



## **Law 11.645/2008 as a mechanism for the promotion of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous education in schools: A qualitative study**



<https://doi.org/10.56238/levv15n39-027>

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## **ABSTRACT**

The research aimed to evaluate the implementation of Law 11.645/2008, which requires the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture in Brazilian school curricula. It adopted an exploratory and qualitative approach, conducting in-depth interviews with fifteen teachers to understand their perceptions and challenges. The results showed that while the law has been welcomed by many teachers and contributed to more inclusive education, it still faces significant challenges. Among these challenges are the lack of specific training for educators, the scarcity of adequate teaching materials, and resistance to change in the curriculum. The analysis revealed that, despite the difficulties, the law is promoting a greater appreciation of cultural diversity and contributing to a more respectful citizenship. To ensure effective and complete implementation, it is necessary to invest in quality pedagogical resources, continuous training for teachers, and promote a school environment that supports cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** Law 11.645/2008, Education, Afro-Brazilian, Indigenous.



## INTRODUCTION

Law 11.645/2008 represents a significant milestone in the promotion of cultural diversity and the inclusion of content on Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture in the Brazilian school curriculum. Originating in a context of growing recognition of the rights of minorities and the need for more inclusive and representative education, this legislation emerges as a response to the historical and social inequalities that have marginalized these populations in the education system. With its enactment, Brazil has moved towards an education that seeks to value diversity and promote mutual respect between different cultural groups (Dantas, 2020).

The history of marginalization and invisibility of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures in Brazilian schools has deep roots in coloniality and the construction of the national state. For too long, school curricula focused predominantly on European history and culture, neglecting the contributions and cultural richness of Afro-descendant and indigenous peoples. This gap in official education perpetuated stereotypes and prejudices, contributing to exclusion and social inequality (Nascimento; Hydrangea; Peixoto, 2023).

Law 11.645/2008 emerges as a response to this situation, seeking to correct this omission and ensure that the contributions of these groups are recognized and respected. Law 11.645/2008 establishes the mandatory inclusion of content related to Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture in the curricula of basic and higher education. It complements Law 10.639/2003, which had already instituted the mandatory teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture, expanding the scope to also include the History and Culture of Indigenous Peoples. With this expansion, the legislation seeks to promote a more equitable education, allowing students to become familiar with the country's cultural diversity from an early age and understand the importance of each group in the formation of Brazilian society (Ginane, 2023).

The effective implementation of Law 11.645/2008 faces several challenges. Teacher training and the adequacy of teaching materials are crucial aspects to ensure that content is conveyed in an accurate and respectful manner. Resistance to changes in the curriculum, lack of adequate resources, and the absence of specific training for educators can limit the effectiveness of the law. Therefore, it is essential that there be investments in continuous training for education professionals, development of appropriate pedagogical materials and institutional support for the integration of these contents into school programs (Marques; Calderani, 2016).

In addition to seeking better representation and inclusion, Law 11.645/2008 also has significant implications for the promotion of citizenship and respect for diversity. By including Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture in school curricula, the law contributes to the construction of a richer and more plural national identity. It allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the social and historical complexity of Brazil, promoting a culture of respect and



appreciation of differences, essential for peaceful and democratic coexistence in a multicultural society (Coelho; Soares, 2016).

Thus, the objective of this research was to analyze teachers' perceptions about Law 11.645/2008. It is expected that this research will provide theoretical and practical subsidies for the effective implementation of this legislation, contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and representative curriculum. In addition, it seeks to identify challenges and opportunities for the training of educators, the elaboration of pedagogical materials and the adaptation of educational practices that respect and value Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures. It is believed that the results will be able to guide public policies, educational practices and initiatives that promote equity and diversity in the school environment, strengthening cultural identity and respect for plurality within the educational system.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research was conducted with an exploratory approach, which aims to provide a preliminary understanding about a little-known or little-studied phenomenon. This type of research is ideal for exploring new areas of study and generating hypotheses that can be investigated more deeply in future research. The justification for choosing an exploratory research in this case is that the theme of the implementation of Law 11.645/2008 in Brazilian schools has not yet been widely investigated, especially in the specific context of the reality of teachers. Thus, the research sought to identify initial aspects and relevant questions about the application of the law and its effectiveness in pedagogical practice, serving as a basis for more detailed and structured studies. The qualitative approach was adopted to provide a detailed and rich analysis of the teachers' experience with Law 11.645/2008.

The qualitative approach is characterized by its focus on understanding complex phenomena from the perspective of the participants, exploring their experiences, feelings, and interpretations. In this context, the choice for the qualitative approach allowed an in-depth analysis of the perceptions and challenges faced by teachers, revealing nuances and specific contexts that would not be captured by quantitative methods. The objective was to understand in detail how the law impacts pedagogical practice and what are the challenges faced in its implementation.

The research sample was composed of fifteen teachers from a Brazilian school, selected by convenience. The selection by convenience was chosen due to the practicality and easy access to the participants. Teachers were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the research, which allowed for more efficient data collection adapted to the circumstances of the research. This selection method is common in exploratory studies and allows obtaining information



in a practical and accessible way, although it does not offer the same generalization as other more rigorous sampling techniques.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, a qualitative technique that allows obtaining detailed information about the participants' experiences and perceptions. To start the process, an initial contact was made with the school manager to explain the objective of the research and obtain the necessary authorization. Then, the interviews were scheduled directly with the teachers. During the interviews, tape recorders were used to ensure accuracy in the transcription of the testimonies. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and consented to be recorded, ensuring transparency and ethics in the data collection process.

In the data analysis, the technique of discourse analysis was used. This technique allows you to examine how participants construct meanings and interpret their experiences through language. Discourse analysis was chosen because it enables a deeper understanding of teachers' narratives, highlighting how they perceive and discuss the implementation of Law 11.645/2008. The technique allows you to identify specific patterns, themes, and contexts in participants' responses, providing valuable insights into the challenges and perceptions surrounding the law and its application in the school environment.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

The results of the research revealed several perspectives on the implementation of Law 11.645/2008 in schools, highlighting both the advances and the challenges faced by teachers. Data analysis was performed using the discourse analysis technique, allowing a detailed understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions.

Teachers expressed divergent opinions about the inclusion of content related to Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture in the curriculum. According to teacher E3, "the introduction of these topics has been positive, as it broadens the students' horizons and helps them understand the true cultural diversity of Brazil". This perception suggests that the implementation of the law is contributing to a more inclusive and representative education. However, Professor E9 commented, "While the intent of the law is excellent, the available materials are still insufficient and often outdated." This observation points to the need for adequate and up-to-date pedagogical resources to support the effective implementation of the contents.

One of the main challenges identified was the lack of specific training for teachers. Teacher E5 reported, "We received little training on how to approach these topics in a sensitive and informed manner. Often, we feel unprepared to teach about Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures." This report highlights the importance of continuing education programs that empower teachers to address



these issues effectively and respectfully. Lack of adequate preparation can limit educators' ability to convey content in a meaningful and engaging way to students.

The analysis also revealed that the scarcity of appropriate teaching materials is a significant challenge. Professor E7 noted, "The books and resources we have are scarce and do not reflect the richness of indigenous and Afro-Brazilian culture as they should." This comment reinforces the urgent need to develop and make available pedagogical materials that accurately and richly represent Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures. The lack of adequate resources can hinder the effective integration of content into the school curriculum and limit the effectiveness of the law.

Resistance to change was another aspect addressed by the participants. According to teacher E2, "Some colleagues still show resistance to including these contents, often due to lack of familiarity or the perception that these topics are not relevant to education". This report indicates that, despite the advances, there is still a need to promote greater awareness and support among educators about the importance of the law and the benefits of a more inclusive education. Resistance can be an obstacle to the effective and comprehensive implementation of the content required by the legislation.

Despite the challenges, teachers recognized the positive impact of the law on pedagogical practice. Teacher E4 mentioned, "Seeing the reaction of students when they learn about Brazil's cultural diversity is gratifying. They begin to show more respect and interest in cultures different from their own." This feedback suggests that the law is fulfilling its role in promoting a greater appreciation of diversity and contributing to the formation of a more inclusive and respectful citizenship.

The results show that Law 11.645/2008 is bringing significant benefits by promoting a more inclusive and representative education of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures. However, implementation faces substantial challenges, including the need for more training for teachers, a shortage of adequate teaching materials, and resistance to changes in the curriculum. To overcome these obstacles, it is crucial to invest in quality pedagogical resources, train educators, and foster a school environment that values and supports cultural diversity. The analysis of teachers' discourses indicates that, despite the difficulties, there is significant potential for the law to promote an education that reflects the true cultural diversity of Brazil and contributes to the formation of a more inclusive and respectful society.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Law 11.645/2008 represents a crucial advance for the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture in Brazil's school curricula, offering a response to the historical gaps of marginalization and invisibility of these cultures. The results of the research show that, although



the legislation has generated significant advances, its implementation faces challenges that need to be addressed to ensure an effective integration of these contents in the school environment.

First, the survey reveals that the inclusion of content related to Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures has been well received by many teachers, contributing to a more inclusive and diverse education. The positive perception of the teachers about the broadening of the students' cultural horizons, as evidenced in the interviews, indicates that the law is fulfilling its function of promoting the appreciation of diversity and mutual respect. However, it is evident that the lack of appropriate didactic resources and the insufficiency in the continuous training of teachers are significant barriers that must be overcome.

The scarcity of adequate and up-to-date teaching materials limits the effectiveness of the law's implementation. As highlighted by the teachers interviewed, the available resources often do not adequately reflect the richness and complexity of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures. To address this challenge, it is essential that there is a coordinated effort for the development and distribution of quality teaching materials that address these cultures in an accurate and engaging way.

In addition, the lack of specific training for educators has been a considerable obstacle. The survey showed that many teachers feel unprepared to deal with the topics addressed by Law 11.645/2008 in a sensitive and informed way. Investing in continuous training programs for teachers is crucial to ensure that they feel safe and competent to teach about cultural diversity with accuracy and respect.

Resistance to change, observed in some reports, suggests that there is still a need to promote greater awareness and support among educators and the school community. The promotion of a school environment that values and supports cultural diversity must be accompanied by strategies to overcome prejudices and expand the understanding of the importance of these contents in the curriculum.

In summary, Law 11.645/2008 has the potential to transform Brazilian education, making it more inclusive and representative of the various cultures that make up society. However, for this transformation to be complete and lasting, it is necessary to address the challenges identified, such as the lack of adequate teaching materials and insufficient teacher training. With appropriate investments and continuous commitment, it is possible to overcome these barriers and ensure that the law fulfills its fundamental role in building a richer and more plural national identity, promoting a more inclusive and respectful society.



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