustainability, where everyone has the opportunity to express their ideas. However, Bhattacharyya (2007) states

that participation is meaningless because it has categories that include different classes based on competing interests. As in politics and administration, the term participation is based on the definition of the goal, which is to serve (Ahmad, 2012). Thus, participation can be defined as participation, involvement, consultation, and empowerment. In this case, it is taking part, being present, and sharing something associated with empowerment and ownership, which is a significant expectation that has an impact (Kirby, 2020).

Participation has three distinct advantages: effectiveness, independence, and sustainability (Swapan, 2016). Effectiveness includes participation that can ensure the utilization of contributions by providing space to determine goals and strategies for implementation to ensure that these are used effectively (Kaleta & Witek-Crabb, 2015). Then, with independence actively present, an attitude of dependence can be avoided, providing confidence, awareness, and control over the program being carried out. Finally, participation is a crucial way to assess the necessary conditions for the program's sustainability (Fraser, Vrakas, Laliberté, & Mickpegak, 2018). Therefore, participation as a strategy has significant benefits and cannot be separated from how the implementation of a program will be achieved in terms of quantity and quality.

2.3. School Management

School management is the key to enhancing school performance, specifically to realizing its vision, mission, goals, and programs (Yulianti, 2020). At the same time, it is also a subsystem of educational administration that does not stand alone (Gül, 2018). In this case, Wiyono, Kusumaningrum, Gunawan, and Ardiansyah (2019) define school management as an important factor influencing school performance. However, school management is not only about administration, but also about knowledge and pedagogical leadership (Sarsour & Sarsour, 2019). The integration of information and communication technology, which is one form of adaptation to global changes, can be seen in the performance of school management. On the other hand, this adaptation presents challenges, barriers, and obstacles to improving school performance development and innovation, as well as the quality of school management in managing human resources and material resources (Mazouak, Tridane, & Belaaouad, 2019). Legčević (2009) states that school management could cause quality gaps and overlook regional views based on the diversity that exists within a school. Thus, the school management is followed up with the implementation of various education. Every region has a unique school management model based on the history of education. In the United States, the school management is referred to as side-based management, characterized by the centralization of the educational function, which is the curriculum and national examinations, to improve its quality (Lee, Neumann, Boese, & Maaz, 2021; Moursund, 1995). In Indonesia, a management model where it provides greater autonomy to schools is implemented. It is based on the initiatives and approaches taken by the government (Tuti & Mufidayati, 2018) and based on community inspiration and needs. As a consequence, schools can exploit their internal and external resources to participate in various activities that produce comprehensive synergy (Day & Sammons, 2016). This management model provides autonomy to optimize its components and improve educational quality (Grauwe, 2005).

2.4. Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic spread like wildfire around the world (Nguyen et al., 2021). It spread quickly and widely, providing long-term lessons in adapting to changes. It also became a global event in a short time. In this case, preventing the transmission of the pandemic was a great challenge to take on (Knapp, Venner, McNulty, and Rainford, 2022). There is a demand to adapt to the circumstances that have been significantly changed (Bhasin, Gupta, & Malhotra, 2021). There is also ignorance that influences behavior patterns based on a person's knowledge (Kruglanski, Molinario, & Lemay, 2021). The pandemic has various interpretations that can be identified from social phenomena that refer to the current situation (MacGregor, Wilkinson, Leach, & Parker, 2020). The pandemic had an impact on various aspects, including health, with an emphasis on public mental health, collective psychosocial,

and global community welfare (Abdullah, 2020; Farris et al., 2021; Pillay & Kramers-Olen, 2021). It also influenced social cognition bias that affects emotions and changes in people's behavior (Hagger & Hamilton, 2022). From a policy standpoint, there was an affirmation regarding changes in social communication patterns and limitations on community mobility (Eguchi et al., 2021; Visser & Law-van Wyk, 2021) to mitigate the risk of contracting the virus and prevent physical and psychological fatigue (Wong, Olusanya, Parulekar, & Highfield, 2021). These impacts assess people's comprehension and attitudes toward behavior and actions in dealing with the pandemic through effective communication and interaction (Prasad Singh, Sewda, & Shiv, 2020). Moreover, people's attitudes toward the pandemic demonstrate bargaining actions (Czeisler et al., 2020) and a proclivity to support or oppose the action based on existing policies (Pawar, Yadav, Akolekar, & Velaga, 2020).

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method approach for data collection, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative data were used to determine the respondents' perceptions of their involvement in school decision-making as members of school committees. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected to understand the phenomenon that could not be described quantitatively.

3.2. Quantitative Method

3.2.1. Respondents

Respondents in this study were members of various school committees in Cirebon Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The total number of persons contacted was 710, but only 510 responded to the survey. The majority of respondents, 360 (70.59%) were from rural areas, and 150 (29.41%) were from urban areas. These respondents represent their public and private schools in both urban and rural areas. Table 1 shows the demographic data of the respondents.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic data.

Item	Total	%
Gender		
Male	206	40.39
Female	304	59.61
Place of residence		
Rural area	150	29.41
Urban area	360	70.59
Age		
21-35	285	55.88
36-45	158	30.98
46-55	35	6.86
56-69	32	6.27
Occupation		
Civil servant teacher	127	24.90
Ministry of religion employee	32	6.27
Principal	51	10
Alumni	55	10.78
Laborer	105	20.59
Tradesperson	95	18.63
Police/Military personnel	15	2.94
Entrepreneur	6	1.18
Political party member	24	4.70

3.2.2. Data Collection Technique

Quantitative data were collected using Google Forms. Most of them were collected through school committee meetings and from school committee contacts.

3.2.3. Instruments

Bandur's (2012b) instrument was adapted to determine participants' perceptions, challenges and obstacles, and strategies for improving community partnerships in SBM during the COVID-19 pandemic. The instrument was designed using the Likert scale and was refined using validity and reliability tests. The questionnaires were distributed to 40 teachers representing their school committees, which consisted of principals, teachers, elementary school staff, and regency-level staff representatives from the Ministry of Religion. They were allowed to provide general comments or input on the questionnaire's clarity, ambiguity, and difficulty in understanding. In addition, a pilot study was also conducted by distributing the questionnaires to other respondents. A pilot study not only makes it possible to identify confusing and ambiguous sentences but also helps to learn about possible outcome patterns (Onyefulu, 2018). The pilot study was conducted in eight elementary schools in Cirebon Regency, both in urban and rural areas. Questionnaires were distributed to 190 respondents who agreed to participate in filling out the questionnaire, with up to 140 willing to provide answers.

3.2.4. Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

The school board formation process, current school board composition, overall school board function, and principal's role were analyzed using factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha. The alpha coefficients in this study ranged from 0.75 to 0.84, indicating acceptable and good reliability (Thorsen & Bjorner, 2010). In addition, the pilot study shows that the factor loading ranged from 0.732 to 0.787, meanwhile, The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test result was 0.640, indicating acceptable factorability with a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity of less than 0.05. However, after revising the item variables, the factorability results in the main study improved. Data analysis revealed that the factor loading ranged from 0.779 to 0.883. Moreover, the KMO was 0.682, with a p = .000 for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, indicating good factorability (Gutierrez-Baena & Romero-Grimaldi, 2021).

3.3. Qualitative Method

3.3.1. Participants

Participants in this study included the principal and members of the school committee, which consisted of parents. Based on 510 respondents in this study, there were 50 participants who were involved in the interview process in order to provide the qualitative data for the purposes of this research.

3.3.2. Data Collection Technique

Structured interviews with principals and school committee members were used to collect the qualitative data. The interviews were conducted at schools and at the school committee members' residences.

3.3.3. Qualitative Data Analysis

NVivo Qualitative Software Plus was used to analyze the qualitative data. The transcribed interview results were inputted into the software to be processed. The results of software processing can be classified into 13 categories. Several themes were made based on the results.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Quantitative

4.1.1. School Committee Involvement

The survey was conducted to discover how principals involve school committees in the formulation process of various school policies. The survey results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that during the pandemic, many community partnerships were weakened in deciding various school policies. The highest involvement was fundraising activities (20.6%), followed by canteen management

activities at (10.09%), and the lowest involvement was in the school vision formulation (1.57%). None of the activities received 50% participation. In other words, SBM did not affect the transfer of decision-making authority from the government to schools in key areas in Indonesia.

Table 2. School committee areas involved in policy making.

School committee involvement	F	
	Involved	Percentage
School vision	8	1.57
School mission	9	1.86
School objective	11	2.06
School renovation	21	4.22
School budget	24	4.65
Construction of a new building	31	6.08
Teaching and learning program	33	6.28
Maintenance	51	10.07
Student discipline	44	8.56
Canteen management	51	10.09
Fundraising	105	20.6
Teacher recruitment	24	4.71
Principal election	26	5.07
Administration staff recruitment	26	5.17
Selection of textbooks	25	4.90
Curriculum development	21	4.12

Note: N=510

The survey was also conducted to learn about the school's decision-making process. The survey results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Decision making in school.

Items	Statement	F	Percentage
Decision making	By consensus	69	13.53
	By vote	4	0.78
	By the principal decision	437	85.69

Note: N=510

Table 3 shows that most of the school decisions were made by the principals. According to the respondents, the principal was the dominant decision maker (85.69%), followed by agreement (13.53%), and by voting (0.78%). This finding shows that the principals asserted their position as the most influential leader in school administration in the school committee did not have this authority. It also indicates that decisions were made in a dictatorial manner rather than democratically.

Table 4. Decision making quality.

Items	Statement	F	Percentage
Decision making quality	Very poor	41	8.04
	Poor	312	61.18
	Good	32	6.27
	Very good	120	23.53
	Excellent	5	0.98

Note: N=510

4.1.3. Decision Making Quality

The survey was done to study the quality of the decision-making process. The survey results are shown in Table 4.

According to Table 4, the quality of decision-making is an issue. Although 23.53% of respondents stated that it was very good, excellent (0.98%), and good (6.27%), most of them (61.18%) believed the decision-making quality

was poor and very poor (8.04%). To put it another way, more than half of the respondents believed the decision-making quality was bad.

4.1.4. Community Partnership Obstacles

During the pandemic, the school committee was given a survey to evaluate their perceptions of the difficulties in implementing SBM. Table 5 summarizes the findings.

Table 5. Obstacles to SBM implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

No.	Items	Statement	F	Percentage
1	Lack of skill development for school leaders	Strongly disagree	182	35.7
		Disagree	0	0.0
		Agree	328	64.3
		Strongly agree	0	0.0
2	Poor school facilities	Strongly disagree	108	21.2
		Disagree	117	22.9
		Agree	194	38.0
		Strongly agree	91	17.9
3	Poor parental involvement	Strongly disagree	77	15.1
		Disagree	102	20.0
		Agree	152	29.8
		Strongly agree	179	35.1
4	Poor coordination	Strongly disagree	26	5.1
		Disagree	143	28.0
		Agree	210	41.2
		Strongly agree	131	25.7
5	Poor SBM knowledge	Strongly disagree	35	6.9
		Disagree	51	10.0
		Agree	268	52.5
		Strongly agree	156	30.6
6	Insufficient funds	Strongly disagree	43	8.4
		Disagree	102	20.0
		Agree	209	41.0
		Strongly agree	156	30.6
7	The discrepancy in the roles of principals and school committees	Strongly disagree	5	1.0
		Disagree	45	8.8
		Agree	357	70.0
		Strongly agree	103	20.2

Table 5 shows that there were many challenges in implementing SBM during the pandemic. Most respondents (64.3%) agreed that there was a lack of skill development for school leaders. On the other hand, some respondents (38%) agreed that the obstacle was caused by the school's poor facilities. Some respondents (35.1%) agreed that there was poor parental involvement. It was also found that many respondents (41.2%) agreed that the obstacle was caused by poor coordination. Respondents (52.5%) agreed that there was a poor understanding of SBM as an obstacle. Finally, it was revealed that respondents (41%) agreed that the school had insufficient funds, and most of them (70%) agreed that the obstacle was the discrepancy in the roles of principals and school committees.

4.1.5. Location and Coordination

A survey was conducted to investigate the potential difficulties in coordination caused by the difference in location between rural and urban schools. The survey results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Location and coordination.

School location	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Rural area	6.27	59.80	27.25	6.67
Urban area	1.96	52.94	38.4	7.06

According to Table 6, the majority of respondents (59.80%) from rural areas disagreed that SBM failed to function properly due to coordination difficulties. Similarly, the majority of respondents (52.94%) from urban areas disagreed that the location was the cause of poor coordination. It can be said that respondents did not agree that the location of the school impeded the implementation of SBM.

4.2. Qualitative

Several discourses were found based on the interview analysis. Using NVivo 12 plus software to analyze the interview data, four major themes concerning the implementation of school-based management as a result of the pandemic were revealed. The four themes can be visualized in a concept map as follows:
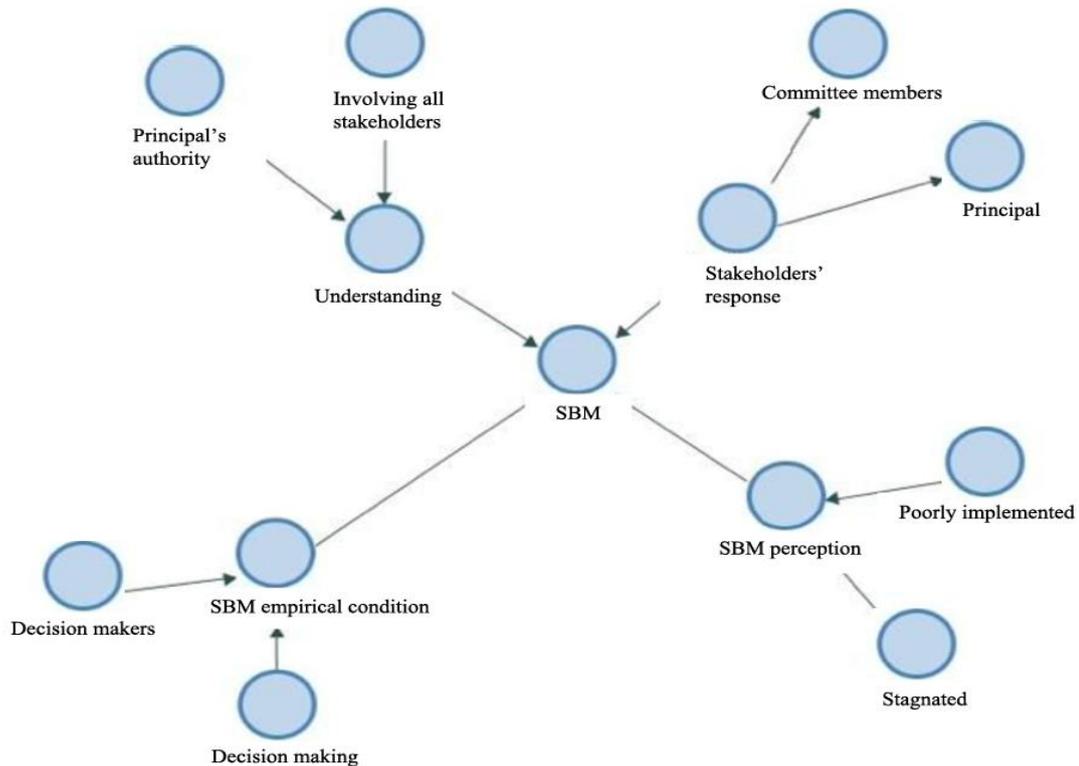
Figure 1. Themes in SBM implementation.

Figure 1 illustrates that SBM during COVID-19 pandemic produced four main themes related to the understanding of committees and principals, perceptions of committees and principals, empirical conditions, and stakeholder responses. These four themes are described below.

4.2.1. Theme 1: Understanding SBM

School-Based Management or SBM is a management model that enables schools to manage themselves (Koç & Bastas, 2019; Parra, 2022; Ulfatin, Mustiningsih, Sumarsono, & Yunus, 2022). This autonomy is granted to schools, particularly principals, to aid educational progress (Arar & Nasra, 2020; Lee et al., 2021). SBM implementation is closely related to the creation of an education decentralization policy that actively involves the community. Therefore, policy implementers, in this case, the principal and school committee members, are required to have a sufficient understanding of the basic concepts of SBM. The understanding of SBM determines the long-term viability of the process in a school. A lack of understanding about SBM can lead to miscommunication among implementers and a poor decision-making process. Several statements from respondents support this fact. For example:

"Due to the lack of understanding about SBM, particularly for myself and the school teachers, the school committee, parents, and the community are not heavily involved in SBM" (Committee member 2).

"*A lack of understanding of SBM for myself and the school staff frequently leads to miscommunication between the school and the school's respondent groups*" (Committee member 4).

"Knowledge about SBM is still very limited. It has influenced the attitudes in the decision-making process" (Committee member 8).

4.2.2. Theme 2: Subjects' Perceptions of SBM Implementation during the Pandemic

Perception is defined as an information process based on experience or a process of recognizing, organizing, and interpreting data (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010), which is closely related to SBM implementation in this study. SBM implementation, which involved schools and committees in developing policies for education delivery programs during the pandemic, was considered to be poor by the involved parties. The hegemony of the principal's authority in policymaking predominates the school committees. As a partner, school committees were often required to follow decisions made unilaterally by the school while also being required to communicate these decisions to parents. Several statements from respondents support this fact.

"*SBM in schools was not working properly because it involved the school committee, parents, and the community*" (School committee 1).

"*The implementation of SBM during the pandemic was poor as evidenced by the school's dominance in making various policies regarding the implementation of education*" (School committee 3).

4.2.3. Theme 3: Empirical Conditions of SBM Implementation during the Pandemic

There were several issues with SBM implementation, such as mental readiness, human resources, and funds (Bandur, 2012b). The community and educators were often mentally unprepared to implement education decentralization, which is a manifestation of regional autonomy (Bank, 2018; Toifur, 2018). On the other hand, human resources in each institution did not have a thorough understanding of decentralization. As a result, they misinterpreted the concept of decentralization, which led to selfish decision-making, especially during the pandemic. This finding is problematic as communication should no longer be the primary issue in this age of information and communication technology. Several statements from respondents support this fact.

"*Before the pandemic, I implemented a deliberation system involving the committee. However, I have made more unilateral decisions because I saw the situation and conditions that made it impossible to always hold meetings during the pandemic*" (Principal 1).

"*I prefer to make decisions on my own because I am aware of the situation and conditions*" (Principle 6).

"*During the pandemic, school committees were not involved in policy making*" (School committee 4).

"*During this pandemic, the decisions were one-sided, so the possibility of reaching an agreement with the community was very low*" (School committee 7).

The limited funding from the central government can also prevent schools from implementing SBM because the essence of decentralization in education, as embodied in the system, is the autonomy of each education provider (Rosidi, 2021). For example, the limited funding influenced the room renovation process. Despite the fact that renovation was urgent, it was prevented due to fund limitations. As a result, parents were required to be involved to solve it. However, the decisions about the renovations, the budget, and community participation were often made unilaterally and the committee only served as an informant. Several statements from respondents support this fact. However, the delegation of authority to the local level leads to more efficient use of finance (Bjork, 2004).

"*The school committee's primary role is to disseminate information. Because the principal is in charge of all school management matters*" (Principal 3).

"*I am included in the school renovations team, but I only know about the information*" (Committee member 5).

"I only know that there is a renovation" (Committee member 21).

4.2.4. Theme 4: Community Response to SBM Implementation

The lack of community involvement in policy making has resulted in a variety of responses from school committee members. Most of their reactions are negative because they perceive the school committee to be egalitarian in making policies for their children's education. Several statements from respondents support this fact.

"The school is not transparent when they want to do something and parents should be informed about it" (Committee Member 10).

"As a parent, I believe this is extremely unfair. The policy was made without taking input from parents, but we must adhere to the rules." (Committee member 11).

"As parents, we must continue to be involved in school affairs and education programs for our children" (Committee member 13).

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Erosion of Democracy

The survey shows that school committees' involvement in the preparation of any of the 16 school activities was only 50%. This finding implies that the principal's role was dominant in the planning of each activity. Similarly, more than 85% of respondents admitted that the principal's decisions dominated the decision-making process. It represents the erosion of democracy at the school level during the pandemic. This fact is supported by parents who were interviewed as members of the school committee. They were rarely involved in the decision-making process. Despite the fact that SBM has been asserted by the government, several studies have confirmed the lack of community involvement in its implementation. According to Vernez, Karam, and Marshall (2012) parental and community participation in decision-making was limited as school district authorities continued to influence school policies and practices, and teachers rarely made decisions without seeking approval from school district authorities. It was also discovered that the lack of teachers, parents, and community administrators' capabilities in implementing SBM has an impact on its implementation (Triwiyanto & Juharyanto, 2017). Meanwhile, Morton and Avanzo (2011) discovered that school principals were unable to leave their centralized authority and still be responsible for the decision-making process.

5.2. Strategy to Improve Community Partnership

A number of strategies are required to improve SBM implementation. The following are some of the responses that should be considered to improve community partnerships. First, principals and communities must collaborate to develop strategies for implementing change. In addition, they have to put themselves as leaders and team members. Second, even though the workload increases significantly since the implementation of SBM, school principals should seek assistance to reduce it. Third, principals are required to develop their ability to delegate authority. Fourth, principals have to provide opportunities for stakeholders to provide advice and support. Fifth, principals are required to receive training, such as SBM, IT (Information and Technology), and risk management training. It can be seen that to overcome obstacles in implementing SBM, principals are required to cooperate with all parties, delegate authority to reduce their workload, and implement change collaboratively. Principals must participate in professional training and development programs to carry out their roles in SBM implementation (Gamage & Hyde, 2011; Heystek, 2011). A school principal is expected to comprehend general skills related to human, material, and financial resource management, information technology, strategic planning, program management, marketing, conflict resolution, and negotiation (Gamage & Hyde, 2011). Seen from the context of this study, the school principals are required to possess skills related to leadership and management, SBM implementation, strategic planning, and regular professional development training. In addition, principals also

necessitate training on participatory decision-making, computer literacy, and typing to support their day-to-day duties.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study answers the two provided questions. It was found that the implementation of SBM for the first question was improperly conducted. This study revealed that the principal and the school committee did not plan and execute the school activities in accordance with democratic principles. For the second question concerning the involvement of principals and school committees in policy and decision-making, it was discovered that both parties had poor participation that ignored school-level partnerships. This finding suggests that centralized administrative control has been used in the school decision-making process. In this case, the principals were regarded as authoritative leaders or the most powerful person in management. As a result, the decentralized education policy and program reforms via SBM, with the delegation of decision-making authority and responsibility from the central government to the school level, failed to establish democratic principles. Moreover, the school leadership pattern was not so decentralized as expected.

This study considers partnerships as a force that should be used to solve educational problems during the pandemic. However, it was found that the partnerships were not properly implemented. As a result, the government must evaluate SBM implementation by examining responsibility, accountability, and community participation to improve educational quality. With an extensive understanding of learning difficulties and poor SBM partnerships, it is possible to formulate a better policy to improve them.

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