



**SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION ON EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND SELF-ASSESSMENT: INTERFACES WITH SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**

***PRODUÇÃO CIENTÍFICA SOBRE AVALIAÇÃO E AUTOAVALIAÇÃO EDUCACIONAL: INTERFACES COM A GESTÃO ESCOLAR***

***PRODUCCIÓN CIENTÍFICA SOBRE EVALUACIÓN EDUCATIVA Y AUTOEVALUACIÓN: INTERFACES CON LA GESTIÓN ESCOLAR***

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**ABSTRACT:** The main goal of this work was to inventory and analyze scientific articles on school management to answer the following issue: which aspects and dimensions are privileged in these papers that might provide us a comprehensive view in degree and range of academic interest on such subject? This paper presents and discusses one of the relevant dimensions addressed by this investigation regarding to educational assessment and self-assessment. At this stage of the study, the contents of 28 articles published between 2009-2020 were systematized in the following axes of analysis: performance assessment and education systems management; institutional assessment, self-assessment, and school democratization; school effect and/or effective schools features; performance assessment of students and management models.

**KEYWORDS:** State of knowledge. Educational assessment and self-assessment. School management. Educational indicators.

**RESUMO:** *O objetivo deste estudo foi inventariar e analisar trabalhos científicos sobre gestão escolar, a fim de responder à seguinte questão: quais aspectos e dimensões são privilegiados nesses trabalhos que podem nos fornecer uma visão abrangente sobre o grau e alcance do interesse acadêmico sobre esse tema? Este artigo apresenta e discute uma das dimensões relevantes abordadas no estudo, que diz respeito à avaliação educacional e autoavaliação. Nesta etapa do estudo, o conteúdo de 28 artigos, publicados entre 2009 e 2020, foi sistematizado nos seguintes eixos de análise: avaliação de desempenho e gestão de sistemas de ensino; avaliação institucional, autoavaliação e democratização escolar; efeito escolar e / ou características efetivas das escolas; avaliação de desempenho de estudantes e modelos de gestão.*

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Estado do conhecimento. Avaliação e autoavaliação educacional. Gestão escolar. Indicadores educacionais.

**RESUMEN:** El objetivo deste estudio fue inventariar y analizar trabajos científicos sobre gestión escolar, con el fin de responder a la siguiente pregunta: qué aspectos y dimensiones son privilegiados en estos trabajos que nos pueden proporcionar una visión integral sobre el grado y alcance del interés académico sobre este tema? Este artículo presenta y discute una de las dimensiones relevantes abordadas en el estudio, que se refiere a la evaluación educativa y la autoevaluación. En esta fase del estudio, el contenido de 28 artículos publicados entre 2009 y 2020, fue sistematizado en las siguientes líneas de análisis: evaluación y gestión de los sistemas educativos de rendimiento; evaluación institucional, autoevaluación y democratización escolar; efecto escolar y / o características efectivas de las escuelas; evaluación de desempeño de estudiantes y modelos de gestión.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Estado del conocimiento. Evaluación educativa y autoevaluación. Gestión escolar. Indicadores educativos.

## Introduction

The definition of systematic literature review has been object of debate in education area, comprising different visions on scope and depth of the systematized material. According to Faria (2003), an inventory comprises any systematized review of elements of a specific subject within a given period, aiming to identify and disclose part of academic production of a specific area, theme and/or object. In addition, the systematization of scientific works and the dissemination of their results are relevant as they amplify visions on different – and often divergent – conceptions, to subsidize studies concerned to the same theme.

However, the identification, systematization and hierarchization of studies carried out in a certain field of knowledge cannot fail to consider historical, political, social, and institutional context in which they were produced, since these aspects influence the research's design, methods used and the processes of analysis. Thus, scientific interests of a given time reflect broad social processes, whose complexity of analysis demand attention to previously published productions. On Bourdieu's words (2005, p. 83, our translation) “professionals of symbolic production are faced with struggles that aim to impose legitimate principles of vision and division of the natural and social world”.

Indeed, productions with bibliographic character that aim to bring about scientific productions are called “state of art”, “state of knowledge”, “state of questioning”, “literature review” and “inventory”. Although using different methodological approaches, the common





challenge of this kind of study is to map and/or discuss academic productions of different areas of knowledge, in search for common aspects and/or thematic dimensions of investigations published in scientific journals and/or annals of scientific events.

### **Educational Assessment and Self-assessment: what are said in the field of studies?**

The present literature review has been carried out on periodicals' portals of CAPES and Scielo Educ@. An early investigation dealt with educational and school management between 2009 and 2019, through the following *Booleans descriptors* “*school management and participation*”; “*school management and school council*”; “*school management and school environment*”; “*school management and principals’ profiles*”; “*school management and student performance*”; “*school management and access to the position*”; “*school management and administration schemes*”; “*school management and administration and leadership styles*”.

In the first stage of this search, it was possible to verify that studies under those keywords also focused on school effectiveness; school’s indicators; educational evaluation and self-evaluation conceptions; forms of use of external assessments as management tools, all of them in interface with school management.

In the next stage, it was possible to select 28 articles published in journals of education area that, directly or indirectly, addressed to Assessment and Self-Assessment topics, between 2009 and 2019. The present literature review corroborated and updated the findings of a previous one, carried out by Souza & Martins (2012), covering the period of 2000 to 2008, regarding academic productions on school management and assessment, collected in de the same database.

In the mentioned work, Souza and Martins (2012) presented the main theoretical-methodological contributions that led to advancement of knowledge in this field, particularly for educational and school management. In addition, the authors also showed how those works have contributed as subsidies for educational and school managers. Drawing on the authors’ initial categorization, we sought to structure the present analysis in four great thematic axes:

- 1) uses of performance assessment results for the implementation of educational policies and school management processes.
- 2) institutional assessment and school democratization.
- 3) school effect and/or effective schools features.
- 4) student performance assessment, principals’ profile, and management models.





Thus, we present below the systematization of articles published in the last decade, with different theoretical-methodological approaches, such as critical studies, argumentative, statistical, quantitative-qualitative studies, among others.

### 1) First axis: Performance Assessment and Management of Educational Systems

The first table contains seven articles, two of those focus on the centrality of external assessments in educational policies regulation, in which the development of schools and educational system works as a mechanism of educational management, associated with school accountability policies (PASSONE, 2014; CARVALHO *et al.*, 2014).

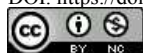
Two articles focus on schools' development and/or transformation as result of use of educational indicators and/or information taken from schools' managers and teachers in the contextual questionnaire attached to Brazilian National Test (RIOS *et al.*, 2017; ORLANDO FILHO, SÁ, 2016; WERLE, KOETZ, MARTINS, 2015). One article analyzes school directors' profile of municipal education system of Itabaina-SE (CONCEIÇÃO; PARENTE, 2014); and the other one discusses forms of assignments for the position of school director of Early Child Education schools in Espírito Santo state (CÔCO; GALDINO, 2016).

**Table 1** – Studies that deal with uses of assessment results for education systems management

Authors	Journal	Year
PASSONE	Cadernos de Pesquisa	2014
CONCEIÇÃO, PARENTE	Eccos Revista Científica	2014
CARVALHO <i>et al</i>	Estudos em Avaliação Educacional	2014
WERLE <i>et al</i>	Educação (Porto Alegre)	2015
COCÔ e GALDINO	Revista Contrapontos	2016
ORLANDO FILHO, SÁ	Ensaio	2016
RIOS <i>et al</i>	Educação Unisinos	2017

Source: Research data

About the regulations of educational policies, Passone (2014) complained the “assessment rage” that predominates in management of Brazilian education systems. To this end, the author presented a sensible analysis of studies that focus on educational policies of assessment attached to school accountability policies and monetary incentives to increase educational quality. Criticizing the lack of scientific evidence on the effectiveness of using standardized tests results as instruments to educational management and regulation of





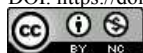
schoolwork, the author questioned the role of educational assessment in Brazilian context, challenged the obsessive practice of assessing what it is not taught in schools and pointed out a certain political refusal of Brazilian state to take responsibility for citizenship education and for equitable education of the youngest.

Carvalho and collaborators (2014) carried out an exploratory study that investigated evaluation policies and school accountability in public school system of the city of Rio de Janeiro. The authors analyzed data from interviews conducted with directors of three schools through the answers given to the contextual questionnaire of Brazilian National Test (*Prova Brasil*) of 2007, 2009 and 2011. The study identified some signs of changes in school management as result of the implementation of evaluation policies linked to school accountability policies adopted in 2009 by Rio de Janeiro municipal education system. Among such signs, the authors highlighted, on one hand, teachers' interest in participating in activities of continuing education and, on the other hand, the intensification of bureaucratic work due to the lack of administrative support to schools' management teams.

Rios, Trevisol & Sopelsa (2017) analyzed actions developed in seven cities of eastern mesoregion of Santa Catarina on the use of educational indicators as subsidies for management of public education systems. Based on qualitative data, the researchers analyzed the answers given by Secretaries of Education, school principals and Portuguese Language and Mathematics teachers to the contextual questionnaire of Brazilian National Test of 2009. Considering specificities of each city, they found that the use of some indicators fostered actions to improve school learning conditions, such as: purchase of school supplies; expansion of computer labs; increase of teachers continuing education offers; new collective spaces for teachers to participate in the processes of re-planning schools' political-pedagogical projects.

Likewise, Werle, Koetz & Martins (2015) discussed the appropriation of educational indicators by school team in a Rio Grande do Sul state school. The authors pointed out that school community tends to collaborate for the improvement of education quality when managers and teachers use external assessment indicators to permanently reflect on schools' practices.

Orlando Filho & Martins Sá (2016) reflected on the impact of the "New School Program" implementation on school management, designed to carry out external assessment of school managers in elementary education system of Rio de Janeiro. By triangulating data obtained through interviews, questionnaires, bibliographical review and documentary analysis, the authors examined convergences and divergences of several aspects of the Program to understand the way of thinking and practicing school management in the units that were







investigated. The analysis showed that, despite efforts already made, the Program itself produced little impact on school management and did not bring any significant improvement in terms of educational services related to external assessment of school management.

Among critical aspects detected, the findings showed evidence that external assessment brought about classification and ranking practices within schools units; that payment of rewards linked to results generated professional demotivation; that emphasis on external assessment led to a kind of “forgetting” of self-assessment processes; and that autonomy of schools has diminished in the face of governmental central organs regulations; finally, the authors concluded that the New School Program has been implemented as a “top down” policy, disregarding participation of the school groups involved. According to them, all those factors generated resistance and demobilization of the very protagonists of the expected changes.

Differently from the studies mentioned so far, Côco & Galdino (2016) focused on forms of assignments of school managers in Early Child Education of Espírito Santo state, considering Brazilian educational laws and findings of related studies. Based on data obtained from a questionnaire applied in 78 cities, the authors mapped different forms of access to school manager position. They concluded that in most cities the school director function is part of schools’ board, nevertheless, quality of participative and collective work processes is still questionable. All that clues pointed out to the great challenges yet to be faced by Early Child Education schools to democratize its management.

The study by Conceição & Parente (2014) examined management of schools in Itabaiana, a municipality of Sergipe state, through a multivariate analysis of groups. To that end, a questionnaire was applied in 58 school units in order to identify the directors’ profile, considering former professional experience; access to different opportunities of financing ; nature of difficulties faced in school management processes. Based on school managers views, the authors discuss several aspects related to competence, skills, professional difficulties and limitations that are possibly linked to schools management processes.

## **2) Second axis: Institutional Assessment, Self-Assessment, and School Democratization**

Table two brings together four research works whose common focus is the institutional assessment and/or self-assessment associated with the issue of participation and democratic school management. It is important to highlight the relevant contributions of some studies to the issue of school, families, and community relationship (SILVA, 2010; BETINI, 2010;



VIERIA; VIDAL, 2015); as well as those that discussed participation and school democratic management (SILVA; ARANDA, 2020).

**Table 2** – Studies on the Institutional Assessment, Self-assessment, and school democratization

Authors	Journal	Year
SILVA	Ensaio	2010
BETINI	Educação: teoria e prática	2010
BRANDALISE et al	Estudos em Avaliação Educacional	2011
VIEIRA e VIDAL	Atos de pesquisa em Educação	2015
SILVA e ARANDA	Horizontes - Revista de Educação	2020

Source: Research data

Silva (2010) discussed self-assessment in Early Child Education and in Early Grades of elementary school from the theoretical perspective of school democratic management, which is a Brazilian constitutional principle of education. Drawn on secondary data - document analysis of assessments carried out in four schools of metropolitan region of São Paulo - the author intended to investigate democratization of school management. It was found that, although schools have effective practices of considering communities views in schools' self-assessment, in most cases such a participation used to be reduced to a mere collection of opinions, since community members are not enclosed in decision-making processes. As a conclusion, the author argues that understanding democratic management in its initial phase (participation) reveals the need of overcoming some contradictions between educational system expectations and the schools' actual needs.

Vieira & Vidal (2015) also focused on school's relations with its surroundings to address the issue of school, families, and community relationship. It was done combining bibliographic and documentary research with the analysis of school principals' and teachers' answers to the questionnaire of Brazilian National Test of 2011, covering 15 cities of Maciço de Baturitém region of Ceará state.

While acknowledging that this relationship maintains asymmetrical characteristics and still open aspects, the authors endorsed positive aspects of such relations and highlighted advancements arising from public policy of federal educational programs in progress in the region, such as Open School Program (*Programa Escola Aberta*), National Program of Empowerment of School Council (*Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento dos Conselhos Escolares*) and the Program of Direct Money at School) (*Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola*) (PDDE).





Studying Participative Institutional Assessment Program – (*Avaliação Institucional Participativa – AIP*), Betini (2010) dealt with the issue of community participation (principals, teachers, school staff, students, and parents) in municipal education system of Campinas, a countryside city of São Paulo state. In such a process, some key categories stand out, mainly, the role of school management, the political and pedagogical project of schools and collective work, as well as objective and subjective dimensions that make social quality of education and population access to social knowledge possible.

Brandalise & Martins (2011) analyzed the re-signification of education assessment policies in relation to the processes of its implementation, i.e, when policy “meet school”. The authors took Institutional Assessment of Elementary Education Program of Paraná state as a starting point to exam the underlying conceptions of official and institutional documents through the management teams’ representation and schools’ everyday practices. If, on one hand, the study has highlighted gaps, difficulties, and troubles during its implementation, on the other, it has acknowledged positive aspects arising from the experience of reflection and acknowledgement of each school particularities in the process of self-assessment.

### 3) Third axis: School effect and/or effective schools features

In this third axis, six articles were brought together in Table 3. As a whole, they focus on the school role for students’ performance. The scope of four articles encompasses the topic of school effect and/or the school efficacy (BERNARDO, 2013; OLIVEIRA; CARVALHO, 2019; OLIVEIRA; WALDHELM, 2016; PAES DE CARVALHO; CANEDO, 2012); other two investigate managerial and pedagogical practices related to students’ good performance (SALGADO JUNIOR *et al.*, 2016; PASSONE, 2019); the last one dealt with the effectiveness of democratic management tools underlying Management Conditions Index (SOUSA; SILVA, 2018).

**Table 3** – Studies that associate students’ performance with the role of school

Authors	Journal	Year
PAES DE CARVALHO, CANEDO	Educação e cultura contemporânea	2012
BERNARDO	Educação e cultura contemporânea	2013
OLIVEIRA & WALDHELM	Ensaio	2016
SALGADO JUNIOR et al	Educação & Sociedade	2016
SOUSA & SILVA	Revista online de Política e Gestão Educacional	2018
OLIVEIRA & CARVALHO	Revista Brasileira de Educação	2018







Source: research data

Among studies that have investigated educational management models, organizational culture, and teaching quality, Paes de Carvalho & Canedo (2012) presented a quali-quantitative work carried out in three schools considered by media as of excellence, regardless they were public, private or any other administrative dependence. Based on data collected by Education Sociology Research Group (*Grupo de Pesquisa em Sociologia da Educação – SOCED/PUC-Rio*), the authors grounded their analyses on two thematic streams: studies on school efficacy and on identity of school institutions. Based on findings, they argued that the acknowledgment of director's leadership by schools' communities positively influences educational quality, regardless their management style and/or pedagogical project.

Bernardo's research (2013) dealt with the issue of how different practices of making up student groups and school management improve school efficacy and equity. The "class-effect" was the focus of this investigation carried out in municipal education system schools of Rio de Janeiro. The study was based on longitudinal data gathered by *Geres<sup>4</sup> project*, plus qualitative research work on pedagogical practices of two case studies. According to the author, challenges persist for educational policy, school administrators and teachers with regard of strategies to promote equity, since students that attend low-performing classes learn less and are often taught by less experienced teachers.

Oliveira & Waldhelm (2016) sought to establish a relationship between principals' leadership and school environment (as so perceived by teachers), by using 2013 Brazilian National Test data (*Prova Brasil/2013*) to find out likely links with learning performance of students from municipal and state schools in Rio de Janeiro. As result of this study, an indicator has been created - Average Indices of Leadership and Teaching Collaboration Index (*Índices Médios de Liderança e Colaboração – IMLD*) - to measure 5th year students' medium performance in Mathematics through a linear regression technique. Through statistical control of students' socio-economic level, the authors concluded that intra-school factors favorably impact students' academic performance.

With similar goal, Oliveira & Carvalho (2018) analyzed the relationship between intra-school factors (teacher's leadership, on their own perception) and extra-school factors (policies

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<sup>4</sup> The Longitudinal Study of School Generation ("*Estudo Longitudinal da Geração Escolar*" – *GERES*) – is a longitudinal study on quality and efficacy of Brazilian early grades elementary school, that followed Mathematics and Reading proficiency of students from the 2<sup>o</sup> to the 5<sup>o</sup> Elementary school. It involved samples of five Brazilian cities: Belo Horizonte (MG), Campinas (SP), Campo Grande (MS), Rio de Janeiro (RJ) and Bahia (BA), reaching around 300 schools, 900 elementary school classrooms and 20,000 students.





for assigning directors position) with students' performance, based on conceptual assumptions of school effectiveness and "integrated leadership"<sup>5</sup> of school directors. Extracting data from Brazilian National Test of 2007, 2009 and 2011, the study analyzed the relationship between Principal's Leadership Index (*Índice de Liderança do Diretor – ILD*), through factorial analysis, combined with two variables: forms of assignments of principals' position and 5th year students' performance in Mathematics. It concluded that ILD is positively associated to tests results given the fact that principals would make an institutional environment favorable to pedagogical practices and to significant learning. However, when school principals are politically nominated, such correlation is negative in relation to students' performance.

Salvador Junior, Novi & Ferreira (2016) investigated management and pedagogical practices correlated to good performances of students in Brazilian National Test (*Prova Brasil*). To investigate schools' internal processes, this quantity/qualitative approach research used Data Envelopment Analysis statistical techniques to identify and select schools considered "efficient", combined with multiple cases studies. The study has reiterated findings of previous ones on school efficacy and efficiency associated with school management and pedagogical processes.

Resorting methodological approach of Management Quality Conditions Index - (*Índice de Condições de Qualidade – ICQ*), Souza & Silva (2018) developed a detailed analysis on the conditions of schools' management of Brazilian municipal education systems drawing on contextual data collected through questionnaires addressed to school principals when Brazilian National Test of 2013 was performed. The national outlook of management conditions on elementary schools revealed deep inequalities between Brazilian states and high variation between municipal educational systems of each state, disclosing variances in effectiveness of management instruments examined by Management Quality Conditions Index.

#### 4) Fourth axis: Students' Performance and School Management Models

Table 4 gathers nine articles about students' performance, school management models among other aspects of school management. Five of them refer to the ways in which management teams use large-scale standardized tests results as educational indicators

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of "Integrated Leadership" proposed by Marks & Prints (2003) consider that principals' role is related to pedagogical and management relational skills, in terms of confidence and acknowledgement from students. Cf. MARKS, H.M.; PRINTY, S.M. Principal leadership and school performance: an integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, n. 39, p. 370-397, 2003.





(CERDEIRA *et al.*, 2017; MACHADO, FREITAS, 2014; MACHADO; ALAVARSE, 2014; ROSISTOLATO *et al.*, 2014; WERLE; AUDINO, 2015); one paper depicts school professionals' perceptions about educational quality, external assessment and school work organization (HOJAS; MANFIO, 2014); one deals with democratic school management (MACHADO, 2016); one examined municipal education system of Rio de Janeiro (BERNARDO; CHRISTOVÃO, 2016); and a last one analyzed the making-up of classrooms and organization of schools in Brazilian cities in relation to democratization of education. (SOUZA; MARTINS, 2018).

**Fourth table:** Studies that associate students' performance with management models

Authors	Journal	Year
HOJAS e MANFIO	Educação em Revista	2014
MACHADO e FREITAS	Revista Eletrônica de Educação	2014
ROSISTOLATO <i>et al</i>	Estudos em Avaliação Educacional	2014
MACHADO e ALAVARSE	RBP AE	2014
WERLE e AUDINO	RBP AE	2015
BERNARDO e CHRISTOVÃO	Educação & Realidade	2016
MACHADO	Estudos em Avaliação Educacional	2016
CERDEIRA <i>et al</i>	Estudos em Avaliação Educacional	2017
SOUZA e MARTINS	Educar em revista	2018

Source: Research data

The research work of Hojas & Manfio (2014) analyzed school management teams' and teachers' conception on education quality by means of two central axes: large-scale assessments and school organization work. This qualitative research was carried out in two schools of São Paulo state with very distinct features, identifying that in one of them educational work is mainly focused on external assessment to accomplish the best results possible; in the other, school's management team considers that "other contents are also important for students' education process" (HOJAS; MANFIO, 2014, p. 7793). The authors concluded that the consolidation of an assessment culture includes a critical and collective reflection about such a process in order to offer new possibilities for pedagogical work organization and change aiming at education and school management democratization.

Machado & Freitas (2014) have investigated the processes of appropriation of large-scale assessment results by management teams of four schools of the city of Sao Paulo. Drawing on field data, experiences, conceptions, and resistance movements of school teams in relation to external evaluations were described. The results showed that teacher training failures must be overcome for them to critically deal with concerns generated by school rankings and with





conflicts arise between schools' members on how to use external evaluations results to improve quality of education.

With similar concern, the study of Rosistolato and collaborators (2014) analyzed the conceptions of school managers of Rio de Janeiro's municipal education system in respect to large-scale assessments and its impact on day-today of schoolwork. From data collected in focal groups with school principals and education technicians (who act as intermediaries between schools and the Department of Education), the authors highlighted school managers' lack of familiarity with technical aspects of external assessments, the "domino effect" related to charges and pressures over schools' performance, and the "strategies" found by schools units – in the "Brazilian way" ("*jeitinho brasileiro*") - to respond to the external demands for better results, like for example, preventing low-performing students from participating in nation test and/or masking schools' failing rates.

Machado & Alvarse (2014) put into debate the relevance of school management to encourage school members to problematize internal/external assessments results. The authors stressed that standardized tests cannot be understood as an end in themselves, but as an opportunity to foster the "needed transformations, in the sense of fortifying the quality of the democratic public school". (MACHADO; ALAVARSE, 2014, p. 75). This research-action, developed in a municipal school of the city of Sao Paulo, between 2010 and 2011, has compared internal assessment results of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> series with those accomplished by the same students in the standardized test of this municipality (*Prova São Paulo*). The study also found incongruities between both types of assessment, as there were cases of students who had failed in internal evaluations, carried out by their teachers, but had a considered advanced performance in "São Paulo Test".

The forms of apprehension and use of educational indicators by management teams were also investigated by Werle & Audino (2015) in a study that focused large-scale assessment in elementary education and management practices in two state schools located in Porto Alegre. The research consisted in the systematization of IDEB<sup>6</sup> (*Basic Education Development Index*), between 2009 and 2011, combined with data obtained from a structured questionnaire applied to the management teams of both schools (principals, pedagogical coordinators, educational supervisors, and educational counselors) and with the analysis of both schools' official documents, such as school regiments and political-pedagogical project. The

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<sup>6</sup> IDEB – Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica – (*Basic Education Development Index*) is an index created by Brazilian federal government, in 2007, to measure and monitor quality education in public school systems.



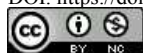


authors observed that schools' teams tend to reflect about assessments results not as a school quality indicator, but rather as a management tool to bring about external elements for the pedagogical, administrative, and participative planning.

Machado (2016) investigated democratic school management drawing on principals' answers to the contextual questionnaire of Brazilian National Test of 2011, within the scope of public education system of the city of Guarulhos, in São Paulo state. The study have contrasted answers given by school principals considering the following concepts: autonomy, participation, school access and students' school attendance. Through principals' answers, it was possible to infer that, in general, schools seek to develop democratic practices by encouraging community participation in School Councils' meetings (School and Class Councils); in relation to "autonomy", the study showed that local authorities have hard interference over schools' management; and regarding to students' attendance, it suggested that there are strategies in progress to achieve this goal, like learning reinforcement programs, environmental projects and others regarding to violence, sexuality, and so forth.

The relationship between school teams' appropriation of external assessments technical knowledge and its effective use was also investigated by Cerdeira and collaborators (2017) in a study carried out within elementary education system of the city of Rio de Janeiro. The methodology combined focal group discussions with naturalistic observation of an undergraduate course named "Comprehension and Use of Educational Indicators<sup>2</sup>", whose data was then cross analyzed with those of a survey applied to the course participants. The results reinforce the hypothesis that such training courses might help school managers to change their perception on the possibilities of use of assessments and of educational indicators for the school planning.

Bernardo & Christovão (2016) analyzed the "Plus Education Program" (*Programa Mais Educação*) - a full-time education model and democratic management - within municipal elementary education system of Rio de Janeiro. Grounded upon theoretical debates on educational inequalities, the authors discussed the Program's compensatory design to describe its potential impact on quality education. Drawing on results of Brazilian National Test of 2013 and qualitative data collected from six public school directors, the study explored peculiarities of schools' management. The authors concluded that, when implemented locally, school management practices were far from the initial objectives of the national program, given to discrepant views of schools' managers and local government lack of commitment to carry out an effective evaluation of its accomplishments.







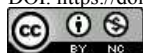
Souza & Martins (2018) investigated the make-up and organization of schools in Brazilian municipalities from the analysis of school principals' responses to the contextual questionnaire of Brazilian National Test of 2015 (*Prova Brasil, 2015*). When reflecting on the criteria declared by them to compose and group student classes, the researchers observed schools' tendency to embrace inclusive principles in terms of school access and of students welcoming, which reveals the important role played by schools' choices and practices towards democratization of education.

### Final words

The 28 studies presented and discussed in this paper suggest that there are different views on the unfolding processes of educational assessments depending on the dynamics of schools' management.

Some studies of the first axis – *Performance Assessment and Management of Educational Systems*– bring about a critical analysis of these processes regarding to the fact that students' performance results, measured by external indicators, fall over principals and teachers due accountability policies adopted by several educational public systems around the country. In contrast, some papers acknowledge the relevance of external assessments results for schools' pedagogical and administrative planning, although calling attention for the need of considering regional/local contexts which school units belong to, as well as to the tensions arise between local education authorities, schools' management, and teaching teams, especially, because of the ranking of schools.

In the second axis – *Institutional Assessment, Self-Assessment, and School Democratization*, – it was possible to identify that some studies stress positive aspects of external assessments in the sense of encouraging schools' team to reflect about students' learning performance in standardized assessments in order to keep a permanent attention to institutional practices. Concerning to institutional self-assessments examined in this second axis, some studies point out that such a practice seem to be “forgotten” insofar as school autonomy has been reduced, mainly due assessment policies implemented by local education systems, without significant involvement of principals and teachers. For the same reason, movements of resistance arise among school professionals, who are supposed to be the central protagonists of such a process. In short, despite gaps, difficulties and drawbacks, positive aspects of self-assessments policies were highlighted once they allow and encourage schools to reflect about their own institutional experience.





Another important aspect highlighted by in studies was that education professionals' opinion over their institutional assessment haven't had significant implications on governments' policy agenda. In other words, perceptions of school units about their own work do not reverberate in the renewal of governments' decision-making processes as a response to students' and schools' communities needs and/or demands.

In the third axis – *School effect and/or effective schools features* – it was observed that quantitative studies based on statistical methods, mainly drawing on Brazilian National Test data, were carried out to analyze school units' endogenous factors linked to quality of education as well as to inequalities of educational opportunities. In general, the studies considered variables (such as “group-effect” associated with organization of students' groups according to their cognitive characteristics and their socio-economic background) that can (or cannot) impact positively on schools' performance and/or on their institutional atmosphere. Directors' profile, Directors' Leadership Index – (*Índice de Liderança do Diretor – (ILD)*), management and pedagogical practices, among others, were also factors considered on the analysis of this thematic axis.

The fourth and last axis of analysis brought together works that dealt with *Student Performance Assessment and School Management Models*. Considering conceptual discussions on school efficacy, all of them, in one way or another, agree on the assumption that, even though each school unit has a particular style of management and a specific pedagogical project, managers' leadership can positively influence the educational quality of schools.

The discussions around different kinds of appropriation and use of educational indicators by the schools' management teams were the focus of qualitative research analyzed within the fourth axis. In general, these works sought to understand how the results of student assessments can become effective management tools to reorganize pedagogical, administrative, and participatory actions in schools, as well as a means of minimizing the resistances and insecurities of school teams in relation to external assessments.

In short, it is fair to say that the common concern of all studies gathered in this article - the relevance of external assessments and institutional self-assessment – raises questions of various orders as to their effectiveness in improving public education. Corroborating what Lima says (2015, p. 1345), one of the possible questions is the ability of school units to “negotiate” their autonomy in the face of “the heteronymous rules of the rational process of control resulting from external evaluation”.

Taking as a reference the studies and research analyzed in this literature review, apparently, external evaluations, as one of the central policies of education in Brazil, continue





to cause tensions in education systems and school units. Although self-assessment mechanisms are guaranteed, there is always a risk that measures that standardized official measures and programs are implemented by central authorities without considering regional/local particularities and needs.

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