



IN-SERVICE PRINCIPALS' DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL: DISCONNECTION AND INSULATION FROM INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY KNOWLEDGE IN EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

FORMAÇÃO DE DIRETORES DE ESCOLAS NO BRASIL: DESCONEXÃO E ISOLAMENTO DA BASE DE CONHECIMENTO INTERNACIONAL CONTEMPORÂNEA EM ADMINISTRAÇÃO DA EDUCAÇÃO

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Abstract

This study explores the public policy implemented by the Brazilian federal government for in-service school leaders' development, in cooperation with state and local education systems, in order to improve school learning outcomes. It aims to investigate the content included in the post-graduate Diploma in School Management (DSM), related to international contemporary knowledge of education administration as presented in the literature. Public documents on the DSM programme, such as courses syllabi, content of instruction and references were analysed. The programme did not refer to any of the most quoted authors or the most quoted articles in the field. A displacement between the policy formulation and its implementation was observed. Disputes over programme conception was evidenced, prevailing a more insulated and local view on school management. Results show that the policy for school principals' development in Brazil took very limited advantage of the contribution of research on educational leadership worldwide, despite research evidences showing that leadership practices share much more similarities than differences considering contexts.

Keywords: Leadership. School. Principal preparation. Public policy. Brazil.

Resumo

Este estudo explorou a política pública implementada pelo governo federal brasileiro para formação de diretores de escola, em cooperação com os sistemas de educação estaduais e municipais, a fim de melhorar os resultados da aprendizagem escolar, desenvolvida no âmbito do Programa Nacional Escola de Gestores da Educação Básica Pública (PNGEB). O artigo investigou os conteúdos da pós-graduação lato sensu Gestão Escolar, na perspectiva da base de conhecimento contemporâneo sobre administração da educação tal como apresentado na literatura internacional. Os conteúdos contemplados na formação pouco compartilham da sólida base de conhecimento internacional desenvolvida no campo da administração educacional, especialmente aquelas relacionadas às práticas de liderança para o aprimoramento escolar, como um conjunto de orientações e práticas para o fazer pedagógico. Os resultados mostram que a política de desenvolvimento de diretores de escolas no Brasil pouco aproveitou a contribuição das pesquisas sobre liderança educacional em todo o mundo, apesar das evidências de pesquisas mostrarem que as práticas de liderança compartilham muito mais semelhanças do que diferenças entre diferentes contextos.

Palavras-chave: Liderança. Escola. Formação do diretor. Políticas públicas. Brasil.

Introduction

In light of the emerging research on the impact of leadership on students' achievement (Hallinger and Heck, 1996; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2008; Grissom et al., 2015), school principal education has become central to international debates on school improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Wildy et al., 2007; Gurr et al., 2020).

Leadership development and preparation programmes differ in terms of content, structure, modes of delivery, standards and emphasis (Carpenter, 2016). A high level of commonality in the content of contemporary leadership development programmes is found (Walker et al. 2013, Gurr, et al.2020). Crow & Whiteman (2016) describe specificity and uniformity regarding curriculum content in leadership programmes, as they focus on instruction, organizational development, and change management. Webber and Scott (2013) highlight the need for clear instruction on budget, paperwork related to accountability, and implementation of government mandates for principals' preparation.

Choosing appropriate content for principals' development programmes is key for success as demonstrated by Darling-Hammond et al. (2010). Authors, such as Brundrett and Dering (2006), argue for a comprehensive and coherent curriculum to educate school principals. This suggests that inappropriate content coming from a weak knowledge base promotes the adoption of untested and uninformed practices. Instead, programmes should consider the knowledge base provided by research.

For six decades, the knowledge base in the field of education administration has experienced a paradigm shift from "school administration" to "school leadership", and the "leadership for student learning and development" has become the "cognitive anchor" of the intellectual structure of its knowledge (Hallinger and Kovačević, 2019, pp.360). Authors argue "the single greatest challenge facing our field in the coming decades lies in producing a cross-culturally valid knowledge base with global relevance" (pp. 360).

In fact, context matters when talking about leading schools. High socioeconomic societies are more instructional and learning-orientated than lower and disadvantaged socioeconomic ones (Hallinger and Murphy 1986; Lalas and Morgan 2006). The former must deal more with issues related to social justice (Moral, 2018). However, international research on successful school leadership shows more similarities than differences on principals' competences for improving learning outcomes worldwide (Gurr et al. 2020). It suggests, despite differences in context, that developing countries could benefit from the research evidences provided internationally.

In Brazil, school leaders' development has traditionally been limited to a few in-service trainings provided locally. The Brazilian education system was designed by the Constitution of 1988, as a decentralized system formed by the federal government, the 27 state-level systems and approximately 5,600 autonomous municipal systems (Brasil, 1988). This system has 184,100 schools of basic education, employing 2.2 million teachers (INEP, 2018). Municipalities are responsible for almost 2/3 of the schools (112,900) providing primary education (INEP, 2018). The scope, content, and organization of principals' education vary widely across educational systems. Richer and more structured states or municipalities have their own policy, while poorer, unstructured states/municipalities depend on federal government initiatives. It is important to say that, in Brazil, each system hires their own teachers, hired as public employees. Only teachers can become a school principal. There is no professional standard and almost half public-school principals took office without proper preparation as demonstrated by Oliveira and Carvalho (2018).

As a response for the underperforming students learning outcomes and the lack of proper preparation of school principals, the federal government established in 2004 the School of Managers in Basic Education (SMBE) policy, which aimed to develop school principals' competences to improve students learning outcomes.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to study the alignment between the content chosen for the Diploma on School Management (DSM), offered under the public policy SMBE, with the knowledge base for school improvement provided by the field of education administration. This was the largest and most comprehensive in-service school principals' development programme implemented in Brazil. From 2007 to 2016, 36,334 school leaders in Brazil enrolled in the DSM Programme. The cost per participant is around 1,000 US\$, and the dropout rate is 47% (Sottani et al., 2018).

This study is based on document analysis of the post-graduate DSM programme courses syllabi, content of instruction and bibliographic reference. It aims to answer two main questions: To what extent does the DSM programme provide a coherent curriculum for students' learning improvement? How consistent was the content provided by the DSM programme with the knowledge base in the field of education administration?

This is relevant to the field of principals' development because it explores the coherence of the strategies for principals' development for school improvement and its implementation in the Latin America context (Lumby et al., 2008). Walker et al. (2013) acknowledged the need to enhance the understanding of leadership preparation internationally and investigated the framework, content and operation of leadership development programmes across countries.

Context

The new system was designed to revert the high level of centralization prevalent during the military-civil dictatorship (1964-1985). Its purpose was to enhance democracy in schools and give them autonomy by establishing school councils with responsibilities covering accountability, school management and development plan, and granting financial autonomy for the use of discretionary funds (Meade and Gershberg, 2008).

This complex collaborative regime in education works with coordination and cooperation, providing compulsory and free-of-charge basic education for all (Segatto and Abbrucio, 2018). Municipalities are responsible for offering childhood and elementary education (nursery, pre-school, primary and lower secondary school) and states are responsible for secondary education (years 10-12). In Brazil, the investment on education grew 91% over the period from 2008 to 2017 and reached approximately 6% of its gross domestic product (GDP) (Brasil, 2018). Nevertheless, only the states of Minas Gerais, Pernambuco and Goiás show a positive correlation between primary school student learning improvement and the increase in investment per pupil from 2000 to 2015 (Moraes et al., 2017).

Since 1988, public policy for basic education is guided by increasing access to public school in order to have all children in school and improving the quality of education. Basic education school quality is assessed by a national system implemented in 1990 by the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa Anísio Teixeira (INEP) – National Institute for Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira, a technical agency of the Ministry of Education.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration (1995-2002), from the Social Democratic Party, contributes to strengthen the coordination role of the federal government in order to guarantee the universalization of basic education. A National Curriculum Guideline was implemented describing what should be taught and what students are expected to learn in schools. The National Textbook Program not only provides content allowing more autonomy for schools to choose textbooks, but also enhances evaluation practices (Burton, 2012). Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's administration (2003-2010), from Workers' Party, improved the policies implemented before. The assessment system was expanded, funds transfer for basic education was enhanced. A remarkable contribution was the establishment of a teacher qualification program in order to improve the quality of education (Brasil, 2014).

As Brazilian society became more aware of education quality problems and the educational outcomes became more publicized by the media, new players from civil society started putting pressure to improve learning in public schools (Carnoy et al., 2017). An example of civil activism in education was the coalitions *Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação* – National Campaign for the Right of Education – and *Todos pela Educação* (TPE) – All for Education (Simielli, 2013). Researchers on education are critical of those organization activism “and its interfaces with the Brazilian government, influencing the creation of educational policies and increasingly naturalizing the incorporation of the association between the public and the private” (Bernardi et al., 2018, p.29).

The School of Managers in Basic Education as a policy for school principals' development

Although education scholars in Brazil are highly critical over the influence of non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international organizations, such as the World Bank, UNESCO, OCDE etc., on national educational policy formulation, policymakers have been influenced by those educational stakeholders (Kauko et al., 2016). In fact, education has become a global issue and no country is in a bubble.

An example of this international influence was the idea of school leadership in the 2000's. In that time, school principals' development became a trend topic on education among policymakers all over the world. England had launched the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) “responding to the increasing challenges of school improvement made providing a single national focus for school leadership development, research and innovation” (Bolam, 2004) and “influenced school leadership, management and administration in England and beyond” (Bush, 2004, p. 244).

In fact, in 2004, the Brazilian Minister of Education, Mr. Genro, formulated a national policy for school principals' education labelled *School of Managers in Basic Education* (SMBE). In Brazil, the term “school leadership” is not used, but “school management” instead (Mariano et al., 2016). The Brazilian “school for principals” was implemented in a different way from NCSL. It was not a place with its own structure, but a public policy to provide qualification for in-service primary education school leaders nationwide. Genro was influenced by studies and research that connected school quality improvement with school leadership and management (Scholze, 2007). Therefore, the SMBE policy was part of the educational agenda's focus on school improvement to face the underperformance of Brazilian students in basic education as pointed out by the School Census and the National Basic Education Assessment System Brazil (Scholze, 2007).

Latin America countries are far from having articulated policies for school leaders in terms of the establishment of performance standards in areas of selection, working conditions, responsibilities, evaluation and professional development as promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (UNESCO, 2014). The UNESCO report also attests that “the lack of a proper training policy, which considers and integrates the various stages of a school leader's career (pre-service, induction and in-service), and guides the training based on the functions and responsibilities provided by the regulations or the frameworks of action/standards developed by some of the school systems” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 80) undermines school leaders' efficacy.

Design and implementation of a pilot program of school leadership and management

INEP, a research agency linked to the Ministry of Education, was in charge of the implementation of the *School of Managers in Basic Education* policy (INEP, 2004). The policy's purpose was to provide a comprehensive educational development for school leaders as principals, vice-principals, pedagogical coordinators among others, starting with in-service principals' training. The policy guidelines was described by INEP in August 2004, as follow: a) the policy aims to reverse the students' underperformance in basic education; b) the means to do so is by the development of school leaders'

competences to improve teaching quality in order to improve learning outcomes; c) school principals should propose a plan for school improvement as the final training assignment; d) a pilot programme on school management in a blended model of online and face-to-face professional learning for in-service professional, using blended learning (20% face-to-face/ 80% online) should be provided, and could be extended to 360 hours; e) the programme will be funded by the National Education Development Fund (FNDE); f) INEP coordinates the policy in collaboration with Secretary of Basic Education (SBE) and Secretary of Distance Learning (SDE), both in the structure of the Ministry of Education, the State and Municipal Secretary of Education, as well as Universities; g) piloting the programme on school management with 150 school principal from the states of São Paulo, Bahia, Ceará and Rio Grande do Sul (40 each), total 160, in 2005/1o sem; h) roll out the training programme nationally reaching 4,420 school principals in 2005/2o sem, 43,200 in 2006/1st sem, 104.440 in 2006/2nd sem (INEP, 2004).

The project started with a Workshop on School Management attended by 54 school principals from the 27 Brazilian states in October 2004. Principals discussed democratically the ideas, concerns, problems and limitations they faced for school improvement. At the end, the Carta de Brasília (Letter from Brasília) was issued providing recommendations for the school principals' development policy and insights for the pilot programme design.

An experienced team of specialists from the School of Education of PUC-São Paulo, a private Brazilian university, was hired to design and implement the school principal pilot programme (Prado, 2007). The pilot aimed to “raise the competence of school leaders and their ability to understand and intervene on school context, considering the social, political, economic and cultural context (...) the development of school principal should contribute to develop its professional ability to integrate and motivate others in order to ensure the improvement of work processes at school and, consequently, the expected school outcomes” (Schulze, 2007, p.37).

The pilot programme content comprises: a) a broader comprehension of school pedagogical purposes and the role of the leadership team in the improvement of teaching development and student learning outcomes, the reduction of the dropout rate and class repetition; b) the use of instruments/methodologies such as the Quality Indicators in Education for school diagnosis and the School Development Plan to promote school improvement; c) enhancement of the participation of students, staff, parents and civil society in school management; d) the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for assessment, learning, managing and communication purposes; e) the creation of a school principal network – in the national or the state levels – in order to promote lifelong learning, sharing experience, providing elements for research and decision making to create a knowledge database on school leadership practices based on information and communication technology (ICT) (Almeida, 2007, p.19; Schulze, 2007, p.37).

The pilot programme was designed in five modules, with 100 hours, in blended learning format with three modules (44 hours) in classroom and two modules using learning management system (LMS), carried out in a four-month period (Fernandes e Teixeira, 2007). Starting with a school diagnosis guided by the methodology Indicadores da Qualidade na Educação (INDIQUE) – Education Quality Indicator (INEP, 2005), principals should draw the school improvement plan using the methodology Como Elaborar o Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola – Drawing School Development Plan, provided by the Ministry of Education. At the end, principals learn how to create a School Improvement Project that becomes the training final project (Almeida, 2007).

The Education Quality Indicator was developed by the non-governmental organization (NGO) Ação Educativa, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund – Unicef – and the United Nations Development Programme – UNDP with the support of several governmental and non-governmental organizations all over the country (Ribeiro et al., 2005, p. 228). It provides a practical and dialogical way that describes school quality in seven dimensions: educational environment, pedagogical practices, assessment, democratic school management, training and working conditions of school

professionals, school physical space and access and permanence of students in school. Each dimension consists of a group of indicators. School principals are required to bring the school community together to assess the school situation considering each indicator, using it as an instrument to guide the discussion and document the results (INEP, 2005, p.10). Both principal and community put in practice the concept of democratic and participatory management by defining the method for gathering information and the people who should participate in the discussion groups about each of the dimensions under analysis.

The pilot was implemented from August to December 2005 in ten states (Bahia, Ceará, Espírito Santo, Mato Grosso, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Tocantins), comprising 400 in-service principals, 40 in each state. In January 2006, the Secretariat of Basic Education (SBE) closed the pilot programme, finished in the month before, without any evaluation.

Turnaround on SMBE: scholars from education policy field takeover

The second half of 2005 was intense at the Ministry of Education (MEC). Minister Genro was called to chair the Workers Party (PT) and was replaced, in July 2005, by Mr. Fernando Haddad. The new Minister of Education transferred the SMBE supervision from INEP, a technical branch, to the Secretariat of Basic Education, a political office, responsible for coordinating projects within state and municipal education systems.

This change opened the opportunity for a group of scholars from the field of education policy to propose a reformulation in the SMBE's policy. Influential scholars from federal universities, financed by central government, proposed to replace the framework adopted in the pilot programme, taken by them as instrumental and superficial, for an alternative approach based on critical social theory (Aguiar, 2010). Indeed, in January 2006, the Secretariat of Basic Education held a workshop with scholars associated to Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação (ANPEd) – National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education, and representatives from the National Confederation of Education Workers, the Association of Municipal Secretaries of Education, the National Council of Secretaries of Education and the National Association of Directors of Higher Education Federal Institutions to decide the new path for the School of Manager in Basic Education policy (Aguiar, 2010, p.165). The group made important decisions as follows: a) discontinuity of the pilot programme on school management; b) the design of a new post graduate Diploma on School Management (DSM), with 400 hours, under the responsibility of ANPEd Working Group 5 (GT-5) or researchers indicated by the coordination of GT-5; c) the Graduate School of Education at Federal Universities should be the only provider of the new Diploma on School Management for states and municipalities. (Aguiar, 2010, p.165-166).

Professor Aguiar led the group of less than 10 academics, from three Universities, which designed the curriculum for the new DSM Programme for in-service school principal in order to guarantee “substantial changes in content and institutional setting” for principals' development (Aguiar, 2010, p.165). At that time, professor Aguiar was president of ANPEd and professor of Education in the Federal University of Pernambuco. She played a strong political role among education scholars in Brazil and was among the founders of Grupo de Trabalho 5 – Estado e Política Educacional (GT5) – Working Group 5 – State and Educational Policy from ANPEd (Stremel and Mainardes, 2018). The GT-5 is led by the macro-structural approaches of education policy (Azevedo and Aguiar, 2001, p. 55). The ANPEd associates view on education reflected on the Diploma on School Management Programme formulation as will be described in the following sections.

Literature review

The fundamental role of principals for school improvement is a consensus on the literature (Leithwood, Patten and Jantzi, 2010; Day et al. 2011; Day et al. 2016). To prepare principals to lead schools has

become a strategic issue in education policy all over the world, and principals' development has become a life-long learning process as well (Nicolaidou, 2008).

Formal requirements for leadership preparation and development vary across contexts. In the USA, for instance, several providers, such as universities, may be endorsed to deliver leadership programmes that meet the requirements stipulated in the standardized frameworks (Crow and Whiteman, 2016). In most Latin America countries, there is no professional standard nor governmental framework defining competences for school leaders. In Brazil, almost half public-school principals took office without a proper preparation as demonstrated by Oliveira and Carvalho (2018).

Studies have been done in order to identify the characteristics of high-quality leadership programmes. The research led by Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) based on eight pre-service principal training programmes in the USA, which were selected for their strong outcomes, found what make those programmes effective. The author highlights eight aspects: the alignment of a coherent curriculum with externally developed state and/or professional standards; an emphasis on instructional leadership and school improvement to guide the programme; philosophy and curriculum; the use of active and student-centred learning strategies; a teaching faculty that includes practitioners and scholars who are experts in their fields; diverse support structures such as formal mentoring systems and cohorts; a rigorous approach to participant selection; supervised internships or school attachments.

For Cozza et al. (2014), the characteristics for quality leadership programmes related to school improvement should meet some criteria, such as: coherent curriculum, program philosophy, active learning, faculty experts, professional support via cohort structure, recruitment and selection, and quality internships. Webber and Scott (2013) sustain that in developing countries, more attention should be paid to address strategies to deal with absenteeism of teachers and students, union issues, and provision of materials and facilities. The authors say that these basic needs must be addressed in principals' preparation and later, on principals' development, instructional issues should be addressed.

Principals' preparation programmes have been subject to critical scrutiny. Some critics argue graduate programmes in educational leadership tend to train managers rather than "leaders grounded in the 'educational' aspects of schooling who have a deep understanding of an appreciation for the purposes of schooling" (Murphy, 2006).

The UNESCO Report (2014) suggests that principals' development programmes in Latin America are not able to provide preparation that produces changes. They argue that principals' development and preparation have not addressed competencies linked to the instructional leadership that principals must exercise in relation to teachers and the teaching that takes place in the schools they lead. However, policymakers are still confident that school leaders' development plays an important role in improving quality of schools, which lead them to increases investment in training and preparation (Weinstein, et al., 2018).

Hess and Kelly's (2007) study of program curricula is widely quoted for its conclusions that the typical program content is not sufficiently oriented toward practical school leadership and management skills or teaching and learning.

Authors, such as Brundrett and Dering (2006), argue for a comprehensive and coherent curriculum to educate school principals, based on the knowledge base provided by research.

Knowledge base reference for school development programmes' content

Hallinger and Kovačević (2019) did a systematic review on 22 SCOPUS-indexed educational administration journals on education administration, from 1960 to 2018, to "illuminate the 'intellectual structure' of the field" (pp.335). They identified: "four key Schools of Thought that have emerged over

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time focusing on Leadership for Learning, Leadership and Cultural Change, School Effectiveness and School Improvement, and Leading Teachers.” (pp. 335)

The authors also show a list of top 20 most quoted authors, most influential scholars by co-quotations, most quoted article and most co-quoted documents, as listed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Top 20 in education administration, from 1960 to 2018 in Education Administration

Ord	Most quoted authors	Most influential scholars by co-quotation	Most quoted article	Most co-quoted documents
1	Leithwood, K.	Leithwood, K.	Robinson, V., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes.	Weick, K. (1976) Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems.
2	Hallinger, P.	Hallinger, P.	Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (1996). Reassessing the principal's role in school effectiveness.	Robinson, V. et al. (2008) The impact of leadership on student outcomes
3	Heck, R.	Fullan, M.	Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness.	Leithwood, K. et al. (2008) Seven strong claims about successful school leadership
4	Jantzi, D.	Harris, A.	Jeynes, W. (2005). A meta-analysis of parental involvement and student academic achievement.	Leithwood, K. (1994) Leadership for school restructuring.
5	Jeynes, W.	Hoy, W.	Jeynes, W. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and student academic achievement	Marks, H., & Printy, S. (2003) Principal leadership and school performance
6	Hoy, W.	Murphy, J.	Hartog, J. (2000). Over-education and earnings: Where are we, where should we go?	Hallinger, P. (2003) Leading educational change.
7	Louis, K.	Louis, K. S.	Mazzarol, T., & Soutar, G. N. (2002). "Push-pull" factors influencing international student destination choice.	Edmonds, R. (1979) Effective schools for the urban poor.
8	Harris, A.	Spillane, J.	Marks, H. M., & Printy, S. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance.	Fullan, M. (2003) Leading in a culture of change (Book)
9	Walker, A.	Hargreaves, A.	Sanders, W. L., Wright, S. P., & Horn, S. P. (1997). Teacher and classroom context effects on student achievement.	Fullan, M. (1991) The new meaning of educational change (Book)
10	Darling-Hammond, L.	Darling-Hammond, L.	Dufour, R. (2004). What is a "professional learning community"?	Spillane, J., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. (2004) Towards a theory of leadership practice.
11	Robinson, V.	Heck, R.	Monk, D. H. (1994). Subject area preparation of math and science teachers and student achievement.	Lortie, K.(1975) Schoolteacher. (Book)
12	Tschannen-Moran, M.	Bryk, A.	Bossert, S.T., Dwyer, D. C., Rowan, B., & Lee, G. V. (1982). The instructional management role of the principal.	Goodlad, J. (1984) A place called school: Prospects for the future. (Book)
13	Muijs, D.	Hopkins, D.	Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2003). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage.	York-Barr, J. & Duke, K. (2004) What do we know about teacher leadership?
14	Kyriakides, L.	Sammons, P.	Jeynes, W. (2003). The effects of parental involvement on minority children's achievement.	Spillane, J. et al. (2001) Investigating school leadership practice
15	Sammons, P.	Jantzi, D.	Groot, W., & Van Den Brink, H. M. (2000). Overeducation in the labour market: A meta-analysis.	Spillane, J. (2006) Distributed leadership.

16	Stoll, L.	Day, C.	Leithwood, K. (1994). Leadership for school restructuring	Theoharis, G. (2007) Social justice educational leaders and resistance.
17	Hanushek, E.	Ball, S.	Dolton, P., & Vignoles, A. (2000). The incidence and effects of overeducation in the UK graduate labour market.	Hallinger, P. (2005) Instructional leadership and the school principal.
18	Creemers, B.	Miles, M. TC	Kane, T. J., Rockoff, J. E., & Staiger, D. O. (2008). What does certification tell us about teacher effectiveness?	Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006) Professional learning communities
19	Fullan, M.	Reynolds, D.	Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2007). Teacher credentials and student achievement: Longitudinal analysis.	Hallinger, P. & Heck, R. (1998) Exploring principal's contribution to school effectiveness.
20	Murphy, J.	Hanushek, E.	Witziers, B., Bosker, R., & Kruger, M. (2003). Educational leadership and student achievement.	Bandura, A. (1993) Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning.

Source: Hallinger and Kovačević (2019)

Kenneth Leithwood was appointed as the most influential and co-quoted scholar in the field and author of top five most influential co-quoted article as shown in Table 1. His research has been consistent over time and has the school principal as its central study focus.

In 2019, Leithwood et al. published the “Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited”. Authors argue that, after ten years since they published the original paper (Leithwood et al., 2008), the evidences still endorse the four domains of leadership practice identified before as setting directions, building relationships and developing people, redesigning the organization to support desired practices, and improving the instructional program. However, the number of effective leadership practices, based on research evidence, has grown from 14 to 20 over (Leithwood et al., 2019, p.3), as presented in Table 2:

Table 2 – Framework for leadership practice

Domains of practice	Specific leadership practices
Set Directions	Build a shared vision
	Identify specific, shared, short-term goals
	Create high-performance expectations
	Communicate the vision and goals
Build Relationships and Develop People	Stimulate growth in the professional capacities of staff
	Provide support and demonstrate consideration for individual staff members
	Model the school's values and practices
	Build trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents
	Establish productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives
Develop the Organization to Support Desired Practices	Build collaborative culture and distribute leadership
	Structure the organization to facilitate collaboration
	Build productive relationships with families and communities
	Connect the school to its wider environment
	Maintain a safe and healthy school environment
	Allocate resources in support of the school's vision and goals
Improve the Instructional Program	Staff the instructional program
	Provide instructional support
	Monitor student learning and school improvement progress
	Buffer staff from distractions to their instructional work
	Participate with teachers in their professional learning activities

Source: Leithwood et al., 2019

The framework for leadership practice proposed by Leithwood et al. (2019) figures as an international reference for school principals' development as confirmed by the International Successful School

Principalship Project (ISSPP). ISSPP was the first research network whose purpose was to identify successful leadership practices in different contexts and countries (Day, 2011). This framework is also a reference for principals' development in a context of disadvantage and at places where leading for social justice is important, as highlighted by Moral et. al. (2018). This framework provides the analytical lens for the propose of this research.

Methods

Documents are a valuable source of qualitative data because “documents are part of the fabric of our world” (Love, 2003, p. 83). Documents may be useful in several areas of educational research. For example, Fernández (2018) used documents from teachers' development policies to analyse the narrative stories implicit in those documents. Document analysis seeks to clarify not only what the author meant, but also to ponder the meaning of the document's actual existence. It should be analysed not only by dealing with its contents, as produced by human beings, but also by dealing with its function within relational networks (Prior, 2008).

Since documents are “produced and preserved as a record of the past”, they can also be used as a primary source of data (Fitzgerald, 2012, p.297). In this research, courses syllabus, instructional material and references of the DSM programme were preserved in the Moodle learning management system (LMS) making it visible and traceable (Bowen, 2009).

Documents related to the DSC Programme as courses syllabi, content of instruction and international references have been downloaded from the LMS and comprise the main source of data. This study required focusing also on official documents, available on official websites as INEP and the Ministry of Education, which are public documents, produced for public consumption (Fitzgerald, 2012). As a public policy in education developed at the federal level, documents provided by the Ministry of Education and other government branches are used. Two articles written by Aguiar (2010; 2011) are especially important because they describe the context in which Diploma on School Management (DSM) programme was discussed, designed and implemented. They also describe content guidelines and the political disputes related to the programme's implementation. Aguiar had a privileged point of view, as she was the one coordinating the team that formulated the DSM Programme. A book published by INEP is also an important document. It describes the pilot programme provided under the School of Managers in Basic Education policy (Scholze, 2007). It shows the Ministry of Education point of view and the perspective of the team involved in the pilot programme at that time.

Data analysis was carried out in a three-stage process – condensing, coding and categorizing. In the first stage of analysis (condensing), the portions of data related to the topic of this study were retrieved from the LMS and selected. In the second stage (coding), each segment of relevant data was coded according to the subject it expressed (Gibbs, 2007). After capturing the essence of portions of data in the second stage, they were categorized in the third stage (categorizing).

The analysis of documents in this study was based on their interpretation with the purpose of detecting explicit and implicit meaning concerning the topic at hand.

Results

The Diploma on School Management (DSM) was offered by Public Universities in all Brazilian states and funded by the Ministry of Education (MEC) from 2007 to 2016. School leaders' enrolment was voluntary.

The DSM Programme curriculum formulation was guided by the principle that everyone has the right to education with social quality. At the end of the programme, school principals should have developed abilities to: a) Understand education as a basic social right and an instrument of human emancipation for

social justice; b) Promote the right to basic education with social quality, acting with transparency, collaborative work, community participation in the school decision process, ethics, critical and creative posture; c) Carry out and strengthen the democratic management in schools; d) Master and implement mechanisms and strategies that promote democratic management; e) Actively participate in the processes of elaboration and implementation of the School's Political-Pedagogical Project, including participation of the whole school community and the collaborative and collegial action; f) Develop, encourage and consolidate work processes and socio-educational relations at school, in favour of collaborative work, the sharing of power, the exercise of a pedagogy based on dialogue, respect for diversity and differences, freedom of speech, the construction of educational projects and the improvement of learning levels in the teaching processes; g) Understand the educational reality and school management as a dimension of the socio-cultural, political and economic processes that engender Brazilian education; h) Act consciously, with a view to strengthening decentralization processes in education and school, school autonomy and public funding of education; i) Intervene in the formulation and implementation of policies in the educational field, in order to consolidate the right to Basic Education, the democratic management of education, school autonomy and collaborative and participative work; j) Master and use information technology for organizing the work processes, taking them as important tools for the democratic management of education (MEC, 2009, p.3).

The DSM Programme comprises 400 hours, completed in approximately two academic years, delivered in blended learning methodology. Three core courses cover 45% of the Programme content. They are Fundamentals of The Rights to Education (60h), School Management Planning and Practices (60h) and Education Policy and Management (60h). In the course Living Project (120h) participants should create a school improvement plan following the principles of democratic management. It corresponds to 30% of the programme. Introduction to LMS (40h) takes 10% and the remaining 15% address technological workshop on web designing and contents related to school quality and health in school (Aguiar, 2011).

The three core courses contents are detailed in Table 3. In general, the assignments for the three core courses ask participants to read or watch videos, reflect critically on it, produce a short manuscript and upload it on LMS for discussion. Some readings were produced specially for the course, others are academic articles.

Table 3 – DSM Programme core course content and leadership practices analysis

Leadership Practice Leithwood et al., 2019	Course Content	Core Courses
Not apply.	A conceptual approach on human rights	Fundamentals of The Right to Education (41 references)
Not apply.	A historical approach on education as a right in the context of human rights	
Not apply.	Different conceptions for holding right to education	
Not apply.	The role of the state in enabling the right to education	
Not apply.	Feasibility of education as a right in Brazil	
Not apply.	The school principal as an agent of the right to education	
Not apply.	The curriculum as an instrument for enabling the law	
Provide instructional support	Curriculum theories Educational reform and new national curriculum guidelines	
Structure the organization to facilitate collaboration	Planning and school daily life	School Management Planning and Practices Content (57 references)
	The relationship among planning, plan and project	
	Conceptions of planning	
Building collaborative culture and distributed leadership	The school manager facing the challenge of participation in schoolwork planning, its dimensions and meanings	
Not apply.	Planning in education	
Not apply.	Theoretical and methodological approaches to institutional assessment	
Providing instructional support	The assessment of learning in the context of institutional assessment and the implementation of the political-pedagogical project at school	
Not apply.	Educational policy as a public policy in the context of Brazilian society	
Not apply.	The school and the classroom as the locus of embodiment of educational policy	

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Not apply.	Policy measures at school management	Education Policy and Management (69 references)
Building collaborative culture and distributed leadership	Democratic school management and education systems	
	Understand the concepts of school management, school management, autonomy and social function	
	Discuss the mechanisms for effective democratic management in schools	
Building productive relationship with families and communities	School council: participation and democratization of administrative, pedagogical, and financial management of education and school	
Not apply.	Understand school system	
Not apply.	Financing basic education: limits and possibilities	
Not apply.	Decentralized financial management: resource planning, application and monitoring	

Source: <http://186.193.48.66:23200/curso1/menu.htm> and Leithwood et al., 2019

The purpose of the course Fundamentals of the Rights to Education is to develop a critical reflection on the right to education, considering school management as an expression of social practice, as well as addressing democracy as a universal value in the historical construction of egalitarian society based on social justice. As shown in Table 3, the courses provide content on curriculum theory in a broad sense, with some connection with leadership practice of providing instructional support. It also covers the theoretical and philosophical basis of democracy and the right of education and how it is perceived in Brazil. In general, the course assessment is based on reading, critical reflexion and writing. For example, participants are required to read articles and documents in order to identify advances and/or setbacks in how the right to education has been historically considered by international agencies.

The course School Management Planning and Practices aims to discuss issues related to planning and evaluation of education systems and schools. It gives an understanding of the different meanings and dimensions that planning and evaluation can take in the process of organizing work in education, and their interfaces with the quality of education and school autonomy. This content can provide knowledge so that the principal can structure the organization to facilitate collaboration, as a leadership practice. Participants are required to read the national, state and municipal education plans, compare their objectives and goals, point out convergences and divergences, and analyse all the content critically. Another assessment activity asks participants to describe how their school has been conducting the learning and school assessments, how they can overcome the problems surrounding the assessments, organize and develop institutional evaluation, from a democratic management perspective, and make the evaluation an instrument to improve the pedagogical work at school. However, participants do not learn how to analyse the school reports on students' achievement in order to improve teaching and learning.

The goal of the Education Policy and Management course is to stimulate theoretical and practical reflection on education policies and school management in Brazil through the lens of democratic values and critical social theory. The concept of democratic management is discussed as well as the regulations of education in Brazil. Videos are used to discuss the history of education and democratic management in schools. At the end, it is necessary that school principals write a text linking the concepts taught and the actions they implemented in their school. The content focus on values that school principals should cultivate to lead democratically. It also provides knowledge about how the education system works and how it is funded in Brazil. However, the courses do not develop competencies to improve principals' practices to navigate in the education system. The core courses' content has not been modified to suit local demands or incorporate the new evidences resulting from research. Therefore, it remained static for almost ten years.

The purpose of the DSC Programme seems to be the development of school principals' awareness of political and social values that should guide them at work. DSM Programme claims that principals should

reflect on democratic management and develop collegiate management practices in order to contribute to effective learning outcomes.

Considering 167 references provided by the courses, as shown in Table 3, only Stephen Ball, a part-time distinguished Service Professor of Sociology of Education, from the Institute of Education at University College London, is appointed by Hallinger and Kovačević (2019) as one of the most influential scholars by co-quotations in the field of education administration, as shown in Table 1. Professor Ball is member of The Critical Institute, a non-profit organisation that promotes debates, learning and collaboration on world class critical research, teaching and practice (<http://www.criticalinstitute.org/about/>).

Discussion

The DSM Programme philosophy emphasizes on the political role of school principals in a macro-level approach. The displacement of school principals' development policy moves from the improvement of students' learning and a school level approach, to the development of a higher awareness of principals on democratic management practices.

The opportunity for a change in the school principals' development policy was perceived by academics associated to ANPEd, who were not happy with the fact that Lula da Silva's administration enhanced the education policy implemented by Cardoso's administration (Burton, 2012). Gaudêncio Frigotto, a prominent Marxist scholar in the field of education policy in Brazil, said that Lula da Silva's administration "did not dispute an antagonistic educational project in terms of content, method and form." (Frigotto, 2011, p. 241). The antagonist project "concerns the radical transformation of this social form (capitalism), building, by revolutionary praxis, a new socialist society" Saviani (2017, p. 658). Led by critical theorist scholars, the policy was displaced. This decision was made by a specific interest group including academics and university representatives and excluding school leaders. By excluding them, the process were much less democratic and participative than supposed to be.

The creators of the post-graduation DSM Programme adopted the macro level perspective that focuses on enhancing school principals' awareness of their political agency in the education system as well as the implementation of democratic management in schools. The program aimed to develop political and social values for school leadership. The competences developed by school principals at the end of DSM Programme are not related to those required to lead school for improvement (Grissom and Loeb, 2011; Grissom et. al., 2013).

The programme was designed by academics from the field of education policy with little experience with school leadership theory and practice. An analysis on the courses content and references shows that authors rely on educational critical theorists, such as Stephen Ball. Even the seminal work of Leithwood and Hallinger, quoted as the most influential work in the field of education administration, management and leadership were ignored.

The international knowledge base from education administration (Hallinger and Kovačević, 2019) was not provided to participants. From the 20 leadership practices described by Leithwood et al. (2019) only five were barely mentioned in the entire programme, showing a poor connection of the DSM curriculum and the research evidences in the field.

The courses assessment relies mostly on reading, reflecting and asking participants to write and share their perspectives on different issues. The creators of the courses privileged a theoretical perspective, as perceived by them as more sophisticated and not instrumental (Aguar, 2010). The content provides knowledge for school principals in different subjects but very few on leadership practices for improving teaching and learning connecting theory and practice.

Some authors highlight that high socioeconomic societies are more instructional and learning-orientated than that lower and disadvantaged socioeconomic contexts (Hallinger and Murphy 1986; L alas and

Morgan, 2006). Others argue that unequal countries should deal with questions related to social justice issues (Moral, 2018). Taking this into consideration, it is expected that a programme designed for Brazilian school principals should include discussion about values as democratic leadership, social justice, inclusion, inequalities and so on. However, it is surprising that a national policy for school improvement does not provide guidance on teaching and learning as recommended by the most qualified research in the field (Darling- Hammond et al., 2010).

The SMBE policy ended without any evaluation (Sotanni, 2018). The ambitious policy goals were never accomplished.

Conclusion

The turnaround on SMBE policy reflects the “theoretical disputes in human sciences and education in relation to school objectives, types of organization and management and the conduction of the teaching and learning processes” (Libâneo, 2016, p. 40). The initial pilot programme focused on school improvement at school level. However, critical academic theorists perceived the approach as superficial and instrumental. They were assigned to design the DSM Programme core courses focusing on the political role of school principals, favouring macro level discussions in order to improve the promotion of educational values by the participant agency. The leadership competences to lead the schools in the technical and practical aspects, such as the definition of directions, people and organization development to support the desired practices and the improvement of the instructional program using attainment data, were not considered (Leithwood et al., 2019).

The creators of the DSM Programme did not take into consideration the researchers from the educational administration field, whose seminal work built it. Their work were not quoted in readings produced by core courses authors nor listed as references (Hallinger and Kovačević, 2019). Instead, critical theorists, such as Stephen Ball, inspired the choice of the readings used in the programme. Brundrett and Dering (2006) argue that the development of programmes that does not rely on a strong knowledge base increases the chance of failure.

The authors claim that school principals in Brazil have the right to learn leadership practices that contribute to student learning improvement, taking advantage of the scientific research carried out in this field worldwide. This does not mean uncritical assimilation of leadership practices adopted in developed countries, but their adaptation to fit the Brazilian context (Ramos, 1996). It is also necessary to increase research in Brazil on school leadership, as developed by Moraes et al. (2019) exploring school leaders' practices that sustain student learning.

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