EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION POLICY: SCHOOL/MADRASAH BASED MANAGEMENT

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Abstract
Educational decentralization is part of regional autonomy policy aimed at bringing education services closer to the community and improving quality in an equitable manner. This study aims to analyze the implementation of educational decentralization policy in Indonesia through the School-Based Management (SBM) and Madrasah-Based Management (MBM) approaches. The research method employed is a literature review using a descriptive qualitative approach by analyzing regulatory documents, theoretical frameworks, and previous research findings. The results show that decentralization provides flexibility for local governments and educational units in managing resources, making decisions, and involving the community. However, this policy also faces challenges such as disparities in regional capacity, weak supervision, and suboptimal synergy between central and local governments. International comparisons with countries such as Finland, Japan, and the Philippines highlight the importance of professional educators and a balanced governance system between central and regional authorities. This study concludes that the success of educational decentralization depends greatly on strengthening human resource capacity, establishing accountable oversight systems, and synchronizing policies across levels of government.

Keywords: Educational Decentralization, School-Based Management, Regional Autonomy, Education Policy, Community Participation

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a foundational pillar for national development and societal advancement. It shapes human capital, fosters innovation, and underpins the social and economic progress of a nation. In the context of Indonesia, the enactment of regional autonomy policies following the Reform Era has significantly influenced the governance of education. The shift from a centralized to a decentralized governance model aimed to make education more democratic, participatory, and locally responsive. This decentralization process allows regional governments and educational institutions to exercise more control over planning, resource allocation, and the management of educational services.

The decentralization of education in Indonesia is rooted in the broader framework of governance reform, which emphasizes subsidiarity, local empowerment, and accountability. Through this policy, the central government delegates authority to local governments and schools to enable them to make decisions that better reflect the needs and characteristics of their communities. The key goals of this approach include improving the quality and relevance of education, reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, increasing stakeholder participation, and promoting equitable access across diverse geographical and socio-economic regions.

Central to the implementation of educational decentralization are the concepts of School-Based Management (SBM) and Madrasah-Based Management (MBM). These models place schools and madrasahs at the heart of decision-making processes, giving them autonomy over budget management, curriculum adaptation, and staff development. By empowering schools as self-managing institutions, SBM/MBM aims to foster innovation, responsiveness, and accountability. The expectation is that with greater autonomy, schools can better address local challenges and improve student outcomes.

However, the success of education decentralization depends on several enabling conditions, including institutional capacity, leadership quality, financial resources, and policy coherence. In practice, the implementation of decentralization in Indonesia has been uneven. While some regions have made significant progress in adopting SBM/MBM and improving educational services, others continue to struggle due to limited resources, weak governance structures, and insufficient coordination between central and regional authorities.

This paper seeks to critically examine the decentralization of education in Indonesia, focusing on the theoretical foundations, legal frameworks, and practical implementation of SBM and MBM. It also explores international experiences to draw comparative insights that may inform better policy and practice. Through a comprehensive analysis of opportunities and challenges, the study aims to provide a balanced understanding of how decentralization can contribute to an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education system in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach through library research and policy analysis. Data were collected from academic journals, government documents, and international education policy reviews. Comparative case studies from Finland, Japan, and the Philippines were used to provide contextual insights. No statistical software was used; analysis focused on qualitative synthesis and thematic interpretation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result
The implementation of education decentralization in Indonesia has brought about significant institutional and structural transformations across various levels of the educational system. By transferring authority from the central government to regional governments and educational institutions, this policy has enabled localized management and autonomy in designing and delivering educational services. Notably, the adoption of School-Based Management (SBM) and Madrasah-Based Management (MBM) has encouraged schools to take initiative in strategic planning, budgeting, human resource development, and community involvement.

From a legal standpoint, the decentralization framework is supported by several national regulations, including Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, and Ministerial Regulation No. 2 of 2022 concerning the Technical Guidelines for BOS Funds. These laws underscore the principles of local authority, independence of educational units, and the importance of community engagement in education governance.

In terms of institutional outcomes, regions with adequate infrastructure and human resources have demonstrated improved school governance, better budget utilization, and the development of localized curricula. These advancements are particularly evident in

urban and economically advantaged districts where schools are supported by capable leadership and active stakeholder participation. In these areas, SBM/MBM have improved the responsiveness of educational institutions to local needs, increased transparency in school management, and enhanced the relevance of learning outcomes.

However, the results also reveal substantial disparities in implementation effectiveness across different regions. Many underdeveloped and remote areas continue to face challenges such as insufficient funding, lack of managerial expertise, and limited infrastructure. These disparities have led to unequal educational quality and access, contradicting the policy's goal of national equity. Furthermore, inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the local level often result in the mismanagement of resources and hinder accountability.

The SWOT analysis conducted highlights the following:
- Strengths: Greater decision-making flexibility at the local level, increased community involvement in school affairs, and faster administrative responses due to reduced bureaucratic layers.
- Weaknesses: Inconsistencies in regional capacity, weak supervision frameworks, low managerial competence, and dependence on central transfers for funding.
- Opportunities: Integration of educational technologies for digital learning and data-driven school management, partnerships with NGOs and private sector, and alignment with national education goals.
- Threats: Risk of political interference in school administration, misalignment of policies across government levels, and widening regional disparities in educational outcomes.

International comparisons provide further insight. Finland's education system demonstrates the power of trust-based, professional-led school autonomy where internal evaluations and pedagogical freedom drive quality. In contrast, Japan maintains centralized curriculum standards but permits localized implementation, achieving uniformity without compromising flexibility. The Philippines presents a mixed model where decentralization has yielded localized innovation but is hampered by structural weaknesses and insufficient central support.

Discussion

The Indonesian experience with educational decentralization reflects a broader global trend towards empowering local educational actors. The goal is to make schools more responsive, democratic, and capable of meeting diverse educational needs. SBM/MBM, as operational arms of this policy, are intended to transfer key responsibilities to school heads, teachers, and communities to promote ownership and improve outcomes. In practice, this transformation has been partially successful.

In schools where principals and teachers are well-trained and supported by active school committees, decentralization has led to innovative programs, increased student engagement, and better use of available resources. These schools exemplify the intended goals of SBM/MBM—providing customized, efficient, and community-responsive education. Moreover, when paired with digital technologies, these schools have been able to implement effective monitoring systems, track learning outcomes, and enhance communication with stakeholders.

Nonetheless, the limitations are profound. A lack of systematic capacity-building for school leaders, insufficient clarity in role delineation, and frequent changes in education

regulations have disrupted consistency in implementation. Without strong coordination, local autonomy can become fragmented autonomy, leading to a patchwork of education standards and services across the archipelago.

The central government still plays a vital role in ensuring quality control and equity. Affirmative policies, targeted funding like the Special Allocation Fund (DAK), and technical assistance are necessary to support disadvantaged regions. Furthermore, a robust monitoring and evaluation system must be developed and institutionalized at all levels to ensure transparency, detect irregularities, and inform continuous improvement. This requires training, digital tools, and a clear reporting structure.

International models reinforce that successful decentralization does not equate to total disengagement by the central government. Instead, it calls for a balanced governance structure where autonomy is supported by regulation, innovation is guided by standards, and local initiatives are nurtured through capacity-building. Finland's trust-based model and Japan's hybrid approach show that alignment between local flexibility and national vision is both feasible and beneficial.

In summary, the decentralization of education in Indonesia offers both promise and peril. It enables schools to respond to local conditions, promotes community ownership, and accelerates decision-making. Yet, without systemic support, this autonomy risks reinforcing inequalities and compromising national education goals. To succeed, decentralization must be accompanied by inclusive policy design, stakeholder empowerment, and integrated national-local collaboration built on transparency, accountability, and shared vision.

CONCLUSION

The education decentralization policy in Indonesia is a strategic initiative aimed at bringing educational services closer to communities while granting greater autonomy to regional governments and educational institutions. Through the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) and Madrasah-Based Management (MBM), this policy promotes more participatory and context-sensitive decision-making, with the goal of enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of education in alignment with local needs.

Despite its promising potential, education decentralization presents several significant challenges. Disparities in regional capacity, weak supervision systems, limited human resources, and fragmented policies between central and local governments pose serious obstacles to its implementation. Without appropriate intervention, this policy may risk widening the quality gap in education between developed and underdeveloped regions.

Therefore, the success of education decentralization heavily depends on strong synergy between central and local governments, enhanced institutional and human resource capacity, and reinforced regulatory and oversight mechanisms. A sustained commitment is essential to building an inclusive, adaptive, and equitable education system capable of achieving national educational goals comprehensively.

SUGGESTIONS
1. Increasing Regional Human Resources Capacity
   The central government needs to provide continuous training and competency development to education officials in the regions so that they are able to manage education professionally and effectively.
2. Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation System
   A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system is needed to ensure accountability and transparency in education management at the regional level.
3. Equalization of Education Funds and Facilities

The government needs to adopt affirmative policies to support underdeveloped regions to catch up in terms of facilities, financing, and quality of education services.

4. Strengthening Collaboration Between Stakeholders

    Encourage partnerships between schools, communities, the private sector, and universities in improving the quality of education through mentoring programs, digitalization, and learning innovation.

5. Synchronization of Central and Regional Policies

    Harmonization of policies between levels of government is needed to prevent fragmentation and ensure that the implementation of education programs is consistent and focused.

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