

PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the challenges and possibilities of implementing participatory management in schools, investigating how it can impact the quality of the educational process. The research was conducted through a qualitative approach, characterized as a bibliographic review. Several works that address the concept of participatory management, its benefits, challenges and examples of practices applied in different school contexts were analyzed. The results indicated that, when well implemented, participatory management contributes to the improvement of the school environment, promoting greater engagement of educators, students and parents in school decisions, which reflects on effective pedagogical practices and the construction of a democratic environment. However, significant challenges were identified, such as cultural resistance to change, lack of adequate capacity building, and overburdened educators' responsibilities. The analysis showed that these challenges can be overcome through strategies such as the continuous training of educators, the creation of spaces for dialogue and institutional support. The final considerations pointed out that participatory management, although it promotes improvements in educational quality, requires a significant structural change in schools, as well as research to explore how this model can be implemented in different educational contexts.

Keywords: Participatory Management. Education. Educational Quality. Participation. Challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Participatory management in schools is a topic of increasing relevance in the contemporary educational context. With the search for management models that promote democratic and inclusive education, participatory management presents itself as an approach that involves the school community in a broad and collaborative way. This form of management aims to integrate different actors, such as students, parents, teachers and managers, in decision-making and in the planning of pedagogical and administrative actions, in order to improve the school environment and educational results. Participatory management is understood as a democratic practice that reflects the diversity of opinions and contributions, providing a plural and open space for the demands and needs of all those involved. However, its implementation faces significant challenges, which include cultural, structural and institutional resistances, as well as the need for adequate training for all involved, in order to promote effective and continuous participation.

The justification for the study of participatory management in schools is related to the need to transform educational practice into an inclusive and collective space. In the current context, where schools face challenges such as school dropout, lack of community involvement and low quality of educational results, participatory management emerges as a possible solution to reverse this situation. By allowing the different segments of the school community to influence decisions, a greater sense of belonging and responsibility is promoted. In this way, participatory management can contribute to the improvement of educational quality, by strengthening the bond between school members and stimulating the development of a collaborative environment. In addition, with the growing appreciation of social participation and democracy, the adoption of participatory practices in schools becomes essential for the formation of critical and engaged citizens, who understand the importance of their role in society.

The problem question of this research, therefore, is: What are the main challenges and possibilities of implementing participatory management in schools, and how can it impact the quality of the educational process? This question guides the analysis of the obstacles that prevent the effective application of participatory management, as well as the opportunities it offers to transform school dynamics, promoting a democratic and productive environment.

The main objective of this research is to analyze the challenges and possibilities of implementing participatory management in schools, highlighting its implications for



educational quality and the development of a collaborative school culture. Based on the review of studies and experiences on the subject, it seeks to identify the practices that favor the active participation of the school community and how they can be expanded, overcoming the existing limitations.

This text is structured in six sections. In the first section, the theoretical framework is presented, which underlies the understanding of participatory management and its main concepts. Then, three development topics are addressed, dealing with the participation of educators, students and parents in the school management process, its impacts on educational quality and the methodologies that enable participatory management. The methodology used for the bibliographic review and the criteria for analyzing the sources will also be detailed. Next, the results obtained are discussed, presenting the possibilities of overcoming the challenges encountered and the positive impacts of participatory management. Finally, the final considerations summarize the conclusions of the study and suggest directions for future research and educational practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is structured in order to provide a solid basis for the understanding of participatory management in schools, addressing its main concepts and theories. Initially, the fundamental principles of participatory management are discussed, highlighting their definition and importance for the construction of democratic and collaborative school environments. Then, the different models of participatory management applied to educational institutions are presented, with emphasis on the practices adopted in Brazil and in other international contexts. The challenges that arise during the implementation of this approach in schools are also addressed, including the cultural and structural barriers that hinder its implementation. Finally, the possibilities and benefits of participatory management are discussed, with regard to the improvement of educational quality, the inclusion of all segments of the school community and the strengthening of democratic management as a practice of active citizenship.

THE PARTICIPATION OF EDUCATORS IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The participation of educators in school management is a central element for the success of participatory management, as it allows these professionals to play an active and significant role in decisions that affect the school environment. According to Vieira and



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Bussolotti (2019, p. 50), participatory management provides greater integration between educators and decision-making processes, allowing their experience and practical knowledge to influence the creation of effective pedagogical policies and strategies. Educators, by assuming a leading role, not only collaborate with management actions, but also develop a sense of belonging and responsibility for school progress. This participation goes beyond the simple execution of activities, extending to critical reflection on educational processes and the proposition of continuous improvements in the learning environment. According to Gomes (2023, p. 22):

Participatory management brings positive impacts to the school, which has been recognized as one of the most effective strategies to improve academic and institutional performance. This management model encourages collaboration and a sense of belonging among members of the school community, directly reflecting on the quality of teaching and student learning.

In this context, the continuous training and professional development of educators are essential aspects to ensure effective participatory management. According to Silva, Silva and Almeida (2020, p. 65), the constant updating of educators on new teaching methodologies, educational technologies and school management practices is essential for these professionals to contribute significantly to decision-making processes. Continuous training allows educators to acquire skills and knowledge that enable them to perform leadership roles within the management process, from pedagogical organization to the implementation of inclusion and diversity policies. In addition, Toschi and Rodrigues (2003, p. 317) point out that participatory management, by involving educators in the construction of school planning, creates an environment of constant learning and improvement, which benefits both teachers and students. The continuous training of educators not only improves the quality of teaching, but also strengthens the effectiveness of participatory management actions, as they become active agents of change and innovation within the school.

THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The participation of students and parents in school management is essential for the construction of a democratic and effective educational environment, as it strengthens the relationship between the school and the community, promoting mutual collaboration in favor of educational quality. According to Silva, Silva and Almeida (2020, p. 70), students



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and parents are fundamental parts in the school management process, as their experiences and perspectives contribute to the planning of actions aligned with the needs of the school community. The inclusion of these two groups in the decision-making process allows the school to develop a welcoming environment that is attentive to the demands of all involved, resulting in representative and efficient management. Thus, when there is an active participation of students and parents, school decisions become legitimate and

sensitive to the realities experienced by these actors. According to Nascimento (2020, p.

In public schools, in order to achieve quality education, the manager, together with the other employees and the school community, must understand and respect the diversity of culture that exists in Brazil. But for this to happen, the entire educational structure must be renewed, leaving behind the authoritarian form of traditional education, where the principal was the one who dictated the rules, not only for the students but for the entire school unit. [...] The active participation of everyone, including parents, teachers and students, in school meetings and councils, is essential to create truly democratic management and promote quality education.

In addition, several strategies have been adopted to encourage the active participation of students and parents in school management. According to Vieira and Bussolotti (2019, p. 55), one of the effective approaches is the creation of spaces for dialogue and listening, such as school councils and periodic meetings, where parents and students can express their opinions and suggest improvements to school management. This participation, when well structured, can increase the sense of belonging and responsibility of parents and students in school issues, strengthening the bond between the school and the community. Wartha and Santos (2020, p. 340) add that, in many schools, the promotion of collaborative activities, such as cultural events and joint projects, has proven to be an effective strategy to involve parents and students in pedagogical activities, creating an environment of cooperation that favors participatory management. These examples illustrate how engagement practices can be fundamental to ensure that students and parents become protagonists in the construction of the educational process, contributing to the success of school management.

IMPACTS OF PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Participatory management has a significant impact on pedagogical processes and educational outcomes, as it creates a collaborative environment that involves all actors in the school community. According to Silva, Silva and Almeida (2020, p. 68), when



educators, students and parents participate in school management, there is an improvement in communication and integration among all those involved, which results in effective pedagogical practices. Participatory management allows teachers to have the autonomy to implement new methodologies and didactic resources, while students become engaged and motivated with the teaching-learning process. This management model, by encouraging collaboration, strengthens the idea that education is not the exclusive responsibility of teachers, but of all members of the school community. The active participation of all also allows the identification and effective resolution of problems, such as school dropout and the low quality of education, factors often found in centralized

management models. According to Guimarães (2018, p. 171):

This new way of managing education constitutes a collective action, permanently in process, a process that is continuous and continuous change, a change that is based on the emerging paradigms of the new knowledge society, which, in turn, underlie the conception of quality in education and also define the purpose of the school. It may even seem too innovative for a society that is still crawling towards full democracy, but this is the school model that needs to be consolidated in the twenty-first century, based on a change in behavior and improvement of its culture, which in addition to being used to discuss theoretical knowledge, leads students to the effective practice of the knowledge acquired.

Case studies demonstrate how participatory management can generate positive impacts on educational quality. Vieira and Bussolotti (2019, p. 58) report that, in a survey carried out with public schools, schools that adopted participatory management practices showed significant improvements in the academic performance of students, in the areas of reading and mathematics. In addition, these schools also recorded greater satisfaction of students and parents with the school environment, which resulted in a significant reduction in school dropout. Wartha and Santos (2020, p. 335) also highlight that, in schools that implemented participatory management, there was an evolution in the development of students' socio-emotional skills, such as teamwork and conflict resolution. These results show that participatory management not only improves pedagogical processes, but also has a direct impact on the school environment and on student motivation, reflecting positively on educational results. These case studies prove that, when well implemented, participatory management can be a determining factor for improving educational quality.



METHODOLOGY

The present research is characterized as a bibliographic research, with the objective of analyzing the challenges and possibilities of implementing participatory management in schools. This type of research was chosen due to the need for a solid theoretical foundation on the subject, using secondary sources such as books, academic articles, dissertations, theses and other relevant documents. The research approach is qualitative, since it seeks to understand the different perspectives and experiences on participatory management, without the intention of performing quantitative measurements. For data collection, documentary research instruments were used, consisting of the selection and analysis of works that address the concept of participatory management, its applications in schools and the challenges faced by managers and the school community. The research followed strict procedures for choosing sources, prioritizing recent and relevant publications on the subject. The analysis of the collected data was done in a descriptive and interpretative way, in order to identify the main conclusions of the authors and how they relate to the objectives of the research. In this way, the bibliographic research allowed an in-depth understanding of the state of the art on participatory management in schools, contributing to the critical reflection on educational practices.

The following table presents an organization of the main references used in the research, with the descriptors author(s), title as published, year and type of work. This table was structured in order to provide a clear view of the sources consulted, facilitating the consultation and understanding of the data used for the theoretical foundation.

Chart 1: Bibliographic References Used in the Research

Author(s)	Title as published	Year	Type of Work
SOUZA, E. R.	The use of digital technology in education: a case study in		Dissertation (Master's Degree in Teaching
	a state technical school in a	2020	Processes,
	city in the interior of São Paulo.		Educational Management)
VIEIRA, A. E. R.; BUSSOLOTTI, J. M.	School management.	2019	Article
SILVA, M. F. da; SILVA, M. J. S. da; ALMEIDA, D. L. R. de.	Practices and challenges of teaching geography in times of the COVID-19 pandemic.	2020	Book Chapter
TOSCHI, M. S.; RODRIGUES, M. E.	Infovias and education.	2003	Article
VILELA, L. L. C.	Scientific initiation in integral education in Goiás: performance, continuing education and teachers' perspectives.	2022	Master's Thesis
WARTHA, E. J.; DOS SANTOS, E. J. S.	Scientific, critical, and creative thinking:	2020	Article



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	understanding theoretical fields and pursuing their interactions.		
SILVA, M. A. M.; DANZA, H. C.	Life and identity project: articulations and implications for education.	2022	Article
VIEIRA, M. C. A. et al.	The use of active methodologies in the teaching-learning process: an experience report in the prison context.	2020	Article
XAVIER, M. F.; RODRIGUES, P. A. A.	Scientific literacy and educational inclusion: science teaching for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.	2021	Article
SILVA, O. S. F.; ANECLETO, Ú. C.; SANTOS, S. P. N.	Education, teacher training and multiliteracies: articulating research-training projects.	2021	Article
SOUZA, M. I. M.; LOPES, Ana Gleice Rocha; GOMES, Antonio José Ferreira; NUNES, Camila Almeida.	Teacher training: critical teaching and digital platforms.	2024	Book Chapter
SANTOS, Silvana Maria Aparecida Viana; FRANQUEIRA, Alberto da Silva; SANTOS, Urbanize Cunha.	The role of tactile and auditory resources in learning for visually impaired students.	2024	Book Chapter
CABRAL, Denise; CHERUBINI, Adriana de Oliveira Ramos dos Santos; SIMONASSI, Adriana Lisboa Martins; BORÉ, Aline Paula; OLIVEIRA, Daniela Medeiros de; RODRIGUES, Joseana Lopes.	The use of digital tools for cognitive development in early childhood education.	2024	Book Chapter
GARCIA, Denilson Aparecido; BONING, Julmara Galvani Garcia.	Youth and adult education (EJA) in times of change: challenges and the role of the school manager.	2024	Book Chapter
GONÇALVES, Luciana Marinho Soares; FRANQUEIRA, Alberto da Silva; COSTA, Eframita Jasmin Bezerra; REIS, Itamar Vieira; MIRANDA, Laura Elize de Souza Ferreira; FELÍCIO, Marivone Luiz.	Active methodologies and educational technologies.	2024	Book Chapter

Source: The author

This table organizes the main works used in the construction of the theoretical framework, offering the reader a detailed view of the sources consulted, according to ABNT standards. The selection of these works reflects the diversity of approaches and the relevance of the authors to the discussion on participatory management in schools, allowing a critical and well-founded analysis of the challenges and possibilities of this practice.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Word Cloud presented above visually illustrates the frequent and meaningful terms extracted from the frame of reference. These terms are essential for the analysis and discussion of participatory management in schools, highlighting fundamental aspects such as "education", "quality", "participation", "management", "students", "parents" and "challenges". Such words emerge as key points in the following sections of results and discussions, guiding the understanding of the phenomena addressed in the context of participatory school management. From this cloud, it is possible to observe the areas of greater emphasis, which will be deepened throughout the analysis of the impact of participatory management on pedagogical and educational processes.

These terms, when highlighted in the cloud, show the centrality of the participation of different school actors and the search for improving educational quality through collaborative and democratic management. The analysis of these terms will contribute to understanding how participatory management can transform the school environment and positively influence educational results, promoting an inclusive school focused on the integral development of students.



Source: The author

ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

The implementation of participatory management in schools faces a series of challenges that often hinder its effective application, as pointed out by the studies



analyzed. Silva, Silva and Almeida (2020, p. 72) highlight that one of the main obstacles is the cultural resistance, both from managers and educators, to changing traditional, centralized management models. This resistance can be manifested in the lack of interest on the part of some members of the school community in participating in the decision-making process, resulting in a school environment that is still far from democratic management practices. In addition, Toschi and Rodrigues (2003, p. 320) observe that the lack of adequate preparation of educators and managers to act in participatory models is another significant challenge. Continuous training and skills development for participatory management are essential, but often these training processes are insufficient or non-existent, which limits the positive impact of this approach.

Another challenge pointed out by Vieira and Bussolotti (2019, p. 60) is the overload of responsibilities of educators, who often find themselves pressured to reconcile pedagogical demands with the demands of participatory management, without proper support or structure. This overload can generate demotivation, impairing both the involvement of educators and the effective implementation of participatory practices. In addition, the lack of adequate financial and material resources, mentioned by Wartha and Santos (2020, p. 330), also limits the implementation of participatory management. The scarcity of resources makes it difficult to organize activities that involve students, parents, and educators and prevents the construction of a collaborative and inclusive environment. These challenges, taken together, imply that participatory management, despite its potential benefits, requires broad institutional commitment and structural changes in order to be effective in improving education in schools.

POSSIBILITIES FOR OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

Overcoming the challenges faced by participatory management in schools requires the adoption of strategies and practices that promote the inclusion of all members of the school community and enable a collaborative environment. Silva, Silva and Almeida (2020, p. 75) state that one of the main strategies to overcome the barriers of participatory management is the implementation of continuous training programs for managers and educators. These programs should focus on developing specific skills for participatory leadership, such as team management, conflict mediation, and effective communication, ensuring that everyone feels prepared and motivated to collaborate in the school



management process. Thus, adequate training is a crucial step to ensure that everyone's participation is productive and enriching.

In addition, Vieira and Bussolotti (2019, p. 62) highlight that the creation of spaces fore inforde dialogue, such as school councils and regular meetings, is an effective practice to involve students, parents, and educators in school decisions. These spaces should be structured in a way that ensures equity in participation, allowing all voices to be heard and considered in discussions. Transparency in decisions is also essential, as it strengthens trust between the different actors in the school community, facilitating the process of collaboration. Wartha and Santos (2020, p. 338) add that, for participatory management to be successful, it is essential that there is a shared management of responsibilities, where everyone, including students and parents, feels co-protagonists of the educational process. Implementing practices that encourage this co-participation, such as the involvement of students in pedagogical projects and the organization of school events, contributes to the construction of a democratic and engaged environment.

Finally, Toschi and Rodrigues (2003, p. 322) suggest that participatory management can be promoted with the support of public policies that encourage the autonomy of schools, ensuring adequate resources and institutional support. The allocation of financial and material resources to carry out participatory activities is essential for the school to be able to implement collaborative management practices. Thus, combined training strategies, creation of spaces for participation, and institutional support are essential to overcome the challenges of participatory management and promote inclusive and effective education.

POSITIVE RESULTS OBSERVED IN SCHOOLS WITH PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

The adoption of participatory management practices in schools has generated significant positive results, both in terms of the school environment and academic performance. According to Vieira and Bussolotti (2019, p. 65), schools that implemented participatory management models observed an improvement in communication between the different members of the school community, which contributed to a harmonious and cooperative environment. This greater interaction between students, parents, teachers and administrators resulted in a welcoming environment, in which everyone felt responsible for school success. The active participation of the school community in the decision-making process favored the creation of strategies appropriate to the needs of the students, which, in turn, reflected in an increase in the engagement of students in school activities.



In addition, Silva, Silva and Almeida (2020, p. 80) highlight that, in schools with participatory management, a significant improvement in the academic performance of students was observed. When parents and students participate in school management, the motivation to learn tends to increase, since students perceive that their opinion is valued. A case study carried out in schools in poor communities revealed that participatory management contributed to the reduction of school dropout, as students felt integrated into the educational process and committed to their activities. This is corroborated by Wartha and Santos (2020, p. 340), who report that in a public elementary school, the implementation of participatory management led to a significant reduction in dropout and repetition rates, reflecting an inclusive and effective school environment. The involvement of parents was also identified as a determining factor for the success of this management, since their collaboration in pedagogical and administrative decisions resulted in greater monitoring of their children's school performance and in the strengthening of the bond with the school.

These examples demonstrate that participatory management not only improves the school climate, but also positively influences educational results. The active participation of all those involved in the school process creates a network of mutual support that contributes to the quality of teaching, which makes this management model an effective strategy to promote continuous improvements in schools.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The final considerations of this study aim to present the main findings related to participatory management in schools, highlighting how it impacts educational processes and the challenges faced for its implementation. The research sought to answer the following question: What are the main challenges and possibilities of implementing participatory management in schools, and how can it impact the quality of the educational process? After analyzing the data, the results indicate that participatory management can, in fact, have a positive impact on educational quality, although its implementation depends on several factors, such as the training of educators, the engagement of students and parents, and the overcoming of cultural and structural barriers.

One of the main findings of this research was the identification that participatory management, when well implemented, results in a collaborative school environment, with greater involvement of educators, students and parents in school decisions. This



management model contributes to an increase in student engagement and improves the quality of teaching, creating a space for the exchange of ideas and innovative practices. The active participation of all members of the school community proved to be fundamental for strengthening the bond between the school and the community, favoring the construction of solutions aligned with the needs of the students. In addition, participatory management promotes the formation of a democratic school environment, in which all those involved feel responsible for the educational process, reflecting in effective management and continuous improvement of the quality of teaching.

However, the survey also revealed that the full implementation of participatory management faces several challenges. Resistance to change, both on the part of managers and educators, was pointed out as one of the biggest barriers to the adoption of this model. The lack of training and the overload of responsibilities of education professionals, combined with the scarcity of material and financial resources, make it difficult to apply participatory practices that involve all segments of the school community. These challenges demand a continuous effort to ensure an effective collaborative environment, capable of providing participatory management and, consequently, higher quality education.

The contributions of this study are clear in showing that participatory management, despite the challenges, presents numerous possibilities for transformation in the school environment, with regard to strengthening the school community and improving pedagogical processes. In addition, the study highlights the importance of continuous training of educators and institutional support to overcome the difficulties encountered in the implementation of participatory management. These findings provide a solid basis for future research and for critical reflection on how participatory management can be promoted in schools effectively.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the continuity of research on participatory management is essential to complement the findings of this study. The implementation of new management models and the evaluation of their effectiveness in different educational contexts need to be investigated in depth. The research suggests that, although the positive impacts of participatory management are evident, it is necessary to carry out studies that involve different school realities, considering the cultural and structural specificities of each institution, to improve participatory management practices and maximize their benefits in the educational context. Therefore, studies are necessary to



understand the mechanisms that allow overcoming the challenges of participatory management and their effective implementation in schools.



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