# INNOVATIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: MODELS OF SUCCESS

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated how democratic and innovative school management practices could be effectively implemented in public schools to improve the quality of education and promote inclusion. The general objective was to analyze the management strategies that favor these aspects. The methodology of bibliographic review was used, analyzing articles, books and dissertations relevant to the theme. The results showed that democratic management, characterized by the active participation of the entire school community, promotes a collaborative environment. The integration of technologies was identified as an innovative practice to transform education, facilitating communication and school organization. However, the need for continuous training for managers and teachers and careful planning for the effective integration of technologies was highlighted. Inclusive practices, essential to ensure equity, involve creating a culture of welcome and respect, as well as adapting school activities to meet the needs of all students. In the final considerations, it was concluded that democratic and innovative school management can contribute to the improvement of the quality of teaching and the promotion of inclusion, as long as it is implemented in a continuous and collaborative manner. The need for additional studies was pointed out to explore the application of these practices in different contexts and assess the long-term impacts.

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## INTRODUCTION

Democratic and innovative school management has gained increasing attention in the educational field, reflecting the need for new approaches that promote the active participation of all those involved in the educational process and the inclusion of technologies as facilitators of teaching. This theme is relevant in a context in which educational institutions seek not only to transmit knowledge, but also to form critical and participatory citizens.

The choice of the theme is justified by the importance of understanding how school management practices can contribute to improving the quality of teaching and to the construction of an equitable education. Democratic school management involves the participation of teachers, students, parents, and the community in decision-making, which can lead to a collaborative educational environment. In addition, the introduction of innovative practices and the use of technologies in school management to transform school dynamics, making them adapted to contemporary demands.

The central problem of this research lies in understanding: how can democratic and innovative school management practices be effectively implemented in public schools, facing the challenges and taking advantage of opportunities to improve the quality of education and promote inclusion? It is interested in analyzing how these practices impact the school daily life and what are the main obstacles and facilitators for their adoption.

The objective of this study is, therefore, to investigate the democratic and innovative school management strategies that can be adopted to improve the quality of teaching and promote inclusion in public schools. It seeks to understand how these strategies are perceived and implemented by school managers and what are the results obtained with their application.

This text is structured in such a way as to offer an understanding of the theme. The introduction presents the theme, its justification, the problem to be investigated and the objective of the research. Then, the theoretical framework addresses the main theories and concepts related to democratic and innovative school management. The development is divided into three topics: innovation and quality of teaching, democratic and participatory management, and innovative and inclusive practices in school management. The methodology describes the approach used in the literature review and the criteria for selecting the references. In the discussion and results section, the impacts of innovative and democratic management practices in the school context are presented and analyzed.

The final considerations summarize the main points discussed and offer reflections on future challenges and suggestions for future research.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is structured in order to provide a basis for understanding democratic and innovative school management. The fundamental definitions and concepts are addressed, followed by the discussion on the importance of school management in the quality of teaching and in the promotion of educational inclusion. Then, the main theoretical perspectives on democratic and participatory management are presented, highlighting the challenges and potentialities of these practices. Finally, the theoretical framework examines innovative strategies in school management, focusing on the integration of technologies and inclusive practices, providing an analysis of the theme and establishing the connection between theory and effective practices in the school context.

## INNOVATION AND QUALITY OF TEACHING

Innovation in contemporary school management is a topic of great relevance for improving the quality of education. Amorim (2015, p. 403) discusses the paths that school management can follow to adapt to current demands, emphasizing that "contemporary school management must be attentive to social and technological changes, promoting an educational environment that favors meaningful learning". This argument highlights the importance of management that not only manages, but also inspires and motivates the school community to participate in the educational process.

Complementing this perspective, Moran (2003, p. 157) addresses the use of technologies in educational management, emphasizing that "technologies can transform the way the school operates, providing tools that facilitate communication, organization and access to information". Technological integration, according to the author, is not limited to the use of equipment, but involves a cultural change in the school, where managers and teachers become active agents in the incorporation of these tools in the school day-to-day.

To illustrate the practical application of these ideas, Prata *et al.* (2010, p. 15) describe the integration of technologies in school management, pointing out that "the insertion of technologies in school management must be planned and continuous, always seeking to align technological tools with pedagogical and administrative needs". They argue

that technology, when well implemented, can result in significant improvements in administrative efficiency and the quality of education offered.

In addition, Moran (2003, p. 160) emphasizes that "innovative educational management must be people-centered, using technology as a means to achieve educational objectives". This humanistic approach to the application of technology is essential to ensure that innovations contribute to the quality of teaching, rather than becoming mere technical props.

Santana and Munhoz (2022, p. 16) reinforce this idea by stating that "the quality of teaching is linked to the ability of school management to innovate and to integrate all actors in the educational process in a joint effort". This comment underlines the need for participatory and inclusive management, where innovation is seen as a collaborative process that involves the entire school community.

Therefore, innovation and the quality of teaching in contemporary school management depend on the ability of managers to integrate technologies effectively, promote an environment of collaboration and always be aware of the changes and demands of the educational context. As Moran (2003, p. 164) concludes, "the transformation in school management begins with the willingness to learn and adapt to new realities", reinforcing the importance of an open and proactive mindset to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

## DEMOCRATIC AND PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

Democratic and participatory management in schools is essential to promote an inclusive and collaborative educational environment. Melo Matos *et al.* (2021, p. 56) highlight that "democratic and participatory management involves the collective construction of decisions, where all members of the school community have an active voice". This approach allows different perspectives to be considered, resulting in effective decisions.

According to Lück (2017, p. 45), participatory management in the school "is a process that requires not only openness to participation, but also the creation of conditions that favor collaboration among all those involved". The author stresses that effective participation depends on a school environment that values and encourages the involvement of teachers, students, parents and other community members. He argues that "participation should be seen as a right and a responsibility of all" (Lück, 2017, p. 47), which reinforces the importance of an organizational culture that supports these practices.

Luz (2018, p. 33) complements by stating that "school management from the perspective of inclusive education must ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities". Inclusion, according to the author, is an essential component of democratic management, as it promotes equity and respect for the diversities present in the school environment. She emphasizes that "inclusive management goes beyond the simple insertion of students with special needs; it must promote a culture of welcome and respect" (Luz, 2018, p.33).

Melo Matos *et al.* (2021, p. 60) illustrates well the challenges and perspectives of this approach:

> Democratic and participatory management faces significant challenges, such as resistance to change and the need for continuous training of managers. However, the prospects are promising, as this form of management can lead to an inclusive school environment, where everyone feels part of the educational process.

This means that there is duality between the challenges and potential benefits of democratic management. Furthermore, for Lück (2017, p. 50), "the practice of participatory management is not restricted to the application of techniques and methods; it requires a genuine commitment to democracy and to the inclusion of all members of the school community." The author suggests that true participation is only achieved when there is a collective commitment to continuous improvement and the development of a culture of dialogue and mutual respect.

Thus, democratic and participatory management emerges as a model of school administration that values the contribution of all, promotes inclusion and seeks to improve the educational environment. The integration of these practices depends on the willingness of managers to adopt an open and collaborative posture, as highlighted by Lück (2017) and Luz (2018), creating an inclusive school.

## INNOVATIVE AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Incorporating innovative and inclusive practices into school management is essential to promoting an equitable educational environment. Maldonado (2015) discusses transformative praxis and school innovation, highlighting that "innovation in school should not be seen only as the introduction of new technologies, but as a change in the way of teaching and learning" (Maldonado, 2015, p. 30). This perspective emphasizes the

importance of transforming traditional pedagogical practices to better meet the needs of students.

Machado, Ribeiro and Oliveira Brito (2016, p. 51) introduce the idea of complex thinking in school management, arguing that "school management must be able to deal with the complexity of the educational environment, integrating different areas of knowledge and promoting an interdisciplinary approach". They suggest that the complexity of the school context requires flexible and adaptive management, capable of responding to changes and demands.

Narciso *et al.* (2024, p. 239) emphasize the importance of inclusive strategies and practices in school management, stating that "promoting equity in school management involves the implementation of practices that ensure the inclusion of all students, observing their social, physical or intellectual conditions". They argue that inclusion should be a central priority in school management, creating an environment where all students feel valued and supported. Maldonado (2015, p. 35) exemplifies well the challenges and benefits of innovative practices in school management:

> Transformative praxis in school requires a continuous commitment to innovation, not only through the adoption of new technologies, but also through the constant review of pedagogical and administrative practices. This implies a collective effort by all members of the school community to create an environment that promotes meaningful learning and the integral development of students.

Thus, the need for a joint effort to implement significant changes in school management is highlighted. In line with this idea, Machado, Ribeiro and Oliveira Brito (2016, p. 53) complement by stating that "school management based on complex thinking allows for a dynamic approach, which considers the various interactions and interdependencies present in the school environment". They argue that this approach facilitates effective problem-solving and decision-making, promoting inclusive management.

Finally, Narciso *et al.* (2024, p. 245) emphasize that "inclusive practices in school management must be implemented continuously and systematically, ensuring that all students have the same opportunities for learning and development". They argue that inclusion is not only a matter of social justice, but also an effective strategy to improve the quality of teaching and school performance.

Thus, innovative and inclusive practices in school management, as discussed by Maldonado (2015), Machado, Ribeiro and Oliveira Brito (2016) and Narciso *et al.* (2024), are essential to create an educational environment that values diversity and promotes the

integral development of all students. The implementation of these practices depends on an ongoing commitment to innovation and inclusion, as well as adaptive and collaborative school management.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses the methodology of bibliographic review to investigate the strategies of democratic and innovative school management. The approach adopted is qualitative, with the objective of understanding the practices and concepts related to the theme in question. The instruments used were scientific articles, books and dissertations relevant to the subject, accessed through academic databases and digital libraries.

The procedure began with the careful selection of references, favoring works published in the last 20 years and of recognized relevance in the field of school management. The analysis techniques included the critical reading and synthesis of the information obtained, seeking to identify patterns, divergences and significant contributions to the understanding of the theme. Digital resources, such as academic databases, electronic journals, and institutional repositories, were used for data collection.

The following table presents the references used in the literature review, organized according to the established descriptors: author(s), title as published, year and type of work.

Frame of Reference

| Author(s) | Conforming title published | Year | Type of work |
|---|---|---|---|
| Moran, J. M. | Innovative management of the school with technologies. Educational management and technology. | 2003 | Book |
| Pereira, S. M. C. | School Management as the focus of the Discourse of Quality in Education. | 2007 | Article |
| Prata, C. L. Et Al. | School management and technologies. | 2010 | Book |
| Amorim, A. | Innovation, quality of teaching and educational knowledge: paths of contemporary school management. | 2015 | Article |
| Maldonado, L. | School management - for a transformative praxis: an innovative public school Emef. Judge Amorim Lima. | 2015 | Master's Thesis |
| Machado, M. F. E.; Ribeiro, O. L. C.; Oliveira Brito, R. | School management and complex thinking: an innovative reference for success in education. | 2016 | Article |
| Lück, H. | Participatory management at school. | 2017 | Book |
| Luz, R. M. N. | School management from the perspective of inclusive education. | 2018 | Article |
| Melo Matos, A. H. *Et Al.* | Democratic and participatory school management: challenges and perspectives. | 2021 | Article |
| SANTANA *Et Al.* | Education & TDIC's: Democratization, digital inclusion and the full exercise of citizenship. | 2021 | Article |

| Santana; Munhoz | Paths to the New High School: tracing a formative itinerary on an adaptive platform. | 2022 | Article |
|---|---|---|---|
| NARCISO, Rodi *Et Al.* | Promoting equity in school management: inclusive strategies and practices. | 2024 | Article |

Source: authorship.

After the presentation of the table, the main contributions of each reference to the theme of democratic and innovative school management are discussed. This table provides an organized analysis of the sources used and facilitates the understanding of the methodological path adopted in the research. The literature review, based on the references presented, allows an analysis of school management practices, highlighting the challenges and possibilities of implementation in the current educational context.

## IMPACTS OF INNOVATION ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The integration of technologies in school management has generated significant benefits, but it also presents challenges that need to be addressed for innovation to result in effective improvements in the quality of teaching. According to Amorim (2015, p. 405), "the adoption of technologies in school management can enhance administrative efficiency and the teaching-learning process, providing an interactive environment". This comment highlights how technologies can be powerful tools to transform the school routine, making it adapted to the contemporary needs of students and teachers.

However, Santana *et al.* (2021) points out that the implementation of technologies in educational management requires adequate preparation of managers and teachers, in addition to careful planning to avoid superficiality in the use of these tools. This aspect emphasizes the need for continuous training and strategies so that technological innovation is not restricted to the use of equipment, but results in significant pedagogical changes.

According to Prata *et al.* (2010, p. 17), "the integration of technologies in school management must be accompanied by a change in organizational culture, where all members of the school community are involved in the innovation process". They suggest that the active participation of all is essential for technological innovation to be incorporated into the daily school routine and contribute to improving the quality of teaching.

Moran (2003, p. 162) deals with the challenges and benefits of integrating technologies in school management:

> For technology to transform education, it needs to be used in a critical and reflective way, integrated into the school's pedagogical project and adapted to the specific needs of students. This requires a joint effort by managers, teachers, and students

to create an educational environment where technology is a tool at the service of learning.

This excerpt highlights the importance of an integrated and collaborative approach to the use of educational technologies. In addition to the benefits, it is important to recognize the challenges associated with technological innovation in school management. Amorim (2015) points out that resistance to change is one of the main obstacles to the adoption of new technologies in school management. Overcoming this resistance requires awareness and continuous training of managers and teachers.

Prata *et al.* (2010, p. 19) add that "the sustainability of technological innovations depends on adequate technical support and continuous investments in infrastructure and professional training". They argue that without these elements, innovations can become unsustainable and lose their positive impact on education.

Therefore, the analysis of the impacts of innovation on the quality of teaching reveals that, although the integration of technologies in school management offers considerable benefits, it also requires careful planning, continuous training and a change in organizational culture. The practical experiences highlighted by Amorim (2015), Moran (2003) and Prata *et al.* (2010) demonstrate that technological innovation can transform education, as long as it is implemented in a strategic and collaborative way, with the active involvement of the entire school community.

## DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Democratic participation in school management plays an important role in creating a collaborative educational environment. Melo Matos *et al.* (2021, p. 56).) They state that "participatory management involves the collective construction of decisions, where all members of the school community have an active voice". This management model allows different perspectives to be considered, resulting in effective decisions.

Lück (2017, p. 45) complements by highlighting that "the practice of participatory management in school is a continuous process that requires the creation of favorable conditions for collaboration among all those involved". He stresses that effective participation depends on an environment that values and encourages the involvement of teachers, students, parents and other members of the school community. Participation is, therefore, seen as a right and a responsibility of all, which reinforces the importance of an organizational culture that supports these practices.

Luz (2018, p. 33) addresses school management from the perspective of inclusive education, emphasizing that "democratic management must ensure that all students and their conditions, so that they have equal access to educational opportunities". Inclusion is an essential component of democratic management, as it promotes equity and respect for the diversities present in the school environment. She reinforces that inclusive management goes beyond the simple insertion of students with special needs; it must promote a culture of acceptance and respect (Luz, 2018).

Melo Matos *et al.* (2021, p. 60) presents well the challenges and benefits of this approach:

> Democratic and participatory management faces significant challenges, such as resistance to change and the need for continuous training of managers. However, the prospects are promising, as this form of management can lead to an inclusive school environment, where everyone feels part of the educational process.

This excerpt highlights the duality between the challenges and potential benefits of democratic management. In addition, for Lück (2017, p. 50), "the practice of participatory management is not restricted to the application of techniques and methods; it requires a genuine commitment to democracy and to the inclusion of all members of the school community." The author suggests that true participation is only achieved when there is a collective commitment to continuous improvement and the development of a culture of dialogue and mutual respect.

When comparing schools with different approaches to democratic management, significant variations in the effects on the school community can be observed. Schools that adopt democratic management tend to present a participatory environment, where students and teachers feel valued. In contrast, schools with centralized management may face greater challenges in terms of school community engagement and motivation.

The comparison between these approaches reveals that democratic management can promote a healthy school environment. Luz (2018, p. 53) observes that "inclusive practices in school management must be implemented continuously and systematically, ensuring that all students have the same opportunities for learning and development". This suggests that school management that values the active participation of all members of the school community, including teachers, students, and parents, is better equipped to meet the diverse needs of its students. This implies that democratic management not only facilitates the creation of policies and practices that are fairer and more equitable, but also contributes

to building an educational environment where everyone feels valued and heard. By promoting inclusion and collective participation, democratic school management can more effectively identify and address the barriers that prevent the full participation and development of students, ensuring an educational process that is both collaborative and directed towards the well-being of the entire school community.

Thus, the effects of participatory management in the school community are positive, promoting an environment of collaboration and inclusion. The comparative analysis between different approaches to democratic management highlights the effectiveness of this model in creating inclusive schools, as discussed by Melo Matos *et al.* (2021), Lück (2017) and Luz (2018). The implementation of these practices depends on an ongoing commitment to the active participation and inclusion of all members of the school community.

## INCLUSION AND EQUITY IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Inclusion and equity in school management are central themes to promote an educational environment that respects and values diversity. This approach emphasizes the importance of creating a school environment that is welcoming and accessible for all students, including those with special needs.

Inclusive practices in school management involve the implementation of strategies that ensure the participation of all students in the educational process. Narciso *et al.* (2024, p. 239) highlight that "promoting equity in school management involves the implementation of practices that ensure the inclusion of all students". This thought underlines the need for policies and practices that not only integrate, but also value the diversity present in the school. Luz (2018) demonstrates well the challenges and benefits of inclusive practices:

> Inclusive management goes beyond the simple insertion of students with special needs; It must promote a culture of welcome and respect. This implies policies and practices that ensure the active participation of all students in school activities, respecting their particularities and providing the necessary adaptations so that everyone can learn and develop fully.

Narciso *et al.* (2024, p. 245) states that "inclusive practices in school management must be implemented continuously and systematically, ensuring that all students have the same opportunities for learning and development". They argue that inclusion is not only a matter of social justice, but also an effective strategy for improving the quality of teaching and school performance.

The evaluation of public policies aimed at inclusive management reveals that, although there are significant advances, there are still many challenges to be overcome. Melo Matos *et al.* (2021, p. 58) highlight that "public policies for educational inclusion must be accompanied by concrete and continuous actions so that they can transform the reality of schools". They suggest that the successful implementation of these policies depends on the commitment of school managers and adequate support from education authorities.

Lück (2017, p. 46) observes that "participatory management in the school is fundamental for the effective implementation of inclusive policies, as it involves all members of the school community in the construction of an equitable educational environment". This perspective underscores the importance of a collaborative approach, where managers, teachers, students, and parents work together to promote inclusion and equity.

Therefore, the discussion on inclusive practices and their results, as addressed by Luz (2018) and Narciso *et al.* (2024), shows that inclusion is a continuous process that requires effective public policies and school management committed to equity. The evaluation of public policies, as discussed by Melo Matos *et al.* (2021) and Lück (2017), highlights the need for concrete and collaborative actions to overcome challenges and ensure that all students have access to quality education. The implementation of these practices and policies depends on the collective commitment of the entire school community, promoting an inclusive educational environment for all.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to investigate the strategies of democratic and innovative school management, seeking to understand how these practices can be effectively implemented in public schools to improve the quality of education and promote inclusion. The main findings reveal that democratic management and the integration of technologies are essential to create a participatory school environment.

The analysis showed that democratic management, characterized by the active participation of all members of the school community, promotes a collaborative environment. This management model allows different perspectives to be considered, resulting in inclusive decisions that are representative of the needs of all involved. In addition, participatory management fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, which contributes to the improvement of the school climate and the satisfaction of students and teachers.

On the other hand, the integration of technologies in school management was identified as an innovative practice to transform education. Technologies can facilitate communication, organization and access to information, making administrative processes efficient and teaching dynamic. However, the survey highlighted the importance of continuous training for managers and teachers, as well as careful planning to ensure that technologies are used effectively and integrated into the school's pedagogical project.

Inclusive practices were another central point of this study. The survey showed that inclusive school management must go beyond the simple insertion of students with special needs, promoting a culture of welcome and respect. Inclusive practices also involve adapting school activities and ensuring adequate support so that all students can learn and develop fully.

The contributions of this study are significant for the area of school management. By highlighting the importance of democratic management, technological innovation and inclusive practices, this work offers a theoretical and practical basis for school managers who seek to improve the quality of teaching and promote inclusion in their institutions. In addition, the research contributes to the understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of these practices, offering *insights* for the formulation of effective educational policies.

However, it is important to recognize that the complexity of the school environment and the specificities of each context require additional studies to complement the findings of this research. Future research can explore, for example, the implementation of these practices in different socioeconomic and cultural realities, as well as evaluate the long-term impacts of democratic and innovative management strategies. It would also be interesting to investigate how the continuous training of managers and teachers can be improved to better support the integration of inclusive technologies and practices in the school.

In conclusion, democratic and innovative school management, when well implemented, can contribute to improving the quality of education and promoting inclusion. This study covers strategies and practices that can be adopted, highlighting the importance of an ongoing commitment to active participation, innovation, and equity. The continuity of research in this area is essential to deepen the understanding and improve school management practices, ensuring quality education for all students.

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