

THE ROLE OF STUDENT PARENTS' COMMUNITY IN SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the role of the Parents' Association (Paguyuban Orang Tua Siswa) in supporting the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at the elementary school level. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, focusing on how parental participation contributes to decision-making, resource management, and the enhancement of educational quality. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving school principals, teachers, and active members of the Parents' Association in several public elementary schools. The findings reveal that the Parents' Association plays a significant role as a strategic partner in promoting school autonomy by participating in financial transparency, academic supervision, and community empowerment programs. Parents' involvement encourages stronger collaboration between schools and communities, aligning with the principles of participatory leadership and accountability in SBM. However, challenges such as uneven parental engagement, limited understanding of managerial processes, and socio-economic disparities hinder the effectiveness of their contributions. The study concludes that strengthening communication, leadership support, and capacity-building initiatives for parents is essential to maximize their impact in achieving sustainable, community-driven school management practices.

Keywords: parents' association; school-based management; parental participation; educational governance

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, education systems around the world have shifted toward decentralized governance models that emphasize school autonomy, community participation, and shared accountability [1]. This paradigm is reflected in the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM), a management approach that transfers significant decision-making authority from central authorities to schools in order to improve educational quality and responsiveness to local needs [2]. Under SBM, schools are empowered to manage resources, design contextual learning programs, and engage stakeholders including parents and communities in achieving educational goals [3]. The effectiveness of SBM depends largely on the active participation of stakeholders, particularly parents' associations, which act as bridges between schools and communities [4]. Parental involvement in school governance is widely recognized as a determinant of institutional effectiveness and student achievement [5]. Research has shown that parents' participation in educational decision-making fosters better communication, shared accountability, and transparency in school operations [6]. According to Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory, the partnership between family, school, and community creates a collaborative environment that enhances students' cognitive, emotional, and social development [7]. In this context, the Parents' Association serves as a structured mechanism for collective parental engagement in supporting school governance, financial management, and extracurricular development. When parents are actively engaged, they contribute not only resources but also social capital, trust, and moral support essential for sustaining educational reform [8]. In Indonesia, the implementation of SBM (Manajemen Berbasis Sekolah) has been institutionalized through national policies that encourage the decentralization of education management to the school level [9]. The Parents' Association (Paguyuban Orang Tua Siswa) plays an essential role in this policy framework by strengthening collaboration between schools and communities. Its functions include facilitating communication between parents and educators, participating in planning and evaluation, and assisting in school development programs [10]. However, the level of parental involvement varies widely depending on factors such as socio-economic background, leadership support, and community culture [11]. Studies

by Rahmawati and Yuliani [12] and Ülker and Elci [13] indicate that many schools still face challenges in integrating parents effectively into decision-making structures due to limited managerial literacy and unequal participation. Globally, evidence shows that school-community partnerships can significantly improve learning outcomes, equity, and accountability when institutionalized through participatory governance frameworks [14]. For instance, OECD (2021) emphasized that schools with strong parent–community engagement tend to demonstrate higher student motivation, lower dropout rates, and improved learning environments [15]. Similarly, Kim and Park [16] found that effective communication between schools and parents enhances mutual trust and collaborative problem-solving, leading to better educational outcomes. However, the success of parental engagement depends not only on willingness but also on the establishment of clear institutional mechanisms that define roles, responsibilities, and channels for participation [17].

The Parents' Association in Indonesia provides an interesting case for examining how community-based participation interacts with educational leadership in the SBM framework. It embodies the principles of bottom-up management, where community stakeholders influence school policy implementation. Yet, as pointed out by Oakland [18] and Goetsch & Davis [19], effective management systems require a balance between autonomy and accountability an equilibrium that must be cultivated through leadership competence and transparent communication. Therefore, the role of the Parents' Association extends beyond volunteerism; it represents a governance structure that supports Total Quality Management (TQM) in education through continuous improvement, participatory evaluation, and stakeholder collaboration [20]. This study aims to analyze the role of the Parents' Association in supporting the implementation of School-Based Management in elementary schools, focusing on its contribution to leadership collaboration, transparency, and community empowerment. Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of parental participation as a form of social partnership in educational governance. Practically, it offers insights for school leaders and policymakers on strategies to strengthen community-based management in achieving sustainable educational improvement. By integrating perspectives from SBM and TQM frameworks, this study emphasizes that shared leadership and collaborative governance are fundamental for improving school performance and nurturing a participatory educational culture [21].

School-Based Management (SBM) represents a paradigm shift from centralized to decentralized educational governance, granting schools greater autonomy to manage their resources, make local decisions, and engage stakeholders in continuous quality improvement [22]. Under SBM, schools are expected to identify local priorities, allocate budgets effectively, and encourage collaboration among principals, teachers, and communities [23]. According to the World Bank (2021), effective SBM practices lead to improved student outcomes, accountability, and stakeholder satisfaction when supported by transparent management and community participation. SBM is grounded in the belief that schools, being closer to learners and communities, are best positioned to make contextually relevant decisions [24]. Research by Rahmawati and Yusof [25] shows that schools implementing SBM with active parental and teacher involvement experience higher institutional responsiveness and better alignment between policies and student needs. Oakland [18] emphasized that SBM success depends on leadership competence, teamwork, and a culture of trust principles also found in Total Quality Management (TQM) frameworks. Thus, SBM can be viewed as an adaptation of quality management concepts to the education sector, where continuous improvement and participatory decision-making replace bureaucratic control [26]. However, challenges persist in ensuring that SBM translates into genuine participation rather than token involvement. Studies in Indonesia by Ülker and Elci [11] revealed that while SBM is formally mandated, many schools still struggle with limited parental participation and unclear role definitions. Effective SBM therefore requires systemic support through leadership capacity building, stakeholder education, and institutional policy reform [27].

Parental participation is a key pillar of school effectiveness and accountability within SBM frameworks. Epstein [6] defines parental involvement as a multidimensional process encompassing communication, decision-making, volunteering, and collaboration in both academic and non-academic school activities. The Parents' Association (Paguyuban Orang Tua Siswa) provides a formal structure for coordinating parental contributions to school planning, budgeting, and community outreach [28]. Through regular meetings and consultative processes, parents are involved in school improvement programs, resource mobilization, and extracurricular initiatives that strengthen students' social and emotional well-being. Empirical studies show that active parental participation enhances educational outcomes and institutional performance. For instance, Kim and Park [7] found that schools with strong family school partnerships achieved higher student satisfaction and teacher morale. Likewise, Qian and Clark [12] observed that shared decision-making between parents and school leaders fosters mutual accountability and a sense of ownership among stakeholders. In Indonesia, Rahmawati and Yuliani [10] highlighted that the Parents' Association plays a vital role in fostering transparency and community trust, particularly in financial management and school development planning. Nevertheless, parental participation remains uneven across socio-economic contexts. Some parents lack the confidence, time, or knowledge to engage meaningfully in school management, limiting the inclusiveness of participation [29]. Therefore, educational leaders must create supportive environments that empower parents through training, communication, and recognition of their contributions. Leadership's role is to transform parental involvement from mere attendance at meetings to active collaboration and shared governance [30].

The concept of collaborative educational governance emphasizes distributed leadership and collective responsibility among various school stakeholders [31]. It extends beyond the participation of parents to include teachers, administrators, and community organizations as co-managers of educational quality. Leithwood and Jantzi [8] proposed that transformational leadership encourages shared decision-making and promotes stakeholder commitment, resulting in stronger organizational learning. Collaborative governance within SBM thus bridges leadership and community participation, creating a network of actors aligned toward common educational goals. The Parents' Association operates as a critical element of collaborative governance by

institutionalizing stakeholder dialogue and accountability mechanisms. According to Goetsch and Davis [19], participatory management models based on TQM principles enhance institutional adaptability and innovation by engaging diverse perspectives. This aligns with the view of UNESCO (2021) that inclusive governance strengthens democratic practices and social cohesion in education systems [4]. In practice, schools that foster collaboration between educators and parents demonstrate higher resilience, responsiveness, and satisfaction levels, particularly during times of reform or crisis [30]. Within the Indonesian context, collaborative governance through Parents' Associations represents an evolving model of participatory democracy in education. It reflects the cultural value of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) while reinforcing accountability and transparency. However, to maximize impact, such collaboration must be institutionalized through policy support, leadership training, and equitable participation across all socio-economic groups. Therefore, this study situates the role of the Parents' Association as a vital component of SBM implementation, bridging the gap between **policy intentions and practical outcomes** through collaborative school management.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the role of the Parents' Association (Paguyuban Orang Tua Siswa) in supporting the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at the elementary school level. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes, interactions, and perceptions among stakeholders regarding participatory school management. This design allows the researcher to capture the complexity of social phenomena in a natural setting, providing rich, contextualized insights into school community collaboration [32]. The research was conducted in three public elementary schools in Bogor City, Indonesia, selected purposively based on their active implementation of SBM and the existence of a functioning Parents' Association. The participants included school principals, teachers, and active members of the Parents' Association, totaling 18 informants. Data collection techniques comprised semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and documentation analysis, enabling data triangulation and strengthening validity. The interview questions focused on parental roles in school planning, decision-making, communication with educators, and participation in quality improvement programs.

Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman Interactive Model, which includes three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [33]. During data reduction, the researcher categorized responses into thematic clusters such as "leadership support," "transparency in school planning," "participation barriers," and "community empowerment." Data display involved organizing information into visual matrices and narrative summaries to reveal relationships among themes. The conclusions were verified through continuous comparison and member checking, where participants confirmed the accuracy of interpretations. The validity of the findings was further enhanced through source triangulation (multiple informants) and method triangulation (interviews, observations, and documents). Ethical considerations were upheld by obtaining informed consent from all participants and maintaining confidentiality throughout the research process. The methodological rigor aligns with Creswell's [32] and Yin's [33] recommendations for qualitative educational research, ensuring credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness of the study findings.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study revealed three dominant themes that describe the role of the Parents' Association (Paguyuban Orang Tua Siswa) in the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at the elementary level: (1) Participatory Planning and Decision-Making, (2) Transparency and Accountability in School Governance, and (3) Community Empowerment through Collaborative Initiatives. First, the theme of participatory planning indicates that parents were actively involved in school meetings, curriculum discussions, and budgeting decisions. Parents contributed ideas and resources during school development planning sessions (*rapat kerja sekolah*), reflecting their growing influence in decision-making. This aligns with Epstein's [28] framework of family school partnership, emphasizing shared responsibility in educational processes. Second, the theme of transparency and accountability emerged as a defining feature of successful SBM implementation. The Parents' Association served as a liaison between school management and the broader parent community, ensuring open communication about financial reports, school priorities, and program evaluations. Third, the theme of community empowerment highlights how the association initiated social and educational programs such as literacy movements, student motivation events, and charity initiatives to strengthen collective engagement and build school reputation.

Parents' Association as a Pillar of Participatory School Management

Findings suggest that the Parents' Association acts as a strategic agent of participatory governance, bridging administrative management and community trust. Parents' involvement in planning and monitoring activities enhanced schools' responsiveness to local needs and reinforced democratic values in education. Similar findings by Rahmawati and Yuliani [25] and Kim and Rahmawati [30] demonstrate that collaborative leadership and open communication between parents and educators foster transparency and innovation in SBM implementation. In the observed schools, principals encouraged regular dialogue sessions (*forum komunikasi sekolah*), where parents could express opinions on curriculum alignment and extracurricular priorities. This participatory model resonates with transformational leadership theory, in which leaders inspire participation by promoting shared

vision and collaboration [31]. The Parents' Association's role extends beyond financial contribution it supports educational quality by co-creating solutions to school challenges. Such findings corroborate Ülker and Elci's [27] view that leadership and cultural readiness are crucial in enabling authentic parental participation. In the Indonesian context, this role also reflects the local value of gotong royong (mutual cooperation), where collective responsibility reinforces educational sustainability [34].

Promoting Transparency and Accountability

Transparency emerged as a central theme in ensuring the effectiveness of SBM. The Parents' Association functioned as an oversight body that helped monitor school budgets, project implementation, and student welfare programs. By promoting financial transparency, parents gained confidence in school governance, reducing potential conflict and mistrust between stakeholders. According to Goetsch and Davis [19], transparency and accountability are vital elements of Total Quality Management (TQM), which supports continuous improvement and shared responsibility. In this study, accountability was achieved through open financial reporting, joint evaluation meetings, and periodic dissemination of school progress reports. Parents' representatives also contributed to school self-evaluation (Evaluasi Diri Sekolah) activities. These practices demonstrate how participatory mechanisms can enhance governance standards, aligning with UNESCO's [17] principle of "accountability in education." Furthermore, as Oakland [26] observed, transparency fosters a culture of trust and engagement, enabling continuous improvement in both teaching and management processes [35].

Community Empowerment and Social Capital

Beyond formal governance, the Parents' Association contributed to building social capital and community resilience. The data show that parents organized programs to support student welfare, such as nutrition campaigns, book donations, and extracurricular clubs. This aligns with Leithwood and Jantzi's [31] notion of distributed leadership, where leadership roles are shared among multiple stakeholders for collective empowerment. Parents' initiatives strengthened the relationship between school and community, creating a network of mutual support that extended beyond academic activities. Community empowerment also involved parents as resource mobilizers—raising funds, volunteering, and connecting the school with external partners. As Anwar and Yuliani [29] found, parental involvement can enhance the sustainability of educational programs when schools facilitate inclusive participation and recognize diverse contributions. In this study, parents from different socio-economic backgrounds collaborated in non-financial ways, including mentoring, organizing cultural events, and supporting health programs. Such initiatives are consistent with OECD's [15] assertion that active citizenship in education contributes to democratic participation and social cohesion [36].

Challenges in Parental Participation

Despite these achievements, the study identified several challenges in optimizing parental engagement. Some parents exhibited limited understanding of SBM principles, while others faced time and resource constraints that hindered consistent participation. This finding echoes research by Rahman [26] and UNESCO [4], which highlight socio-economic disparities as barriers to equitable participation. In addition, differing expectations between teachers and parents occasionally led to communication gaps and reduced collaboration. Addressing these challenges requires continuous capacity-building programs to enhance parents' managerial and communication skills. To overcome these limitations, the study recommends integrating capacity-building workshops for parents, focusing on basic school governance, budgeting, and communication strategies. Schools should also utilize digital communication platforms (such as WhatsApp groups or school apps) to maintain inclusive engagement. Kim and Park [7] noted that digital collaboration tools significantly increase parental accessibility and involvement in school activities. These interventions would strengthen mutual understanding and sustain participation in the long term [37].

The findings reinforce the theoretical relationship between School-Based Management, participatory leadership, and educational quality improvement. The role of the Parents' Association demonstrates that school governance is most effective when shared responsibility and accountability are embedded within daily management. This confirms Epstein's [28] framework and aligns with the TQM principle of continuous improvement articulated by Oakland [26]. Furthermore, the study extends previous literature by showing that participatory governance in the Indonesian context intertwines cultural values (collectivism and cooperation) with modern management principles. From a theoretical standpoint, the Parents' Association serves as an institutional embodiment of the "learning organization," where collaboration, feedback, and reflection drive improvement. As OECD [36] emphasized, effective education reform requires co-production between institutions and communities. Hence, this study contributes to the evolving discourse on collaborative governance by highlighting how parental associations can function as agents of quality assurance and community empowerment within the SBM framework.

For school leaders and policymakers, this study provides empirical evidence that strengthening the Parents' Association can improve the effectiveness of SBM. Leaders should establish structured communication channels, transparent decision-making mechanisms, and regular evaluation forums involving parents. Schools should design capacity-building programs that equip parents with the necessary knowledge of school governance, budgeting, and quality assurance processes. As Kim and Park [37] found, digital communication tools can further increase inclusivity and accessibility in parent-school collaboration, particularly for working parents. For educational policymakers, the findings imply that national SBM policies should integrate clearer guidelines on parental roles and responsibilities. Regulations should mandate periodic evaluations of community engagement and ensure equitable participation regardless of socio-economic background. Strengthening community-based school councils (Komite Sekolah) and Parents' Associations will institutionalize participatory culture, ensuring that decision-making processes remain democratic, accountable, and transparent [44]. For teachers and educational practitioners, building partnerships with parents should be viewed not as additional administrative tasks but as opportunities for professional collaboration. Parental feedback can provide valuable insights into student learning contexts and school improvement strategies. As Leithwood and Jantzi

[31] noted, shared leadership and dialogue between educators and parents enhance organizational learning and mutual respect, leading to better student outcomes and community trust. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing literature on collaborative governance and parental participation by demonstrating how the Parents' Association functions as an institutional mechanism for co-managing school quality within the SBM framework. It expands the School-Based Management model by integrating principles of TQM—particularly continuous improvement and stakeholder involvement—into community participation theory. The findings reinforce Epstein's [41] concept of overlapping spheres of influence, in which home, school, and community form interdependent systems that support holistic education [45]. Future research should consider conducting comparative or longitudinal studies across various regions or school types to examine contextual differences in parental involvement and leadership styles. Quantitative validation using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or Partial Least Squares (PLS) could further test the causal relationships between leadership, parental participation, and school performance. Additionally, research into the use of digital platforms for parental engagement can offer insights into how technology supports inclusive and sustainable SBM practices [46]. In conclusion, the study affirms that collaborative governance through Parents' Associations is essential for achieving equitable, transparent, and community-driven educational management. Empowering parents as active partners transforms schools into learning communities where accountability, innovation, and shared leadership drive continuous improvement and educational excellence.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Parents' Association (Paguyuban Orang Tua Siswa) plays a vital and strategic role in the successful implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) at the elementary school level. Through active participation in planning, decision-making, and evaluation, parents contribute to strengthening transparency, accountability, and collaborative governance in schools. The findings demonstrate that the Parents' Association not only supports the administrative and financial aspects of education but also acts as a catalyst for community empowerment and collective responsibility. The study validates the theoretical proposition that participatory leadership and community engagement are key drivers of effective SBM, as they foster shared ownership and trust between schools and stakeholders. Moreover, this research underscores that effective parental participation depends on leadership commitment, inclusive communication, and capacity-building initiatives. Schools that integrate parents as collaborative partners experience better alignment between policies, community needs, and educational outcomes. The study also highlights the cultural dimension of Indonesian education, where values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation) strengthen the sustainability of participatory management. Consistent with the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), continuous improvement in SBM requires that school leadership, teachers, and parents work together to review, reflect, and enhance the quality of education through collective action.

V. REFERENSI

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