



Exploring predictors of impact of school-based management in rural Mexico: Do student engagement, teacher attitudes and parent involvement predict better academic outcomes?



Anilena Mejia^a, Ania Filus^{b,*}

^a Instituto de Investigaciones Científicas y Servicios de Alta Tecnología INDICASAT AIP, Panama

^b University of Southern California, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

School-based management
Apoyo a la Gestión Escolar
Predictors
Multilevel latent growth modeling
Mexico

ABSTRACT

School-based management (SBM) programs are effective for improving academic performance. However, few studies have examined factors predicting their effectiveness. We analyzed data from a randomized experiment conducted in Mexico designed to test effects of SBM with double resources as compared to standard resources. Results indicated that regardless of the amount of money received, students' standardized scores in mathematics and Spanish improved over time. In addition, the results showed that for all schools a reduction in self-reported student absenteeism predicted improvements in student academic scores while a reduction in self-reported homework time predicted a decrease in academic scores over time. Future studies should explore a wider range of potential predictors.

Improving the quality of education in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is a pressing priority (UNESCO, 2015). Good quality education can break intergenerational cycles of poverty (Raffo et al., 2009) and protect children, families and communities from difficulties later in life (Walker et al., 2011). While systematic efforts have been made to empirically establish effectiveness of educational policies and interventions in LMICs (e.g. Banerjee, Cole, Dufflo, & Linden, 2005; Dufflo, 2004), we know very little about how these interventions work. This is important to know in order to reveal which components of the intervention are most strongly related to outcomes, serving to streamline or make initiatives more efficient.

One type of intervention commonly evaluated in LMICs is school-based management (SBM), which decentralizes decision-making and authority in schools and transfers power to principals, teachers, parents and/or communities (Caldwell, 2005; Malen, Rodney, & Kranz, 1990). Some distinguish between school-based management in which responsibilities are transferred to professionals within the school (i.e. senior teachers) versus decentralization, which implies giving authority to an elected school board representing parents and the community (De Grauwe, 2005). Others use the terms school-based management and decentralization interchangeably (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, & Patrinos, 2009). In any case, the main purpose of SBM or decentralization is to provide power to teachers, parents and/or communities so that they can make decisions on budget allocation, remuneration of staff, curriculum development, infrastructure improvement, and monitor teacher and student performance. The rationale is that decentralizing decision-making might prompt a diverse mix of inputs depending on local preferences and needs (King & Cordeiro-Guerra, 2005). It is therefore considered that SBM is more democratic, allows for greater accountability, and eases mobilization of resources (Caldwell, 1994).

* Corresponding author at: Center for Self-Report Science, Center for Economic & Social Research, University of Southern California, 635 Downey Way, Los Angeles, CA, United States.

E-mail address: afilus@usc.edu (A. Filus).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2018.01.010>

Received 4 August 2017; Received in revised form 3 January 2018; Accepted 14 January 2018

0883-0355/ © 2018 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

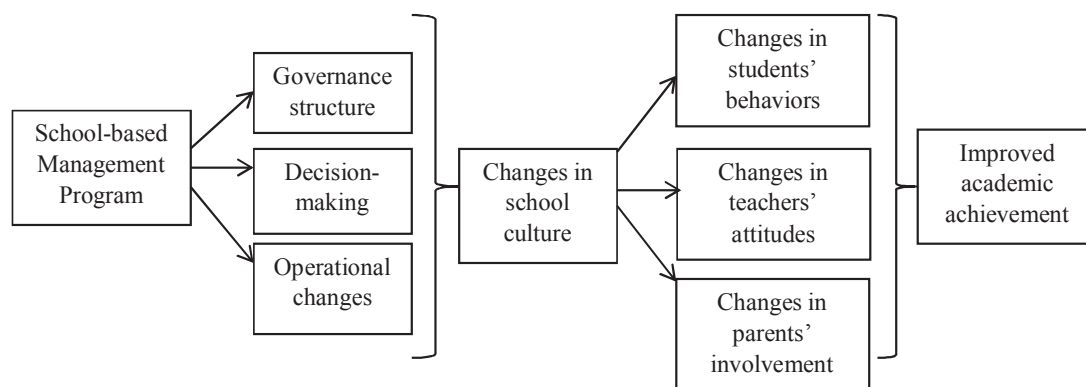


Fig. 1. Robertson (1995) change process theory of School Based Management programs.

Several evaluations of SBM have been conducted in LMICs, specifically in the Latin American and Caribbean Region. For example, Parker (2005) evaluated the impact of the “Autonomous School Program” in Nicaragua and reported that students in autonomous schools had better scores in Spanish and math. EDUCO, a SBM program was also implemented in El Salvador in the early 1990s to strengthen direct involvement and participation of parents in both pre-primary and primary education (Jimenez & Sawada, 2003). SBM diminished student absenteeism due to reduced teacher absenteeism, but unlike the case of Nicaragua, no significant effects were found on academic performance.

As portrayed by the examples of Nicaragua and El Salvador, evidence on the impact of SBM on academic achievement in LMICs is mixed. While some studies report improved academic performance (e.g. Parker, 2005; Di Gropello & Marshall, 2005), others suggest small or no significant effects (e.g. Jimenez & Sawada, 2003). More importantly, processes that trigger changes in the chain of variables linking SBM to students’ academic outcomes have not been systematically investigated in LMICs (McNamara, 2010). Millions are invested in the implementation and evaluation of educational policies in LMICs, but these actions are not guided by evidence regarding mechanisms via which SBM bring positive outcomes for schools and students.

1. Student engagement, teacher attitudes and parent involvement as predictors of change due SBM

Robertson (1995) proposes a theoretical framework or a “change process theory” of SBM (see Fig. 1). This model proposes that changes in (i) governance structure, (ii) the decision-making processes and (iii) the way school operates will predict changes in the (iv) school culture, which will then lead to changes in (v) behaviors (e.g., student attendance) and (vi) attitudes of actors involved (e.g., teachers’ attitudes, parent involvement). These changes in behaviors and attitudes should lead to improved school quality and ultimately improved academic achievement. Measuring school culture and decision-making processes is challenging and thus, most studies evaluating SBM do not include assessment of these dynamic processes. However, many existing evaluations do include measures of student engagement, teacher attitudes towards students and parent involvement.

The impact of SBM on parent involvement and student behaviors has been under-explored. However, impact on teachers’ attitudes has been previously examined with mixed results reported. In India, teachers’ attitudes were unchanged regardless of whether SBM was implemented in the school or not (Kremer, Chaudhury, Rogers, Muralidharan, & Hammer, 2005). Conversely, small impact of SBM on teachers’ attitudes has been reported in Peru (Alcazar et al., 2006), Ecuador (Rogers et al., 2004) and Papua New Guinea (World Bank, 2004). Similar improvements in teachers’ attitudes were found in schools participating in EDUCO, the SBM program in El Salvador previously discussed (Jimenez & Sawada, 1999). Therefore, it seems that SBM can improve teacher attitudes, but the impact may depend on the regional context and the specific SBM.

2. School-based management in rural Mexico

The main aim of the present study was to explore predictors of changes in student academic achievement for primary schools in Mexico who received a specific SBM entitled “*Apoyo a la Gestión Escolar*” (AGE). The AGE was first implemented in Mexico in the 1990s. It provides parent associations with funds, of about \$600 a year depending on school size, in order to increase their participation in school management. This is considered a limited version of SBM, as it only includes strengthening of parent associations by providing extra cash. However, this financial support could have prompted parental interest in monitoring the quality of their child’s education. Parent associations in Mexico are formalized committees ruled by national guidelines. Their main roles are 1) to promote coordination with school directors, 2) to raise funds to improve school activities and infrastructure, 3) to foster relationships amongst teachers, students and other parents, and 4) to provide support and guidance to other parents about students’ education. The executive board is elected every two years by all parents of the school. According to national guidelines, it is prohibited for members to have a say on the technical and administrative aspects of the school, to be compensated or to raise money for purposes that are not related to the school.

With AGE funding, parent associations had additional money available to spend on civil work and infrastructure improvements, thus increasing their role in decision-making. For example, parent associations could spend money on books, pencils, school supplies,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6841506>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6841506>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)