# MANAGEMENT AND SCHOOL CULTURE: BRIDGES TO TEACHERS AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

# GESTÃO E CULTURA ESCOLAR: PONTES PARA PROFESSORES E ENVOLVIMENTO DOS PAIS

# GESTIÓN Y CULTURA ESCOLAR: PUENTES HACIA LOS MAESTROS Y LA PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS PADRES

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** This multiple case study aims to know the practices of school principals for the involvement of teachers and parents, considering the organizational culture and context in Brazilian public elementary schools.

**Methodology/approach:** To this end, principals responded to a semi-structured interview and data on various outcomes, socioeconomic level, and elementary school development index were collected. Instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and organizational culture were the objective of the data analysis, done by axial, open and selective coding.

**Originality/Relevance:** There are few studies on school management practices considering the context and organizational culture in public (elementary) schools in Brazil - focusing on the school manager's relationships with teachers and principals. More specifically, this study investigates such practices in the context of democratic management - where managers participate in an electoral process and are chosen by teachers, parents of students, students, cleaning staff, kitchen staff, and security guards. Additionally, this study covered two of the three full-time schools in the municipality. Thus, there is a research gap filled by this study.

**Main results:** The results demonstrate obstacles for teacher and parent involvement and that dialogue can be a vehicle for cultural modification of the school.

**Theoretical/methodological contributions:** The study contributes by pointing out that school segments have influence on each other and can be barriers or bridges to teacher and parent involvement.

**Keywords:** School principal, school culture, teacher involvement, parental involvement, leadership.

**RESUMO**

**Objetivo:** Este estudo de caso múltiplo tem como objetivo conhecer as práticas de diretores de escola para o envolvimento de professores e pais, considerando a cultura organizacional e o contexto nas escolas públicas de ensino fundamental brasileiras.

**Metodologia/abordagem:** Para isso, os diretores responderam a uma entrevista semiestruturada e foram coletados dados sobre vários resultados, nível socioeconômico e índice de desenvolvimento do ensino fundamental. A liderança instrucional, transformacional e a cultura organizacional foram o objetivo da análise dos dados, feita por meio de codificação axial, aberta e seletiva.

**Originalidade/Relevância:** Há poucos estudos sobre práticas de gestão escolar considerando o contexto e a cultura organizacional em escolas (de ensino fundamental) públicas no Brasil – com enfoque nas relações do gestor escolar com professores e responsáveis. Mais especificamente, este estudo investiga tais práticas no contexto da gestão democrática – onde os gestores participam de um processo eleitoral e são escolhidos por professores, pais de estudantes, estudantes, pessoas integrantes da equipe da limpeza, cozinha e vigilantes. Adicionalmente, este estudo contemplou duas das três escolas em tempo integral do município. Desta forma existe uma lacuna de pesquisa preenchida por este estudo.

**Principais resultados:** Os resultados demonstram obstáculos para o envolvimento dos professores e dos pais e que o diálogo pode ser um veículo para a modificação cultural da escola.

**Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas:** O estudo contribui apontando que os segmentos da escola têm influência uns sobre os outros, podendo ser barreiras ou pontes ao envolvimento de

professores e pais.

**Palavras-chave:** Diretor da escola, cultura escolar, envolvimento do professor, envolvimento dos pais, liderança.


**RESUMEN**

**Objetivo:** Este estudio de casos múltiples tiene como objetivo conocer las prácticas de los directores de escuela para la participación de los profesores y los padres, teniendo en cuenta la cultura organizativa y el contexto en las escuelas públicas brasileñas de educación primaria.

**Metodología/enfoque:** Para ello, los directores respondieron a una entrevista semiestructurada y se recogieron datos sobre diversos resultados, el nivel socioeconómico y el índice de desarrollo de las escuelas primarias. El objetivo del análisis de los datos fue el liderazgo instructivo, el liderazgo transformacional y la cultura organizativa, que se realizó mediante una codificación axial, abierta y selectiva.

**Originalidad/Relevancia:** Hay pocos estudios sobre las prácticas de gestión escolar que consideren el contexto y la cultura organizativa en las escuelas públicas (primarias) de Brasil, centrándose en las relaciones del director de la escuela con los profesores y los tutores. Más concretamente, este estudio investiga dichas prácticas en el contexto de la gestión democrática, en la que los directores participan en un proceso electoral y son elegidos por los profesores, los padres de los alumnos, los estudiantes, el personal de limpieza, el personal de cocina y los guardias de seguridad. Además, este estudio abarcó dos de las tres escuelas a tiempo completo del municipio. Por lo tanto, este estudio cubre un vacío en la investigación.

**Principales resultados:** Los resultados demuestran los obstáculos para la participación de los profesores y los padres y que el diálogo puede ser un vehículo para la modificación cultural de la escuela.

**Aportaciones teóricas/metodológicas:** El estudio contribuye a señalar que los segmentos escolares tienen influencia entre sí, y pueden ser barreras o puentes para la participación de los profesores y los padres.


**Palabras clave:** Director de la escuela, cultura escolar, participación de los maestros, participación de los padres, liderazgo.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The study of school management presented expansion in research and countries, with tendencies to increase scholars' attention (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2019). The school management positively impacted teacher's performance (Blase & Blase, 2000; Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003) parental involvement (Jeynes, 2018; Keetanjaly, Kadir, Luan & Abdullah, 2019). The school management was researched under the prism of transformational and instructional leadership and related to organizational culture (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2019; Hollingworth, Olsen, Asikin-Garmager, & Winn, 2017 Leithwood,

Harris & Hopkins, 2019).

School management produces a positive influence on educational scores in schools in developing countries (Hutton, 2016; Tavares, 2015) and the developed countries (Ng, Nguyen, Wong, & Choy, 2015; Yemini, Addi-Raccah & Katarivas, 2014). Bloom, Lemos, Sadun, and Reenen (2015) researched school management in eight countries and found that high-quality management is associated with better educational results among and inside them. Studies indicate that school climate, influenced by the values of the school principal, acts as a mediator of children's values (Berson & Oreg, 2016).

This study focuses on: How do school principals do to involve teachers and parents, considering account the context and organizational culture of elementary schools in Vitória – Brazil? In this study, teachers and parental involvement is consonant with Jeynes (2018) – maximize students' results. The concept of parents, in turn, is in agreement with Goodaal (2018).

Hallinger and Kovačević (2019) reviewed school management research since 1960 and found growth over the past two decades, with school leadership being among the most cited. In Latin America (between 1991 and 2017), research shows that the index of international publications found was less than 1% of published research and had less than half of them compared to African literature. Journals published 56% of the papers since 2012 (Castillo & Hallinger, 2018). In South America, there are studies about time- management (Romero & Krichesky, 2017) and principals at the beginning of the mandate (Galdames, Montecinos, Campos, Ahumada, & Leiva, 2017). In Brazil, Tavares (2015) investigated the impact of management practices in schools with low scores and found that monitoring performance and establishing goals and incentives positively influence learning and improve math scores.

There are studies on the influences of the impact of the school principal in the quality of teaching (Blase & Blase, 2000; Bloom et al., 2015; Leithwood et al., 2008; Leitwood et al., 2019; Liu & Bellibas 2017), showing the benefits in students' results in virtue of parental involvement, (Jeynes, 2018; Keetanjaly et al., 2019) and the construction of the positive organizational culture (Hollingworth et al., 2017). However, there is little research about school management practices in Brazilian elementary public schools focusing on school principals, teachers, and parents' relationships.

Jeynes (2018) affirms that it is necessary to involve teachers and parents and maximize student results. Leitwood et al. (2019), in turn, proposes research about how school principals

implement certain practices, what they are, and with which results. Hallinger (2018) declared that the contextual variables must be considered, and Tavares (2015) brings evidence that school management practices need to be better in developing countries. The influence of school principals in teachers' performance and the school leadership is the second most important variable in influencing school success (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Leitwood et al., 2019), added to the scarcity of studies in the Brazilian context, it makes it relevant to understand this study.

The strategy for research is the multiple case study (Yin, 2017). The data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews with school principals in Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil; the analysis was performed through open, axial, and selective codification (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The results show that the democratic management and the dialogue between segments, fomented by the principal and the school board representatives, are factors of teachers and parental involvement. It can stimulate future research; clarify policies for the formation, training, and development of school principals, and scoring criteria for appointing the school principal.

## 2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 School Leadership

The instructional and transformational has dominated the discussions on school management over the past twenty years (Aas & Brandmo, 2016). Instructional leaders are goals oriented, directives, and successful in promoting "turnarounds" in low-scoring schools and in building culture, as they place high expectations on teachers and students, with three premises: to define the school's mission, manage the instructional program, and promote a favorable learning climate (Hallinger, 2003).

In contrast, the transformational leader looks to understand each member's question and foment the change through the bottom-up participation, identifying and linking personal and organizational goals (Hallinger, 2003). The transformational leaders support the team members and maintain one collaborative and professional culture, to encourage professional development, and guide teachers to resolve problems (Leithwwood, 1992).

Scholars found positive impacts of the transformational leadership to teachers' practices - Geijsel et al., (2003) confirmed the direct effect of aspects of transformational leadership

(vision building, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation) on teachers' commitment and extra effort to change. Positive influences also were found in the collective teacher efficacy by Ninković and Knežević Florić (2018), and in teachers in the first year of the profession in Belgium (work attitudes, professional, collegial support, perceived usefulness of professional support, and self-efficacy) by Thomas, Tuytens, Devos, Kelchtermans, and Vanderlinde (2018).

Instructional leadership also confirmed the positive influences of school principals on teachers' practice by encouraging the reflection with suggestions, feedback, modeling, request advice, and praise (Blase & Blase, 2000). In turn, Liu and Bellibas (2017) investigated the instructional leadership's influence on teachers' self-efficacy. They relate the management of classes, instruction, and student engagement through secondary data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013, conducted in 32 countries with a positive correlation between perceived instructional leadership and teachers' self-efficacy in the three dimensions. Romero and Krichesky (2017) studied the time allocation of school principals in Argentina. The survey indicated that school principals use interactive (reactive) leadership most of the time, rather than instructional leadership (proactive, suitable for turbulent schools).

## 2.2 Organizational Culture

Schein (2017, p. 21) teaches that **"**The culture of a group can be defined as the accumulated shared learning of that group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration". Hollingworth et al., (2017), investigated school culture and interviewed four school principals considered as excellent. Cultivating trust, knowledge of the team, and explicit and deliberate communication promotes a positive school culture and indicates that school principals have an opening door policy with the team, parents, and students. Leithwood et al. (2019) claims to have practices used by almost all successful school principals: building relationships and developing people (with team, students, and parents), building a shared vision, defining and communicating goals and affirming which school principals should be able to respond to contexts, not being driven by them and through ways that practices can be implemented.

The contextual factors – institutional, community, sociocultural, political, economic and school improvement, and successful school practices must be adequate. The school

culture is formed with time, which may hinder or facilitate the action of the school principal (Hallinger, 2018). Principals into the beginning of the term was studied in Chile at schools "struggling" – organized, with consolidated norms, a team with readiness and ideal number - and "sinking" – disorganized, without standards and with a negative attitude to the feedback of principal. The appointment of the principal must be in accordance with the specific school culture, with appropriate leadership skills to conduct changes in low-income schools without the team's readiness (Galdames et al., 2017). This argument seems to converge with Hallinger (2018) – the contextual variables must be observed.

## 2.3 School Leadership and parental involvement

The school principal has appointed significant to parental involvement and must activate the work between teachers and parents in the school and the student's house. The school encompasses the partnership and communication between teachers and parents, homework verification, parents' attendance to school, and partnerships directed for the community with actions showing its importance. In the student's house, parents have high and balanced expectations, communication of support, maintaining discipline and being loving, studying with the kids (Jeynes, 2018). But existing barriers to parental involvement - the relationship between parents and teachers, child, specific to families and a society. Minorities have problems with language, communication, transport, child care, policy, and economics (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Nonetheless, scholars appoint that parents with involvement (medium and high) presented better results in Chilean public schools with socioeconomic vulnerability level for pupils aged 7 to 12 years (Lara & Saracostti, 2019). Schools serving low-income students have a strategy to engage parents to achieve better academic results. The parental involvement (community too) is associated with improving student's scores, increased school frequency, and less index of dropout (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). In a developed country, the impacts of the project were analyzed to encourage parental involvement practices. The objective was to improve students' learning at home, modifying the paradigms and actions of the team of members in the long run and at school in general. It depends on the involvement of the principal and must be appropriate to the context (Goodall, 2018). Leithwood et al. (2019) added that building a shared vision in contexts that attend a low-income community requires adequate communication and engaging with the responsible.

In addition, parental involvement appears in national plans of education. Malaysian schools were uncombed of improving educational results, with 11 goals, including parental involvement (Keetanjaly et al., 2019). The national policy for fathers, mothers, and legal guardian's involvement exists in Chile (Lara & Saracostti, 2019). In Brazil, the *Plano Nacional de educação*, (2014) contains democratic management in 19. Parental participation (join with the principal, teachers, and students) builds a pedagogical, political project, and the parent's association. The representative participation has been present, but the parents' direct involvement in the school routine was not registered.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

To answer the question of the study, a qualitative research was carried out, and the strategy is a multiple case study (Yin, 2017). The cases studied are the principals of elementary schools in Vitória. Specifically, what are their strategies for involving teachers and parents in different contexts. "Indeed, it is also important to recognize the limitations of the quantitative paradigm when seeking to contextualize leadership. Thus, qualitative and mixed-methods studies are absolutely necessary to elaborate relevant features of leadership in context" (Hallinger, 2018 p. 17). We applied the questionnaire by Hollingworth et al., (2017), adapted for practices directed for teachers and sum to Hornby and Blackwell (2018) questions. In addition, we collected information about students' number per school unit, students' which parents were receiving the *Bolsa Familia*,[1] socioeconomic level, added to the parent's schooling.

The data collected through semi-structured interviews with school principals of elementary schools in *Vitória*, state of *Espírito Santo*, Brazil, happened between November 2019 and May 2020. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed, with an average of 45 minutes. I conducted 11 video calls interviews because of social isolation. The data analysis was through open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thus, initially we made the open coding, identifying the concepts and with records of memos. After that, the ideas are related, with attention to insights or "a-ha experiences." Finally, the integration of concepts was made by reading and reread the transcriptions, memos, and relations, searching convergences among them, resulting in seven core categories, described

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[1] *Bolsa Familia* is a benefit given by the government to families in a situation of poverty and extreme poverty. The extremely poor - up to BRL 89. Poor: from 89.01 to 178 per person (only participating if there is an adolescent up to 17 years of age and pregnant).

in the results.

The city of Vitória has 52 elementary schools – 49 in regular and three in full time - distributed in 9 administrative regions. The principals are appointed by-election for three years. Students, teachers, administrative staff, and parents voting. The selection criteria were the schools with the minors and majors scores in the Index of Development of Basic Education (IDEB) in each administrative region. When one school principal refused the interview, the school principal was invited with the second minor or major score of the area. In only these had one school. Thus, 17 school principals were selected, and 15 accepted the invite. In the scope, there are two full-time elementary schools. In the selection schools' phase, I noticed that the minor score in a school situated in a mid-class district was superior to the big score of schools of the administrative region with the lowest socioeconomic level.

The principals were elected, reelected, and indicated by the Education Secretary (ES). Four school principals designated by the ES (before the election of 2017) applied for the school principal and won. Retirement, health, and administrative questions are among the reasons for the ES designated the principal. Five of them were in a second term, and six in the first term. Three are male and twelve are female. The mandate's time average is three years and four months, and the professionals are educated in pedagogy, geography, physical education, Portuguese language, and mathematics. The standard as an effective professional (professionals approved from a public tender and in the statutory role) is 19 years. All these have a specialization, three have a master's degree, and one is attending a master's degree. For confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms have been used. The interviews were authorized by the ES.

**Table 1**
Students, beneficiaries of "Bolsa Família" and IDEB.

| School | Total Students | Beneficiaries of Bolsa Família | Results IDEB | Principal |
|--------|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| **A** | 565 | 158 | 5,9 | Luíza |
| **B** | 256 | 110 | 5,7 | Paula |
| **C** | 423 | 98 | 5,5 | João |
| **D** | 430 | 80 | 6,7 | Diana |
| **E** | 644 | 47 | 6,6 | Madalena |
| **F** | 393 | 14 | 7,9 | Camila |
| **G** | 666 | 61 | 6,8 | Pedro |
| **H** | 502 | 228 | 5,0 | Maria |
| **I** | 520 | 280 | 5,4 | Ana |
| **J** | 195 | 156 | 4,8 | Júlia |
| **K** | 312 | 97 | 6,1 | Cristina |
| **L** | 648 | 238 | 5,9 | Flávia |
| **M** | 430 | 170 | 5,0 | Carla |

| N | 702 | 302 | 4,4 | Sofia |
| O | 414 | 156 | 5,8 | Vitor |

Source: ES, 2020. All names are pseudonyms.

## 4 RESULTS

The results emerged from the interviewees' statements and found convergence with the literature review. This analysis had seven core categories - "barriers to teacher involvement," "bridges to the involvement of teachers," "school culture," "barriers to parental involvement," "bridges to parental involvement," "full-time elementary schools," and "social isolation."

### 4.1 Barriers to teacher involvement

The barriers mentioned to involve the teachers and implement initiatives were: lack of time for formation, due to the displacement of teachers to another school unit during lunchtime, sometimes to another city inside the metropolitan region, overwhelmed in coping with several segments, work regimes, and external institutions. Dealing with students and parents; Effective teachers, on a temporary contract and extension of the workload; people from three different outsourced companies (cooks, watchmen and cleaning staff); institutions of social assistance; complying agendas in ES and coping with bureaucratic questions (school budget and research three prices before allocating the money to buy a product or service, for example).

The conflicts among teachers, teachers and parents, teachers and students, teachers and team management (coordinator or pedagogue) appeared as an obstacle to the principal's initiatives and overload. In some cases, the resolution is made by ES after one minute of registration at the school. The professional (teacher or member of team management) has reallocated. New forms of evaluation, technology use, and the school reclassification (to correct distortion between age-grade) also generate resistance among teachers. The precarious structure in some schools (at both socioeconomic levels) was appointed witch difficulty for the initiative's implementation and overcharged factor for all students and professionals. The teacher's work in two or three turns (sometimes has 65 hours of work by a week, in some cases, at different schools); do not perform their duties (planning, the record of students' absence and presence); they feel devalued by governing and disrespect by some parents.

The principal sometimes stays in the classroom for a few minutes and talks to students to soften them. After that, dialogue with the teacher to value it. Directed the teacher for a

"restroom" for one time of repose is used too, in cases of exhaustion. The presenteeism stays underlying, and the teacher's sick leave hinders the projects, with the new construction reference process for students. The principal Sophia said:

> I organized a room, which has dimmed lights, some settee, air conditioned, and so many times their space is used for helping some teachers understand? Sometimes a headache that the person has there at that moment, and if they have 30 minutes of rest in it will reinvigorate their strength and will make them understand that they are not only one more in the crowd, that they are important, being part of the team and is dear to them. (Interview, April 2020).

## 4.2 Bridges to teacher's involvement

Principals indicated that they must conquer the teachers, searching for proximity to identify the project' profiles. The conquest is associated with projects presented to teachers by the management team with cohesion and dependent. Principals are reminded by pedagogue prepared for the function of exercise and good relationships with teachers with the involvement factor. School principals say that listening to the teacher, and making them feel comprehended, appeared to influence the teacher's involvement. The individual conversations had a finality of elevating the self-esteem of overwhelmed teachers.

The better initiatives with teachers appointed by principals stayed related to projects involving the parents, bringing them to appreciate the pupil's work. New methods of teaching after observation of reference schools brought decreases in the number of sick leaves. To correct age-grade distortion, one principal provided an extension of workload for teachers to give reinforcement for outdated students, valuation of practices with praises (unexpected) in public. Shared snacks and symbolic artifacts at events at the beginning of the year arose with a factor of approximation and involvement between principal and teachers and reflection on daily life, ways of dealing with them and their parents. The use of symbolic artifacts by Principal Diana has a goal of bringing the professionals close. She said:

> I will symbolically deliver to you a bottle, with balm, and candy, that's honey. Why? I want to share some that will serve you and the other […] because you will cope with so many situations where people will come with wounds, problems, anxiety, traumas… Kids that are challenges and you need to have the balm, for the cure, treat their wounds… Having a listening ear that can comprehend the other, and your need of honey, to have sweetness, to have joy in your life, having pleasurable moments. (Interview, April 2020).

Principals encourage teachers to participate in congresses, seminars, and competitions

such as the "Brazilian Mathematical Olympics", and field classes. The improvement of school structure - building adequate planning room, space for teachers to relax, and air conditioning in the classrooms, added to the acquisition of equipment and didactic material to execute projects involving the teachers.

The school principals reported that they involve the teachers and maximize the projects' results through the involvement with students – representatives of the class. It influences the affective relationships among students and teachers, quality of lessons, decreasing undesirable behaviors. Creating the school radio, encouraging the protagonist students, and student's games positively influencing the teacher's involvement.

In low socioeconomic status communities, the principals mentioned that better initiatives were communicating to the students to have a better life expectancy, staying in the school (not evading). Brings to the teacher the understanding that the students can progress - for example, entering a Federal Institute of Education. The disbelief of the students and teachers around students converge in such schools. To super, it appeared the constant dialogue with students, parents, and social assistance institutions added to projects to study students' identity and the community's history. The development of musical abilities provided by one Non-Governmental Organization in the counter shift aroused with a form to overcome this paradigm. Regarding the identity, the principal Julia said:

> We perceived that the student's identity was very weakened. They sometimes don't know where they were born, they don't know what a birth certificate is, they don't know their father's full name is, and they don't know the street's name because they are living in alleys or staircases. Thus, both personal and districted identity was essential for them to recognize as a subject, so this was a project that goes beyond the district because they can see "I can do it, I can get it (Interview, November, 2019).

And the principal Julia speaks about music:

> When we go there we see the playfulness, the children going beyond the content so everyone is very emotional, you know, when you see our students playing the violin, [...]the child playing recorder, which neither my children did, nor the teachers' children, so we see it like that, because we teachers, we have this culture that the student struggles to learn and will not be able to [...]So we see it there, it impacts us, he can do it, he can get it. Then I revert with a different perspective. I come back with the sensitivity perspective to empower that student. So it changes my practice, too, in the content. (princial Julia talking about music). (Interview, November, 2019).

## 4.3 Planning and meetings

The formal mechanism cited was the Action Plan, with a one-year duration. It underpins teaching, goals, decrease in year repetition, correction of age-grade distortion, and

budget allocation. According to the results of the Institutional Assessment, carried out by segments of schools and systematized, carried out in the previous year. However, the absence of the Political Pedagogical Project (PPP) as the guiding of the school team in the initiatives. The long-term planning had considered in schools with a low turnover of teachers. The answers about informal goals varied in stated that it did not exist and is the beginning of the projects, through events in the community or as school demand. One school inserted a project to understand violence in the virtues of a student's brother who had been murdered. In another school, parents' absence in meetings brought the idea of making a blog to reach parents virtually.

The principals cited that forms of communication with teachers are the meetings, mobile applications and individual conversation. The teachers looked for principals to speak about programmed absences, events, projects, and conflict mediation with teachers, students, and parents. Applications facilitate communication, but are also a source of distraction - different topics had treated simultaneously with the principal's notifications. Copy of textual fragments and decision making (without permission of principal) had mentioned as conflict causes. Principals made groups where only they can send messages. Doubts were resolved individually.

The meetings' frequency took place twice a week, weekly, biweekly, and sometimes in a period longer than two weeks. Held in the last 30 minutes of office hours are planned by the management team, according to the school demands and SE's communications. Meetings also take place in order to monitor projects developed in the beginning of the year and were included in the action plan. The vote is used to resolve differences. One principal did not permit the legal proposal of teachers and dissonant with the mandate platform. Discussing ideas improvement is the means for collective decision-making, and balanced posture and voice tone also emerged as a way for conduction and coping with teachers' resistance to a proposition or when speaking loudly.

## 4.4 Social distancing

The social distancing was decreed on March 16 by municipal authorities. The principals said, by it, that the initiatives were paralyzed and they should start over again. Some principals said they believed the parents could appreciate teachers and the management

team more. Nonetheless, in mid-class communities, parents would be demanding that those schools send homework in the same way as private schools.

Still, they said they lacking a means of communication with their parents and mentioned that the blog or a page on a social network requires daily work and there is no staff at school to do this work. The directors stated that they are awaiting what will be done, in this sense. The parent segment was cited as a way of resolving conflicts in applications where communication between school principals and parents took place. Furthermore, in a general sense, the principals said that teachers feel anxious and related the uneasiness to the threat of school dropout in communities of low socioeconomic status.

## 4.5 School culture

The democratic management permeates all schools researched, since teachers' decisions, meetings with representatives of segments, election to the principal's tenure. The principals described the school culture from external aspects, linked to the community's history, cultural manifestations, and socioeconomic level mentioned as conditioning relationships. Principles (autonomy, pedagogy intentionality, solidarity, and results), teachers' behavior, and students emerged as internal factors. One principal described the school as having two extremes, one "traditionalist" and the other "ahead of their time." Others indicated students` behavior, with the peaceful way of dealing with people. The principal Ana speaks:

> Our audience here are practically 7 communities, which are inhabited hills in the municipality of Vitória. Thus [...]it is a culture of suffering people, of little social public policy. So these communities, they come to school with lots of difficulties of access, but with many desires [...]in the area of sports, we realize this. [...]there is a great need to further strengthen the value of fraternity, of belonging, of rights and duties, because I perceive a lot of exclusion among themselves. So this is a culture that is fierce within the school, which affects the relations between students and teachers, I see that sometimes they are not even aggressive, but it is the result of this culture, this little sleep that these people have, this little fun, so that's all, so they come here very upset. (Interview, November 2019).

To maintain or modify the school culture, students are made and all professionals have a sense of belonging. The presence of the school principal at the school doors at the time of entry and exit was mentioned, with the door staying opened to invite dialogue with all segments, providing an environment of joy with praise, and keep the premises clean and organized. Cheering up the teacher and providing good care to parents, in the face of challenging circumstances, emerged as a way to contribute to maintaining a positive school

environment. Principal Camila states:

> With regard to the school enviroment, you can be very concerned about any situation that has occurred, but you cannot influence the rest of the work. If someone failed and ran out of gas, what does the child have to do with it? What does the teacher who wants to talk about a project have to do with it? I have to solve the lack of gas problem, it's finished and the food needs to be prepared. But at the same time, I do not belittle the teacher who passes by me, very excited about the literature project she is going to present to the children. So, you must have balance, this not easy, but you must have balance. (Interview, April 2020).

He stated that school culture can be a barrier and a link for the involvement of segments and that dialogue influences the school culture. The principal Sophia explained:

> [...]we had reports from older teachers, the culture was very violent. Both among students, between parents and teachers, there was a great gap, and I see that today we have implemented a culture of dialogue within the school. And this culture of dialogue has been from everyone to everyone, in all ways. Among students, between groups, we managed to break the barrier of verbal aggression, which was very large, even between professional and student. So if it is possible to say that there is a new culture implemented, I believe it is the culture of dialogue [...] And we attribute this to the paradigm shift on both sides, it is both the school and the community too. So then what, [...]but one thing that I think made a lot of difference, was the partnership with the school council.  (Interview, April 2020).

### 4.6 Full-time elementary schools.

The full-time schools present similarities and complementarities with normal period schools. The teachers sign one adhesion term at the beginning of the year and have a workload of 44 hours (weekly, and the students have 40 hours). As of 2015, this school model has not yet targeted primary education in Brazil, only for high school. Thus, Vitória was a pioneer in elementary schools, and the principals declared that the professionals needed to adapt to this model.  Contrasting with normal period schools, teachers have 4 hours of training per week. Weekly meetings are held between coordinators, educators, and both with the director.

It is challenging to stay all day together. To change the culture, intentional pedagogy arose, and dialogue. The means for it was life project, tutoring, clubs, elective disciplines, and planned reception at the entrance (parents also participated). The four hours of meetings appear as a facilitator on projects monitoring and improvement. Being a full-time school was quoted as an accommodation factor for some parents. The principal Paula declares:

> Much of what happens to our students is an achievement of the school. Monitoring, dialogue, life project and entrepreneurship. All of this helps to

improve, tracing the life profile with better expectations for these students. As each one here has a tutor, these teachers follow the school life of this group of students more closely, so I have 11 students, I follow their lives more closely, and so on. All teachers have a group of students who are accompanied by them, search knows of family, his life, how the student copes with that situations because the families, today, in a general sense, are much unstructured. (Interview, May 2020).

## 4.7 Barriers to parental involvement

Parental involvement barriers that converged in schools and socioeconomic levels were a lack of concern about the school life of children and parents' workload. Next, tables 2.0 and 3.0 with socioeconomic and scholar level of parents are presented and analyzed.

**Table 2**
Schooling of parents per school.

| School | Pupils | Don't read/write | Incomplete elementary | Complete elementary | High school | Superior | Specialization | Master degree | PhD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 565 | 0,00% | 17,30% | 12,30% | 46,00% | 18,70% | 5,00% | 0,70% | 0,00% |
| B | 256 | 0,00% | 27,60% | 16,10% | 46,50% | 7,50% | 2,00% | 0,40% | 0,00% |
| C | 423 | 0,20% | 14,70% | 14,00% | 58,10% | 11,10% | 1,90% | 0,00% | 0,00% |
| D | 430 | 0,00% | 4,50% | 7,30% | 65,60% | 17,40% | 4,50% | 0,70% | 0,00% |
| E | 644 | 0,20% | 6,20% | 7,10% | 47,80% | 29,50% | 7,90% | 1,30% | 0,00% |
| F | 393 | 0,00% | 0,80% | 4,60% | 35,50% | 48,80% | 7,70% | 2,00% | 0,50% |
| G | 666 | 0,00% | 5,30% | 5,10% | 48,00% | 32,20% | 6,60% | 1,50% | 1,20% |
| H | 502 | 0,40% | 26,80% | 27,00% | 40,80% | 5,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% |
| I | 520 | 0,20% | 33,30% | 22,20% | 39,50% | 4,80% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% |
| J | 195 | 0,00% | 57,80% | 17,00% | 22,40% | 2,70% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% |
| K | 312 | 1,30% | 14,20% | 16,50% | 54,40% | 11,30% | 1,60% | 0,30% | 0,30% |
| L | 648 | 0,60% | 25,20% | 14,80% | 54,30% | 4,70% | 0,50% | 0,00% | 0,00% |
| M | 430 | 1,30% | 28,80% | 31,00% | 35,10% | 3,80% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% |
| N | 702 | 0,60% | 30,30% | 25,60% | 41,80% | 1,70% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 0,00% |
| O | 414 | 0,50% | 25,00% | 19,70% | 45,10% | 7,80% | 1,20% | 0,20% | 0,50% |

Source: ES.

The second table shows that eight schools have 25% or more parents with incomplete fundamental schooling, associated by principals to the lack of parents' knowledge about the importance of involvement in the child's school life. The third table puts in evidence the income of parents. Eight schools have more than 5% of parents with income until BRL 260. In six schools appear more than 15% of parents with the payment between BRL 260 and BRL 780. The minimum wage in Brazil in 2020 is BRL 1045.

In poor communities, according to the interviews, we observe the student's turnover (recently registered), family composition, non-acceptance of the school professional's advice, (checking the possibility of a special educational need) and the precarious state of constructions. Regarding the turnover of students, Principal Carla explains:

> So, there is a high turnover of students. Many families come from the south of Bahia, from the north of Minas and elsewhere and have moved on, going to Serra, Cariacica and other places. And then we have no continuity. (Interview, April 2020).

With regard to disciplinary problems, the belief of parents in students, instead of the pedagogue and teachers, is a barrier to the involvement of parents and a factor of illness of teachers (in all socioeconomic levels). They also indicated that the parents criticize the teachers in front of their sons. Inviting the parents to criticize sons' behavior and learning without mentioning virtues, solutions, and listen to the parents had cited as a barrier to parental involvement. Principal Luíza appoints:

> Families expose a lot to their children [...] talking to the eight-year-old son what he thinks of the teachers! He talks to other people! This student who hears his mother say horrible things has no respect for the teacher because he is sick, if you talk to him, that's their biggest complaint. *(Interview, April 2020).*
> Principal Vitor said about history and familiar composition:
> We have students here who even keeping them in the classroom is complicated. They have a history of coming from daycare, where they hit everyone, break everything in the classroom and it is very complicated. In this case, his is being raised by his grandmother, and his father was arrested. (Interview, May 2020).

Added to that, parents that get angry at school threatening go to court emerged as a barrier to parental involvement. This led to the reflex meeting about how language is used by teachers and the management team with parents. In regions with more elevated socioeconomic level, some parents wanted to involve themselves in administrative questions without focusing on the sons' learning. In poor areas, numerous families added to precocity

pregnancy as a barrier to parental involvement.

As a written policy for parental involvement, the responses varied among being under elaboration, don't have, the regiment did elaborate by the ES and the Law of Child and Adolescent. The Action Plan and the PPP also was mentioned. In some responses, the PPP should be updated, and the political written part could consolidate as school culture.

## 4.8 Bridges to parental involvement

Internal and external factors appear as bridges to parental involvement. Internally, dialogue done with the parents by the principal, teachers, pedagogues, coordinators, and parents (members of the school board). The moments for it is cultural samples, on the day for clarification of doubts for parents (annual) invites for a treat of questions concerning disciplinarian and learning, parent forum, presence of principal at the gates in moments of entrance and exit. The interest in listening to parents showed the importance of their care and as a means of getting closer. It emerged that the conduct of the meeting with the parents unlinked virtues and abilities, even if the student has behavioral or learning problems, it was found as a bridge of parental involvement.

In the cultural samples, the students' work stayed exposed and had realized dynamics with parents, teachers, and students. In some cases, parents guided the dynamics and teachers were auxiliary. The parents' duty - a day where they go to school with their sons to talk to the teachers about concerns and questions directed for behavior and learning. There is no class on this day and a declaration of attendance is provided for parents who come to work. The reports indicate an increase in the presence of parents, but not all go. For this purpose, one school came up with ideas to make a blog to take the school to parents who cannot go.

Externally, the Public Ministry and social assistance organs are triggered with a focus on students in social vulnerability. By verifying the school dropout, high number of absence, and restrain physical aggression done by the parents are reasons by which the Tutelary Council, Center of Reference and Social Assistance (CRSA) Center of Specialized Reference in Social Assistance (CSRSA) and Public Ministry are actioned. The Law of Child and Adolescent had cited as a legal base. The respondents indicated that had good results in the parent's involvement of children in social vulnerability. Principal Cristina Said:

> The lack of children in school today was more demanded by the Public Ministry, the Tutelary Council, we have a little more support from these bodies. And that brought a great return for us, in this relationship with the family. Other social vulnerable

situations, with the support of CRSA, CSRSA we have to achieve bringing more of these children and their families to school. So, with this socio assistance networking better, the school begins to have other relationships with the family, a relation of the social support. Not only for children but for families too. The social assistance, in my vision, is a movement of great importance. (Interview, April 2020).

And Principal Cristina, indicate the importance of parents recognizes the education while a right:

When the parents perceive the son's education as legal right and education with quality, they demand it from us. We qualify more for the process because this is a […] relationship of the most qualified offer. After all, that user is demanding from us. Thus, the presence of parents also leads to better quality in the educational service as a whole. (Interview, April 2020).

Parents' representatives on the school board appeared as a factor of parental involvement. Through parent meetings to address school issues, through participation in parent meetings of students who commit undisciplined behavior, and speaking with parents who criticize teachers and other professionals, inviting them to attend the school to clarify questions (sometimes this happens in the community). The parent's segment of the school board was also remembered to strengthen the school solicitation for the ES, acquiring resources, and getting structural improvement. Some schools obtained air conditioning and had a reduction of noise that came from the playground. Principal João informs:

The school board, the parent's segment of the school board is the most precious thing which we have. The school achieved some gains, in terms [...] of improvements in the physical structure, because of the segment's performance. Our school board is very strong in this regard. (Interview, May 2020).
Principal Maria complements:
 In addition, another thing that I think is important, a way to break barriers both on the side and on the other is the parent forum that can happen both at school and outside. But with our support. (Interview, April 2020).

## 5 CONCLUSION

The results indicated that school segments influence each other and can be barriers and bridges for teachers and parents' involvement. The democratic management, representatives of segments in the School Board and the dialogue emerged as bridges to involve the teachers, parents, students, employees of outsourced enterprises, and the modification to school culture. It influences the involvement of the SE, community and social assistance agencies. Guided by

democratic management, the principal's practices seemed to converge with transformational leadership, with concerning individualized support, shared goals, and incentive to bottom-up management (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1992). The principal's practices found converge with Hollingworth et al. (2017), opening doors for dialogue, building trust between teachers, and engaging in explicit and deliberate communication. Conversely, in this context it is difficult to know their staff well. Principals do not hire the teachers, pedagogues' coordinators, and cope with several regimes of work (effective, temporary contracts, and extension of workload) after the teacher begins working at school, the principal looks and identifies the good profile for projects.

Invitations made to parents (from the school board) are bridges to parental involvement because use a similar language, have the same socioeconomic level, and often live in the same community. The dialogue, encouraged by the principal and representatives of the parent's segment, emerged to reconcile the objectives and attitudes of the teacher and the parents. Thus, invites, language, goals, and attitudes (depending on the way they are made) can be bridges to parental involvement too, although appointed as barriers by Hornby and Lafaele (2011). This study concludes that the proper parents, through representatively, are bridges for parental involvement. Leithwood et al. (2019) propose building trustworthiness relations with the team, students, and parents. This study appoints that representatives of segments can establish it, with students (impacting relationships between teachers and students) and parents (calling parents who complain about school to go to school and ask questions), and the use of symbolic artifacts to build trustworthiness between principal and teachers, shaping school values and practices.

Emerging that counterpart classes can positively influence student learning as perceived by teachers and parents in communities with low socioeconomic status. That can indicate the necessity of full-time schools in such communities. Jeynes (2018) teaches about parental involvement at home, with high and balanced expectations, communication of support, and maintaining discipline. However, the statistic collected in this study shows that the student house may not be adequate for learning because of the absence of structure (computer to research, for example) or even lack of food.

This study has gaps: it does not investigate the involvement of teachers and parents in schools where the principals indicated in the Brazilian context. Future research can approach international comparative studies to search for similarities and complementarities about

parental and teacher involvement – in developed and developing countries. Also, presenteeism and the teachers' absenteeism can be a theme for research in Brazilian public schools. Future research should explore the impact of social assistance organs in a student's school life - the number of absences, behavior, school results, parent's frequency (if any), and impact in situations where students suffer physical or psychological violence. That includes the social isolation period. Yet, research is needed on the influence of symbolism inside schools during the year. The creation of a blog for the involvement of parents and a virtual means of communication emerged in these moments of social distance. This should be indicating the need for research on what virtual means can be bridges for parental involvement, at different socioeconomic levels, and how implementation can happen.

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