

YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN PARTICIPATORY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL

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Abstract: This case study presents the analysis of the effects of the mobilization of the student leadership in favor of sustainable school, via participatory management strategies by analyzing the content of the survey responses applied to students of a public school on the Conference on Sustainable School, and the deployment and mobilization implemented by them from the results. From these analyzes, it was identified the perception of the students on human relationships at school, the appropriateness of using and the condition of school spaces and actions with which students undertake to manage better in school.

Keywords: youth leadership, human dignity, quality of life, sustainable school.

Introduction

The relationship between citizenship and democratic management is due to the chance that the strategies of participation enable the leadership of students, training skills for the practice of citizenship. The administrative structure of municipal schools in the city of Campinas / SP, is organized in committees and groups in favor of participatory management. Among them, we highlight the School Boards and Standing Committees Evaluation. These groupings represented by managers, teachers, parents, staff and students should meet periodically to review the actions and school needs in their structural, organizational routines, teaching / learning process and relational environment.

Through these committees, the school offers, in a planned and systematic way, opportunities for student leadership. Every school unit has the autonomy to develop strategies to ensure the performance of students in this process.

"Protagonist Student" is the focus of this single case study on the participatory school management, experience developed in a school unit of the Municipal Education Network of Campinas, by promoting the Internal Conference on Sustainable School and assemblies and

actions derived from this event. It is recognized the school as one of the pillars of formation, consolidation and transformation of social practices. The conference is a proposal launched in partnership by the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Education of Brazil with the purpose of involving students, teachers, youth and community in the challenge of coping together with the building of an educated Brazilian society, educating environmentally towards sustainability (Brazil, 2013).

Knowing the students' perception of the quality of human relationships and the qualities of the school environment was the initial purpose of this study.

In order to mobilize the reflections of the students during the Conference on Sustainable School, it became a collective activity of dialogue on the relationship of students with people and spaces of schools. The resource used was an objective questionnaire with 10 questions, and the development of one of the spaces observation framework, for which it is possible to identify how students are perceived in school and how they perceive the school spaces. The questions were organized into three thematic subgroups - dignity, citizenship and solidarity culture.

Answers to the questionnaires and the tables were tabulated by the group of students, representatives on CPA (Standing Committee of Evaluation) and became instrument for planning, development of students and school improvement activities.

The results of the survey at the Conference and the actions that students mobilized are the corpus of the analysis presented.

The application of the instrument was performed by students of the 9th year that were prepared previously for understanding each question. Thus, these students acted as leaders of the groups and, in addition to applying the material, they also answered the questions. From the beginning, applicators students conducted the experiment, to avoid the influence of teachers in mobilizing dialogues reflection.

The responses were computed by a new group of students, elected representatives of each group to play the role of analysts of the results and future organizers and negotiators for the actions and investments needed to improve the quality of the relationship between their peers and school management. The class performed the counting of the first part of the questionnaire, presenting four specific results, containing 168 responses in total. The results were analyzed by general estimative of answers to each question and objective overview of the opinions for each area discussed by groups of students. The researcher carried out this step via content analysis technique.

Management education in citizenship

The school for citizenship is, according to Gadotti (1999, p. 89-90), "part of the reconstruction of ethical-political education". Therefore, citizenship eventually became the core of education, and school is recognized as an important learning space for collective coexistence and political citizenship, positioning itself among the top "pillars of formation, consolidation and transformation of social practices" (Guimaraes Fung, 2012, p. 15).

The way to realize the commitment to political or civic education in Brazil is the school participatory school management. Teachers, students, administrative staff, families and community influence all the management movement of a school, people being aware of this process or not. Participate consciously, however, it is what gives the subject a sense of identity and group membership. The word "participation" brings in its etymology the way to receive (Santos, 2004). The common use of the word suggests participate in the action or be part of something. So, we can say that those who participate both cooperate and receive someone else's largesse. In this conception, participative management is an alternative to integration and cooperation among members of the school community aiming a better governance of the school. Being a school made of individuals who perceive, understand and judge the facts and needs differently, we need to establish dialogue among the parties and integrate students in this process, as well as being users / recipients of the school's services, they are the majority of the school population, and so, need to participate with their action-reflection.

Participation in any social group develops the individual and collective empowerment. Empowerment is essential for effective citizenship. Simon presents strategies for community involvement, in order to promote the achievement of empowerment and participatory management of any institution. Here are some of them:

- Encouraging people to gather in groups, to share experiences, knowledge and skills;
- Identifying common interests in the group and organize activities around these if necessary;
- Encouraging people to make group projects requiring a range of skills, recognizing strengths within the group (Simon, 2007, p.03).

Schools must develop a strategy that provides them this learning. School experiences of participation in conversation circles, groups of assemblies, student unions, school boards etc., are the best known ways to promote management with participation of students. These strategies can be applied to groups of students, respecting age limits and maturity, in order to share the school organization and the welfare of the production of those who make up the

community, as first lessons in citizenship.

Citizenship and participatory management have direct relationship because, according to Marshall (1967), to define citizenship, one must consider the civil, political and social dimensions. The civil dimension considers the rights to personal liberty; the political dimension includes the right to participate and exercise their political power; the social dimension refers to the right to economic and biopsychosocial well-being. An educational project cannot neglect these dimensions "under the risk of being deeply threatening to destroy an entire heritage of fundamental emancipator achievements of modern universalism" (Rego, 2008, p.153).

Participatory management, in schools, primarily promotes the political right, but also guarantees the others, because, by democratic action, there may be the recognition that the public is not to serve the individual interests but to the common good (Covre, 1998), and youth participation in school can be an important strategy to accomplish this type of management.

Youth leadership: what's this?

“Proton” and “agon” are Greek roots for the word "role". The first means "main" and the second "fight", forming the concept of the primary fight or main fighter (Costa, 2004). In the literature, the protagonist is the main actor with which the whole plot is on. Linking the two references, one can say that a protagonist is someone able to face confrontation, be linked to the facts and to link up with them, facing the struggles. Literary plots and fights put on the characters involved, challenges, conflicts to be clarified and problems to be solved. Thus, it is expected the actor protagonist will play an important role in the outcome of the story, and act to ensure its defense and achievements.

In this study, the term “protagonist” comes with the adjective “youth”, focusing the stage of life when people are teenagers and young people, often considered unfit to assume leadership. Are they? Based on the theory of moral development of Piaget, autonomy begins to develop around 9-11 years old. At this stage, there is the inter-cooperation among peers and adults, the rules become an agreement of wills that can be changed depending on the context and the community, there is a predominance of distributive justice, ties of solidarity and reciprocity are formed, and the need to take responsibility for their actions is felt (Lourenço, 1992). In addition, the teenager is able to perform abstractions, analyze situations, draw up hypotheses and argue about the situations within their own perspective (Sousa, 2006), being able to be part of the solution to challenging situations. Based on these arguments, it is

possible to be a teenage protagonist.

Kohlberg suggests that we need to provide life with situations, which intervene in support of the intellectual and moral development of adolescents. He proposes school actions that transform school life in an exercise of building a fair society, or fair community as appointed psychologist. In this scenario, the essential virtues to social life would be developed - participation, solidarity, trust and collective responsibility (Kohlberg, 1981).

Ribas Jr. (2013) says youth leadership is an alternative to the bipolarity consumption/rebellion. The author argues that joining the capitalist appeal has led to alienation and anomie, to social problems or social integration forced by the necessity of work, faced by poor youth who needs to earn a living. Joining the rebellion generates indignation, defense, and desire for freedom due to social transformation projects aiming to free young people from being cheated by empty speeches. The leadership at the school called to active participation, providing opportunities for adolescents and young exercise to influence the course of events, becoming an agent of change, responsible for the solution of social problems.

Relationships between people and environmental quality

The definition of quality relationships established within the school is the image of the actions of all those who make up the community. Students, however, are the majority of this population. We need to ascertain the awareness of the balance of the environment, as one of the highest impact factors, how they relate and enjoy the places and the collective activities. One can learn citizenship, respect and build true principles and practices aimed at ensuring human dignity in daily contact with people who are not part of the family or affective group. School, in its educational nature, is an appropriate setting for Human Rights Education, a planned set of actions in support of formation of a culture of respect for human dignity by promoting and living the values of liberty, justice, equality, solidarity, cooperation, tolerance and peace, which should turn into practice (Benevides, 2007, p. 01).

The use of the word "respect" is essential to establish a culture of human rights and qualitative relationships among people. Respecting is different from tolerating, highly publicized and politically correct. According to Felipe and Bello (2009), "tolerance" carries a great risk behind it, trapping the man the limits of their resilience to withstand anything that does not know or do not understand, to contain the outrage with the other. Respect requires knowing, accepting the other with its features.

Shaping the values and principles underlying the construction of coexistence and

ensuring human dignity in school is the central question of education via leadership. The practice of guided relationships in freedom means having and granting freedom, a combination that requires, although contradictory, renunciation of personal desires, according to the collective decisions. To think "freedom" in the school community, it is necessary to emphasize the responsibility to promote "freedom of expression, thought, creation and collective organization at school (Bastos, 2002).

Institutional values are what can be objective if the rules are explicit. People's values constitute the subjective aspect, used to assess, evaluate others and spaces. Nevertheless, thinking of the subjective questions, can you ask to mobilize people for a trial of relationships or a self-trial if there is no objectivity guaranteed?

Noting the views of people about justice, respect and freedom, we can infer about what they are able to practice against the call for the practice of solidarity and cooperation, since the former are the principles and the latter are actions and, together, they are capable of generating peace coexistence. The coexistence that, according to Maia and Castro (1999), is by means of those making use of intelligence sees the beauty and the sense of life. People interact, cooperate, and build their stories within a space. Thus, the relationship man-environment is an important item to be integrated to the actions of leadership. The discussions on improvements in school always culminate with suggested changes in environmental aspects and conditions.

Corraliza (1997), environmental psychologist, argues that the behavior of individuals is the cause of "environmental problems", and that environmental changes, in turn, will affect the quality of life of those people. Thus, these problems are "problems of humanity" (p. 27). Thus, the author presents the direct relationship between what the human being chooses to do, rationally and emotionally with the space that one enjoys, the conditions of this environment and, on the other hand, the relationship between environmental conditions and the state of life of people.

Pinheiro (1997) explains that man's relation with space is both utilitarian, aesthetics and ethics. It can be said that, in this relationship feelings, there are perceptions and intentions that establish how to use and care about what each have and the place that is shared. Ittelson et al (1974) indicate that the physical environment is directly linked to its social dimension; functional and symbolic attributes should be analyzed in a complementary manner. Given this knowledge, it is necessary to think about the symbolism of the space and objects that make up the school environment, and how students and professionals enjoy and use these experiences.

Reflections on the ethical question about the interrelation Man versus Environment, the

systematic use of the term "environmental care", used in ordinary mode when you want to talk about taking good care of each other or something. The term integrates the studies as an essential thing to be learned through environmental education, expanding the actions that are restricted to the proper use and zeal for spaces and objects to the concept of protection of places, their resources and welfare.

Man become a conscious protagonist in shaping environments to ensure the sustainability and health in the use and care relationship, by ensuring balance and spaces. Together, man and environment form a body, which remains in good or poor conditions. Caring requires however, according to studies done by Pinheiro and Pinheiro (2007), not just an intellectual decision, but the ability to be empathic, perceptive and sensitive to the environment and living together, be someone (or a social group) who participate.

Relationships and the adequacy of school environment serve a primary purpose of learning. All actions and conditions are variables that affect directly or indirectly the results of the acquisition of the required knowledge, culturally and socially produced. Therefore, thinking environmental quality in school is also pondering the creation of sustainable conditions for the learning to happen.

The word "sustainability" brings in it the call to consider, in all decisions relating to school, saving elements, society and environment, school and a social space. Levett (1998) suggested a model, known as three-ring circus or triple bottom line, in which we notice an intersection of interdependence in a graphic, where there is the perception that culture, economy and the environment suffer permanent influence from one another.

In this point of view, education for sustainability carried out through participatory process, will lead to the sustainable development strategy, based on the feelings of "ownership" by various stakeholder groups.

The organization, actions and principles of a school community directly affect the learning of its members, whether students or teachers. Thus, it is necessary to discuss these issues so that everyone who builds it, will be accountable. School is "a social world that has its own life characteristics, its rhythms, its rites, its language, its imagination, its own ways of regulation and transgression, its own system of production and symbols management" (Forquin, 1993, p. 167). Thus, the school is a space where you can create different relations of common culture, if it is produced intentionally. This intentionality must mobilize to act as cultural space of knowledge and experience transaction (Vygotsky, 1998). It depends on a good contract mediated by values, beliefs and institutional social signs (Bruner, 2001) that will influence meanings of life in the consciousness of its actors.

Taking care of the place, taking care of yourself and taking care of the collective law and efficient management of the relationship among all the elements, are what make up the school sustainability of proposals presented as challenges to student actors; their perceptions of the objects are analyzed in this work.

Human dignity

Values

The first set of questions is entitled "Human Dignity" and contains the items respect, advocacy and use of ethical and civic attitudes for which students must opt for the "yes", "no" or "parts" as revealing their views on their own conduct.

The difference between the students who perceive themselves as respectful of the people in their dignity (66); those who marked "don't respect" (9); or do it in parts (93), lights a warning sign on the principle of "respect", understood as a key to building a healthy coexistence in school. These figures show that the safety of the student who respects the dignity of persons covers only 39.28% of the respondents, a very low rate.

When it comes to commitment to human rights, the "yes" (75) and the "parts" (75) tied, and only 18 students assumed to disengage from this cause. The positive aspect of commitment to human rights represents 44.64%.

They perceive themselves as people who do not behave using the concepts learned and attitudes about ethics and citizenship, 5.35% of the students. "In parts", 41.07% and 53.57% of the students use the concepts and attitudes learned.

The "yes" in this issue, brings a positive mark leading to the possibility that, in the previous questions, the students who answered "parts" are on their way to training for respectful (14,29%) and action in defense of human rights (8,93%).

Under either perspective, only about half the population of students of school acting based on ethical principles, respect and defend human dignity.

Taking as reference the thought of Benevides (2007), this school needs to organize itself with students for "the formation of a culture of respect for human dignity by promoting and living the values of liberty, justice, equality, solidarity, cooperation" (p.1). Students should be the protagonists of this story. It is necessary to "create, influence, share and consolidate mentalities, customs, attitudes, habits and behaviors that result, all of the essentials ... that should turn into practice" (p. 01).

Enhance learning

Learning, isn't that school was created for? So why isn't it natural that all of the school community have attitudes that favor the conditions, so that they can succeed in learning? Students need to understand that learning belongs to them, and that teachers, administrators and the school environment are there to organize and promote the right conditions for this event. They must establish a direct and active relationship to the study.

In this particular case, less than half of the students see themselves working with actions for the development of learning. It is notorious in the results of the classes. The conclusion of the class representatives, from the analysis of the results of the groups is that there is a direct relationship between that conduct and the learning performance. The students based on assessment system data made the comparison with the answers given to this question:

- Students in the 6th grade – 75% of them see themselves as acting on behalf of the study, presenting the same percentage of students with general performance learning within the school's goal, reaching the concept good (12/13 students) or great (8/8 students). Therefore, there was learning between 60 and 100 percent of the knowledge that make up the curriculum studied;

- Students of the 7th grade, where 31.25% answered "yes", totaling 52.23% of the students overall performance learning within the school's goal, reaching the concept good (12/14 students) or great (4/5 students). It is also the highest percentage of students among those who help to promote a suitable environment for learning. It can be inferred that at least 21% act more favorably than they may realize;

- The 8th graders, who have 25% of responding "yes", have 46% of the students overall performance learning within the school's goal, reaching the concept good (12 students) or great (2 students), a result that positively surprised the representative of the class and the class itself, as they are "labeled" as the worst kind of behavior. Unfortunately, this surprise - that seemed positive - was revised with more detailed information and the students realized that it was not realistic because of the syllabus that the teachers develop is adapted and these students have not won requirements and learning at curriculum learning cycle they are in, but the previous (6th and 7th graders). Among the students who answered "parts" and "no" to the question, we see a draw, each group with 37.50%. Of these, it can be inferred that 21% tend to a more active management for the sake of learning than can perceive.

- Students in the 9th grade, graduating elementary school students, have 42.85% of perceiving themselves as active for the quality for learning. 46.03% of students are in general performance learning within the school's goal, reaching the concept good (8/13 students) or great (3/5 students). The other students (57.15%), positioned themselves to "parts" in the

criteria, of which only 3.18% seem to act more actively than they realize in their learning process, a much lower percentage of students compared to the other school years.

Reflecting

The organization, actions and principles of a school community directly affect the learning of its members. So, it is necessary that everyone take responsibility to understand what the learning process is and how it is characterized because, usually, the school thinks about teaching, but teaching only occurs when there is learning and, according to Teixeira (2013), the principal in this relationship is the human ability to educate oneself.

Educating oneself is much more than repeat experience or knowledge. One uses one's intellectual abilities to create and modify experiments or received knowledge. It is being able to modify one's behavior as a result of an experiment. It goes beyond the mere acquisition of skills, habits.

In order to the learning or educating processes occur, it is necessary, the desire to learn; a model; performing practical tasks; being active in the process; being called to consider facts, evaluate results, compare situations, exercise judgment etc. The degree of learning is directly connected to the utility and subject to meaningful experiences that come in; one must have knowledge of the results, acknowledge mistakes and seek to correct them, and practice the new knowledge not to miss what was learned. Learning requires the leadership of the student; he/she is the main actor in the process of understanding, retention, practice, review and application of knowledge in new situations. If refusing to this work, there will be no learning.

The call for the acquisition of scientific, cultural and social knowledge is essential to quality of life and humanization of people. The mission of teenagers integrates the challenge to promote and protect the right of everyone to education with learning. It is urgent that they realize themselves as protagonists in the success or failure of this purpose.

The challenge presented to the young protagonists to build a sustainable school, with efficient management of human relations and use of the spaces for the purpose of learning, has been taking care of the place, taking care of yourself and the rules in favor of collective well-being.

Leadership is learned. There will be a spontaneous action of participation and co-responsibility with the school management. There must be provocation and the opportunity to moments of dialogue, reflection and sharing of problem solving among managers, teachers and school students. Events suggested by the Ministry of Education to the school, as the Internal Conference on Sustainable School, are not the only way to trigger leadership.

Certainly, the sharing of thoughts about the well-being of people and the quality of the school environment cause an impact on the awareness that whatever may happen at school relates to the students. School is made by people who may be experiencing a good or bad group living, affecting the achievement of the objective of learning and teaching.

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