

STATE OF KNOWLEDGE: WHAT DOES RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT THE SEARCH FOR IDEB RESULTS, BETWEEN THE YEARS 2011-2021?

ESTADO DO CONHECIMENTO: O QUE DIZEM AS PESQUISAS ACERCA DA BUSCA POR RESULTADOS DO IDEB, ENTRE OS ANOS DE 2011-2021?

ESTADO DEL CONOCIMIENTO: ¿QUÉ DICE LA INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE LA BÚSQUEDA DE RESULTADOS DEL IDEB, ENTRE LOS AÑOS 2011-2021?



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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to describe and systematize research conducted from 2011 to 2021, which discusses the IDEB and the pursuit of quantitative and/or qualitative education outcomes. Data were analyzed through two categories, based on Foucault's Discourse Analysis (DA) (2008), using the archaeological method, namely: discursive regularities and dispersion. Discursive regularities were identified, such as the fragility of the IDEB as an indicator of the quality of teaching in public schools and a conception of quality focused on the labor market and employability. Furthermore, the machinery of the IDEB influences the pursuit of results representing quantity in the educational field. Regarding dispersion, it was found that, although the IDEB is not a precise reflection of education quality, no resistance attitudes towards the index were identified, as actions aimed at achieving satisfactory results continue to be developed.

KEYWORDS: IDEB. Quality of education. Results.

RESUMO: *Este trabalho objetiva descrever e sistematizar as pesquisas realizadas dos anos de 2011-2021, que apresentam discussão em torno do IDEB e a busca por resultados quantitativos e/ou qualitativos da educação. Os dados foram analisados através de duas categorias, a partir da Análise do Discurso (AD) de Foucault (2008), por meio do método arqueogenalógico, sendo elas: regularidades discursivas e a dispersão. Identificou-se, como regularidades discursivas, a fragilidade do IDEB como indicador da qualidade do ensino nas escolas públicas, além de uma concepção de qualidade voltada para o mercado de trabalho e empregabilidade. Ademais, a maquinaria do IDEB influencia na busca por resultados que representam o quantitativo no âmbito educacional. Quanto à dispersão, constatou-se que, embora o IDEB não seja um reflexo preciso da qualidade da educação, não foram identificadas atitudes de resistência em relação ao índice, pois as ações destinadas a alcançar resultados considerados satisfatórios continuam sendo desenvolvidas.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: IDEB. Qualidade da educação. Resultados.

RESUMEN: *Este trabajo tiene como objetivo describir y sistematizar la investigación realizada entre 2011-2021, que presenta una discusión en torno a IDEB y la búsqueda de resultados cuantitativos y / o cualitativos en la educación. Los datos fueron analizados a través de dos categorías, basadas en el Análisis del Discurso (DA) de Foucault (2008), utilizando el método arqueogenalógico, a saber: regularidades discursivas y dispersión. Las regularidades discursivas fueron la fragilidad del IDEB como indicador de la calidad de la educación escolar pública y una concepción de calidad centrada en el mercado y la empleabilidad. Además, la maquinaria del IDEB influye en la búsqueda de resultados que representen lo cuantitativo en el campo educativo. En relación a la dispersión, se observa que, aunque el IDEB no represente la calidad de la educación, no se identifican actitudes de resistencia en relación al índice, ya que continúan desarrollándose acciones dirigidas a la obtención de resultados considerados satisfactorios.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: IDEB. Calidad de la educación. Resultados.

Introduction

Research in the field of education is increasingly relevant in society as it contributes to obtaining answers to social, political, and environmental issues, as well as to the formation of new contexts and theories. In this vein, we highlight postgraduate programs, which expanded in Brazil starting in 1960 and were regulated by Decree No. 977/65, dated December 3, 1965, as significant in this regard.

Postgraduate education is essential for the development of science in the country and for democratizing access to knowledge. The population becomes aware of what is being investigated in broader spheres through research. Scientific expansion is crucial for social development and improving the living conditions of global communities; therefore, it is important to ensure scientific rigor to prioritize the quality of these programs and their research.

Many are the objects and research areas investigated in postgraduate programs, which contribute, moreover, to the construction of new works, as is the case with this study, called "State of Knowledge (SoK)," which "seeks to know, systematize, and analyze the production of the scientific field on a specific theme [...]" (Morosini; Nascimento; Nez, 2021, p. 71, our translation). The intention of this study, in particular, is to seek to build, from a data-driven perspective, a more solid understanding of what has already been produced about the research object in postgraduate education, which is the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB), in order to contribute to the writing of the ongoing dissertation.

The IDEB was created in 2007 by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), with the objective, according to the discourse of the Ministry of Education (MEC), of assessing the quality of primary education in Brazil. It evaluates, on a scale of 0 to 10, school dropout rates and student learning, and according to the sum of the index, the higher (lower) the result obtained by the school, the better (worse) the quality of education offered by it. Additionally, the indices, especially the IDEB, serve as a tool for guiding educational policies.

The data collection source was the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations of CAPES and the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD). For the organization of the analysis of the accessed material, two categories were worked with, based on Foucault's Discourse Analysis (2008), through the arche-genealogical method, namely: discursive regularity and dispersion.

This work is organized into five sections, in addition to this introduction. The first one refers to the methodological procedures of the study, where the methodology used for the

treatment of the collected data will be addressed. Next, in the section "Learning to Walk, Walking," the path taken in the construction of this investigation is outlined. The following section lists the title "What do scientific productions say about IDEB and the quest for results," in which the summary of the analyzed works is presented objectively. Subsequently, the topic "Analyzing the Findings" will be addressed, followed by two subtopics, namely "Discursive Regularities" and "Dispersion," referring to the two formulated categories, where the analysis of the research results will be presented. Finally, we will discuss the topic, the conclusions raised from the study, and the final considerations of the research.

Methodological Procedures

Although the research project that gave rise to this work was not submitted to an Ethics Committee, all necessary ethical precautions for scientific research are assumed here, as "education must strive for the pursuit of truth, as it is a matter of logic and an ethical-moral requirement that students, future professionals, be prepared to enter the job market in an honest and dignified manner" (Tagata, 2008, p. 121, our translation).

In discourse analysis, "[...] the materiality of language breaks with a purely linguistic perspective" (Marques, 2016, p. 263, our translation), therefore, for Foucault, discourse is the very practice of the subject. Practices constructed through power relations. It is formed by statements that follow a formation rule. Statements are always recurring events in practice, and it is precisely the event that constitutes discourse. Discourse constructs knowledge, and therefore, also regulates it.

The archeo-genealogical method not only seeks to identify why a discourse emerges but also what sustains it within society: power relations, the knowledge that arises from these relations, and that end up generating new knowledge, along with the will to truth characteristic of a certain period, together with the interests at stake. Disputes are inherent in all spheres, as is their relationship with those who are silenced.

Foucault (2008, p. 132, our translation) highlights that "the regularity of a sentence is defined by the laws of a language, and that of a proposition by the laws of a logic, the regularity of statements is defined by the discursive formation itself." We can identify what continuous and regularity are, following a discursive order. Dispersal, on the other hand, is related to what is discontinuous, suppressed/excluded from discourse.

Learning to Walk, Walking

Wright Mills (2009), presenting ways to stimulate sociological imagination, emphasizes the need to find common denominators and differentiated factors within the survey conducted on the investigated object. In this sense, he both guides the construction of a state of knowledge about the worked object and underscores the indispensability of presenting the similarities and dissimilarities identified therein. We can relate such guidance precisely to what we propose to achieve: to build a theoretical bibliographic survey and categorize according to their regularities and dispersions.

The initial investigations were conducted on July 12, 2022, on the following research platforms: Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), Catalog of Theses and Dissertations of CAPES, website of the Postgraduate Program in Education of the State University of Rio Grande do Norte (POSEDUC/UERN), and the Brazilian Journal of Policy and Administration in Education (RBP AE). The descriptors for conducting the search on the platforms were based on the adoption of the boolean "AND," representing "E."

The descriptors used were: "IDEB" AND "quality of education" AND "results control." In the four platforms searched, the findings were not satisfactory in terms of quantity. Surprisingly, only one was found in BDTD and none in the others. The descriptors were modified; instead of "results control," only "results" was used, which significantly increased the number of works found. Even though it was recognized that the descriptor "results" was broader, meaning it could find research that addressed results but was not closely related to the object under investigation, it was chosen to use it. Several works were discarded by excluding titles as they diverged significantly from the object.

Using the descriptors mentioned above: "IDEB" AND "quality of education" AND "results," in BDTD, one hundred and four results were identified. After refining the search by year (2011-2021), there were still ninety-five works, including seventy dissertations and twenty-five theses. From the titles, many were already discarded, a total of seventy-six, including some works repeated on the same platform. This exclusion was done based on the deviation of the works from the investigated object, as the descriptors were close, but the content of the study was not. Exploratory reading of abstracts and keywords of 13 dissertations and 6 theses was conducted, selecting five dissertations and one thesis for analysis. In the analysis, besides the title, abstract, and keywords, the introduction and conclusions of the scientific productions were considered. These works discussed topics that aligned with the

descriptors used for the search, namely: "IDEB," "quality of education," and "results."

In the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations of CAPES, the first search resulted in thirty works with the same descriptors mentioned above. When refined by year, twenty-one remained. It is worth noting that on the platform, only works published until the year 2019 were available. Out of these twenty-one, there were only two theses. After reading the abstract and keywords of eight researches, two dissertations and one thesis remained, but one of the dissertations had already been found in BDTD. In this case, one dissertation and one thesis were left for analysis in the CAPES Catalog.

In RBPAE, two articles were found, always with the same descriptors. When refined by year of publication, the same two works remained. One of them was excluded based on the title, and the second, after reading the abstract and keywords, was also excluded. Thus, no work was selected from RBPAE, which was surprising.

On the (POSEDUC/UERN) website, as it did not present the option to refine the search, it was necessary to read all the titles of the dissertations, year by year, one by one. From 2011 to 2019 (the last year of publication of works on the website), a total of two hundred and eight researches were found, from all lines, where the abstract and keywords of only one from 2011, two from 2012, one from 2018, and one from 2019 were analyzed. However, after reading the article, I found that none were chosen for analysis, as they did not match the investigated theme.

Thus, a total of eight works were analyzed, including the dissertations by Klauck (2012), Lopes Assis (2018), Luz (2021), Oliveira (2015), and Silva (2017), as well as the thesis by Audino (2020), all available in the Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD). In addition, the dissertation by Silva (2011) and the thesis by Silva (2018) were examined, accessible through the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES).

Here, it is understood that the EC's objective is not precisely to relate what has been produced in the academic scenario to the researched object, but in order to understand how the researched object has been addressed in the research to present a differential to be investigated, it is necessary to make such an approximation. Thus, it was necessary to reread most of the abstracts to identify the works that would indeed be interesting for analysis. Next, we will see the table with the mapping carried out regarding the data disclosed by the IDEB and the search for quantitative and qualitative results of education.

Chart 1 - Mapping of the studies analyzed

Autor/Ano	Natureza do estudo	Título do trabalho	Objetivo
Audino (2020)	Tese	A QUALIDADE DA EDUCAÇÃO NA RELAÇÃO ENTRE O IDEB E A GESTÃO EDUCACIONAL: Efeitos, Limites e Possibilidades	Compreender a relação do Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica – IDEB com a gestão educacional e os efeitos na Rede Estadual de Ensino do Rio Grande do Sul/RS
Klauck (2012)	Dissertação	INDICADORES DE QUALIDADE DE ENSINO: estudo em escola destaque no Ideb	Compreender em que consiste a qualidade de ensino na perspectiva da própria escola
Lopes Assis (2018)	Dissertação	Os sujeitos docentes e a qualidade da educação básica: indicadores de rendimento escolar da rede pública municipal e estadual de Cascavel no Paraná	Verificar, na perspectiva dos sujeitos docentes, se os referidos indicadores, além do diagnóstico quantitativo, induzem à adoção de políticas para efetiva melhoria da educação básica nas escolas das redes públicas municipais e estaduais na cidade de Cascavel, no Paraná, no período de 2010 a 2016
Luz (2021)	Dissertação (Mestrado Profissional)	A avaliação externa em larga escala e as repercussões no cotidiano escolar	Verificar, na percepção dos professores e equipe gestora de uma determinada escola pública municipal no interior Paulista, como os indicadores de resultados da avaliação externa em larga escala, Prova Brasil (PB), repercutem na prática educativa dos mesmos
Oliveira (2015)	Dissertação	O IDEB E A QUALIDADE DA EDUCAÇÃO: a política do IDEB nas escolas da rede municipal de Francisco Beltrão/PR, no período de 2007-2013	Analisar a concepção de qualidade da educação no Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica – IDEB e seu impacto junto aos educadores de seis escolas da rede municipal de Francisco Beltrão-PR
Silva (2011)	Dissertação	Descompassos do Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica	Analisar os descompassos da avaliação implementada pelo IDEB partindo dos resultados divulgados pelo Ministério da Educação (MEC) e pelos documentos publicados pela mídia
Silva (2017)	Dissertação	A qualidade da educação na concepção de gestores escolares de Pernambuco: um estudo em escolas com índices elevados em avaliação	Analisar os significados atribuídos à qualidade da educação pelos gestores escolares da rede estadual de Pernambuco
Silva (2018)	Tese	QUALIDADE DA EDUCAÇÃO E IDEB NO MUNICÍPIO DE MOSSORÓ/RN: entre o dito e o feito	Analisar como os sujeitos (gestor municipal de educação, gestores escolares, coordenadores pedagógicos e professores) relacionam a qualidade da educação com os índices do IDEB no município de Mossoró/RN

Source: Prepared by the author based on the works analyzed (2022).

What scientific productions say about the IDEB and the search for results

In this section, we will objectively describe what the analyzed productions say about the IDEB and the search for quantitative and/or qualitative results in education. Some studies emphasized the search for results, while others discussed the quality and/or quantity in education, all focused on the IDEB, which is relevant in this context.

The first examined work is the thesis of Janaina Franciscatto Audino (2020), which conducted a qualitative case study with a descriptive exploratory approach and secondary data collection procedure, both qualitative and quantitative in the School Census and the *Questionário Diretor Prova Brasil* (2015). The theoretical framework followed the principles of Complex Thought by Edgar Morin. Its main references were: Chizzotti (1991), Stake (1995), André (1984), Minayo (1998), Oliveira and Araújo (2005), Dourado, Oliveira, and Santos (2007), Morin (2012), Paro (1993, 2003), Soares (2012), Libânio (2013), Ball (1994), Ball and Mainardes (2011), Andrade (2013), and Carvalho (2013).

Not all conclusions will be pointed out here; only those relevant to the research object will be presented. The thesis indicates that the IDEB, in isolation, is an important indicator and constitutes one part, but not the entirety, of education quality. The author argues the premise

that to consider education quality, one must consider the subjectivity of social relations, the peculiarity of human development, and societal changes. The study deems IDEB variables insufficient to gauge the quality of educational institutions, while also questioning the quality addressed in the indices. It contends that the IDEB policy and the quality it purportedly conveys propagate precepts of an education geared toward modern life, toward the job market, through the apprehension of essential content for shaping the new worker.

The author underscores the ideology of overvaluing numbers adopted by schools as a criterion for assessing pedagogical work quality, using fragments that do not encompass the entirety of education. The conclusion regarding the Index of Basic Education Development (IDEB) and quality reflects dissatisfaction among respondents, as they do not believe it is possible to assess education quality based on quantitative data, understanding education as a complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to numbers. In summary, quantitative indicators do not capture progress in education quality. The concept of quality adopted in educational policies is linked to market-oriented quality and employability.

We will now discuss Giseli Aparecida Caparros Klauck's dissertation (2012), which employs a qualitative approach, conducting a case study with triangulation resources, documentary analysis, and part of the bibliographic study of Brazilian authors addressing the debate on education quality. Field research was conducted, utilizing techniques of participant observation and semi-structured interviews with parents, teachers, coordinators, and school management. Some of the theoretical references used by the author include: Brooke and Soares (2008), Alves and Franco (2008), Parandekar, Oliveira, and Amorim (2008), Unicef (2007 and 2010), Beisiegel (2005), Oliveira and Araújo (2005), Dourado and Oliveira (2009), Ferreira and Tenório (2010), and Oliveira (2009). The data were processed through Bardin's (2008) content analysis method.

For Klauck (2012), improving education quality emerges as one of the main challenges of the investigated school, and even with its indicators on the rise, a considerable portion of students face learning difficulties. It is also observed that the IDEB is not responsible for improving teaching quality; it merely acknowledges the work the school institution already carries out within the community it serves.

For the investigated school, the socioeconomic level of the students and their cultural capital significantly favor their learning. According to the pedagogical coordination and school management, the main indicators of educational quality are school and family partnership, commitment of coordination and teachers, demand for participation, and responsibility from

students and parents. For teachers, these indicators include teamwork, commitment from parents and teachers, disciplinary practice, and coordination among school professionals. Parents of students highlight teachers' dedication and good performance, parental support in the educational process, school discipline, and high expectations from parents and teachers. The study also emphasizes that quality indicators should be considered within the context and not based on isolated variables, as each school is part of a scenario that needs to be respected and considered within the variables.

The third analyzed work refers to the dissertation by Lídia Maria Lopes Assis (2018). In it, bibliographic research and data collection through sampling was conducted by applying questionnaires to the 119 teachers from the selected schools for the field research. Some of the authors used were: Deitos (2010), Vieira (2000), Faleiros (2009), Paulo Netto (2003), and Althusser (1998). For the interpretation of data analysis, the following categories were defined: school evaluation and performance, school performance, and educational quality.

The author concludes that the quality of education cannot be restricted to numerical indices. When making considerations about the National Education Plan (PNE, 2014-2024), Lopes Assis (2018) highlights that a culture of performance permeates it by encouraging the payment of bonuses to teachers as an incentive to achieve the indicators. The research identified that certain factors do not impact, individually, on the quality of education, such as the structural conditions of the school, but when combined with other variables, they contribute in some way to the quality aspect.

It was identified that the variables considered in the IDEB are not sufficient to measure the quality of education because, in addition to school learning, variables such as student flow, approval, and retention in school are also considered, affected by numerous extra-school factors, not only related to intra-school factors. In other words, if the indicator cannot be considered capable of defining the quality of education, what it has been presenting is essentially quantification, numbers.

Still, at the conclusion level, the study indicates that actions related to external assessments subject education to the risk of alienation because while prioritizing grades, the quantitative aspect, it risks losing the scientific knowledge capable of thinking about society from a more humane perspective, not just focusing on responding to indices. In reality, schools are increasingly focused on responding to market numbers, with little or no consideration of issues truly relevant to the advancement of society. Finally, it highlights a movement of resistance on the part of teachers, both in basic education and in some university settings,

regarding assessments, due to the way they are being positioned, that is, "with this focus on education as a commodity, school as a company, and the teacher as an implementer of government projects" (Lopes Assis, 2018, p.174, our translation).

The text now being addressed is that of Regina Célia da Luz (2021), which has a qualitative approach and conducted semi-structured interviews with two pedagogical coordinators from the Municipal Education Secretariat (SME), two school managers, two teachers who teach fifth (5th) grades, one Portuguese language teacher, and one mathematics teacher from ninth (9th) grades. The theoretical framework of the research was based on Freitas (2005, 2007, 2010, 2014), Freitas *et al.* (2009), Sordi (2009, 2012), Sordi and Freitas (2009), and used content analysis by Bardin (2002).

In conclusion, it can be observed that

The repercussions of large-scale assessment on daily school life and teaching practices are numerous, given the pressure exerted on school managers and teachers to conduct training with students, aiming for better results in IDEB, and consequently, the tension that such practices generate in the school context (Luz, 2021, p. 139, our translation).

In addition to the repercussions on pedagogical practice, teachers are held accountable for IDEB results, which generates frustration, fear, feelings of helplessness, guilt, and excessive pressure from their superiors. It is essential to consider the context and not just a few variables in a large-scale assessment, as this can lead to a result that does not reflect reality.

We will now discuss Quelli Cristina da Silva Oliveira's dissertation (2015). The study was conducted from the theoretical-methodological perspective of historical-dialectical materialism and investigated eight teachers, five principals, five coordinators, two managers from the municipal education secretariat, and one pedagogical teacher from the Regional Education Center responsible for the Brazil Test. In addition, an analysis of 68 student notebooks from the 3rd and 5th grades was conducted. Field research was carried out between 2013 and 2015, and theorists such as Neto (2011), Saviani (2012), Duarte (2001), Brazil (2012), and Frigotto (2015) consulted on it. This study aligns with the trend of considering the variables of the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) as insufficient to evaluate the quality of education in educational institutions.

The author views the IDEB as a policy of state centralization, as it uses the results of large-scale assessments to coerce and hold educators accountable. She highlights the ideology of the overvaluation of numbers, enacted by schools as a parameter to assess the quality of

pedagogical work through fragments that do not encompass the entirety of education. The conclusion regarding the IDEB and quality is the dissatisfaction of the interviewees, as they do not believe it is possible to gauge the quality of education through data-based calculations; they understand education as a complex matter that cannot be reduced to numbers. In short, quantitative elements do not measure progress in educational quality. The study points to possible movements toward resistance by the school community regarding quality measured by the policy of the mentioned index. The sense of quality employed in the policy is one geared toward the market and employability.

Claudia Cristina Albuquerque Prazim da Silva's study (2011) begins by justifying that the IDEB has shown significant numerical leaps, but this does not reflect the reality of many Brazilian schools. It is a qualitative and quantitative research study that was developed from a bibliographic investigation combined with document analysis. It follows the historical-cultural method Abramo (1979) presented and uses theoretical sources, documents, and digital and non-digital communication media. Authors such as Libânio (2005), Stirner (1979), Gil (1996), Minayo (2010), Arredondo, and Diago (2009), among others, are utilized.

The research identified that the IDEB should not be considered an indicator of quality because, if schools do so, they will be led to undesirable behaviors, potentially becoming mere spaces for test preparation and simplified exams, losing their true essence. If students perceive it as an indicator of quality, they will only memorize content for external assessments.

The author highlights the positive impact of the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) as the reduction of student dropout rates, which favors more efficient educational planning. Additionally, it was observed that the results of these indices can distort the reality of education by disseminating indicators that do not accurately reflect the quality of education provided. In other words, Silva (2011) states in her conclusions that there is a kind of manipulation in the composition of the results because more advanced students are selected to take the test, while those considered more delayed are encouraged not to take it, reinforcing illusory statistics. The IDEB is regarded as a reasonably sensitive indicator as it requires variables that address the elements left "uncovered" by them. There is a discrepancy in that, according to the study, numerical indicators have improved, but the level of students remains low.

Analice Martins da Silva's study (2017) employs content analysis for data treatment. It relied on the following authors: Dourado; Oliveira (2009), Azevedo (2014), Tedesco and Rebelatto (2005), Almeida and Betini (2016), and Gadotti (2013). Interviews were conducted

with eight subjects who were members of the management teams of four schools in the State Network of Pernambuco. The research indicates that there are other factors not covered by the indices, such as "school infrastructure and physical structure, number of students per classroom, the socio-cultural context in which the school is located, and also the economic condition of students and their families, as well as the continuous training of teachers, which influence the quality of education and make a difference in a school unit" (Silva, 2017, p. 16, our translation). The study highlights that even if we achieve the goals, it does not mean that the country has overcome the difficulties and obstacles faced in Brazilian schools. It emphasizes that the indices do not address the entire problem and do not always reflect the reality experienced by educational institutions. The research also highlights a construction of indicators geared towards neoliberal policy.

Another interesting point raised in the study is that the school community as a whole, in pursuit of satisfactory results, ends up fulfilling responsibilities that belong to the system, not just to them. It also points out that external assessments are limited to school performance and student performance on standardized tests. Educational quality is therefore measured through large-scale assessments; however, some factors influence education in the country that cannot be restricted to these processes. The author argues that our understanding of educational quality cannot be limited to what is indicated. It was possible to identify through the research that the planning and actions of the school are geared towards the results, both of the IDEB and the Pernambuco Education Development Index (IDEPE), meaning that the machinery of the indices influences the pursuit of satisfactory results.

The thesis under consideration is that of Ciclene Alves da Silva (2018), which was developed using a qualitative approach, investigating six elementary schools in the municipality of Mossoró (RN). The research data were analyzed through Ball's policy cycle and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Theoretical contributions were drawn from authors such as Nicos Poulantzas (1980), Boltanski and Chiapello (2009), Paro (1996), Wittmann (1985), and Sander (2007), among others. The work highlights that the proposed index only considers the ends of education and not its process and does not consider the subjectivities of schools. The discourses analyzed, in general, do not link the quality of education to the IDEB. The conception of quality, by the subjects, goes beyond what is conveyed through the official devices of the federal government. An interesting fact is that the conception of educational quality changes according to each subject's position; for example, for the teacher, the quality of education is linked to a certain factor, while for the manager, it is linked to another.

According to Silva (2018), standardized tests and exams should not be the only tools to measure the quality of a school. The research subjects identify that large-scale assessments are limited because they attempt to assess educational quality in only a few curriculum contents. Of the surveyed schools with higher IDEBs, 56% indicated a relationship between educational quality and indicator results, while in schools with lower indices, 85% of respondents said there was no relationship. The author asserts that the index is insufficient to "capture alone the dynamics of Brazilian public schools" (Silva, 2018, p. 190, our translation). A large percentage of the surveyed subjects relate educational quality to physical, structural, and pedagogical factors of the school, the socioeconomic and cultural level of the students, and other external factors.

In light of the above, the fragility of the index as a measure of education quality stands out, along with indications of a policy emphasizing market premises. It is observed that schools have been following the directives imposed regarding achieving results without questioning or reluctance, even though they do not see the index as a measure of education quality as a whole.

Analyzing the "findings"

According to Foucault (2014, p. 66, our translation) "the analysis of discourse, understood in this way, does not reveal the universality of a meaning; it sheds light on the game of imposed rarefaction, with a fundamental power of affirmation." In this sense, it is admitted that the two categories produced, in light of this author, will contribute to understanding the discourses that emerged through the research.

Next, the two identified categories will be presented. The first refers to discursive regularities, indicating what is recurrent in the analyzed scientific productions. The second category concerns dispersion, in which what is discontinuous or even absent in the research will be sought.

Discursive Regularities

Among the eight analyzed research papers, comprising six dissertations and two theses, seven of them concluded that the numerical indicators of educational quality fail to capture the reality of a large part of Brazilian schools; therefore, they are insufficient to measure the quality of education offered in them.

Five analyzed works highlight the overemphasis on numbers, manifested through the pursuit of educational indicator results, along with a conception of quality geared towards the market and employability rather than holistic individual development. It is worth noting that the evaluative policy in which the IDEB is involved is based on neoliberal logic, focused on quantification, competitiveness, and the advocacy of minimal state intervention. All these points operate under the influence of the modern state, shaping an entire numerical machinery and guiding individual and collective behaviors.

The eight analyzed works emphasize the need to include additional variables in the index composition to cover educational aspects comprehensively. The variables currently used, flow and proficiency, are considered insufficient to assess true educational quality adequately. This can lead to the perpetuation of illusory statistics, which apparently represent the educational quality of the country, while in reality, what happens in schools does not reflect the published indices.

Regarding the pursuit of results, five of the analyzed works assert that the machinery, the mechanism intertwined in the indices, directly influences schools' efforts to achieve good indicators. Schools develop actions such as: result-oriented planning, manipulation in the composition of assessment results, as well as massive pressure and accountability towards teachers and participating schools in the evaluation process. The indices are geared towards a culture of performance.

In this perspective, the machinery inherent in the index ends up displacing meanings and diverting attention from more subjective and relevant issues, such as promoting citizenship, for example, at the expense of achieving numerical indicators, which conceal the school's responsibilities and often the educational reality of the locality/country. Furthermore, schools, in pursuit of satisfactory results, end up executing fraudulent actions, incapable of representing learning, as Ravitch (2011) rightly stated.

Dispersal

The first dispersion identified in the analyzed works is found in Klauck's research (2012), where the author states, based on the results of her investigation, that the IDEB is not responsible for improving the quality of teaching; it merely presents work that the school has already developed. This fact is noteworthy in light of the Ministry of Education (MEC) discourse, which aims to improve the quality of education in the country through IDEB. Thus, there is a premise that IDEB is not fulfilling its function in educational policy, leading to a gap between what is proposed by the index and how it is actually perceived in academic institutions.

Silva's study (2017) identified that the school community as a whole, in pursuit of satisfactory results, ends up fulfilling responsibilities that belong to the system, not just to them. This is a discourse that is not repeated in other studies. It is indeed important to note because it raises the reflection on how much the school community engages and even sacrifices itself to achieve numerical indicators. The promotion of education is gradually being transferred to educational institutions, even opening up space for the private sector to enter this domain with the discourse of filling gaps left by the public sector.

In this perspective, "playing" by the rules of the market model is at work within education when it opens up space for meritocracy, entrepreneurship, and competition. In this sense, the state is increasingly detaching itself from what is its legitimate obligation, opening "loopholes" for the private sector to establish itself, thus creating a true educational market.

In this context, we can refer to Freitas's stance (2018), who argues that education is being co-opted by the business sector, increasingly seen as a service rather than a right.

Education is isolated from its social bonds and is seen purely as a management issue. By imagining "fixing" schools through their integration into the free market and with proposals restricted to intra-school variables, the importance of extra-school variables, including the impact of children's living conditions on their education, is sidelined. This stance stems from the refusal to take into account structural constraints in the educational process and from neoliberalism's depreciative conception of public service and teaching, which is expressed in the desire to "make the teacher (and the school) the sole responsible party" for learning and once the "responsible party" has been identified, to promote "verticalized accountability policies" as a way to pressure them (Freitas, 2018, p. 37, ou translation).

In Silva's thesis (2018), an interesting dispersion regarding the conception of education quality is observed, which may vary according to the role played by each individual and the context in which they find themselves. For example, among the schools with the highest IDEB

scores investigated in her study, 56% indicated a correlation between education quality and indicator results, while 85% of schools with lower scores stated that there was no such relationship. In other words, for those whose IDEB reflects good results, it fulfills its function as a representative of quality, whereas for others, this representation falls short. The statements of the subjects investigated highlight the non-discursive practices, understood as "anonymous rules" capable of moving discourses in different ways, depending on the position the individual occupies.

Something else dispersed in the analyzed research is the movement of education professionals to not pursue the indices. In practically all studies, it was asserted that the numerical indicators, as they are presented, are not capable of representing the educational quality of schools, yet there is still a great effort to achieve them. Moreover, quantity has dictated what quality the school should pursue. The machinery has set the gears in the direction of reaching the numbers. This movement goes against what school subjects aspire to for the school, yet its (the school's) movement is contrary.

Final considerations

The exercise of research is extremely relevant, not only for the personal growth of the researcher but also so that they, through their knowledge, can solve socially relevant issues. Considering this, the investigative work to achieve the proposed objective, namely: to describe and systematize the research conducted from 2011-2021 that presents discussions around IDEB and the pursuit of quantitative and/or qualitative education results, on academic research platforms, provided significant grounding on the researched object in this dissertation.

Among the challenges encountered, the most prominent was the difficulty relating the works to the object of study. Some research seemed interesting, and they were! However, when it came to exploratory reading, they were not consistent with the investigated theme. In this sense, eight scientific productions were analyzed, with a time frame from 2011 to 2021, comprising four dissertations and one thesis found in the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), as well as one dissertation and one thesis from the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations of Capes. Seven of these are more focused on the category "educational quality," while one of them is more directed towards the pursuit of results.

Regarding discursive regularities, the research reveals the fragility of IDEB as an assessor of teaching quality in public schools. There is a considerable mobilization within

educational institutions to achieve the determined parameters, however, the variables considered in the index fail to capture the true reality of Brazilian education. Thus, instead of representing the quality of education, IDEB masks the condition of public schools in Brazil. There is, to a large extent, an overemphasis on numbers, the pursuit of quantitative results geared toward the job market, and compliance with a policy based on neoliberal principles. In other words, the mechanics of IDEB influence the pursuit of results, but the achievement of indices reflects results that prioritize quantification in the educational field.

In terms of dispersion, it is evident that IDEB does not represent the quality of education, despite the Ministry of Education (MEC) pointing to this as an objective of the index. Furthermore, the school community, in pursuit of the coveted results, ends up assuming responsibilities that do not belong to it but rather to the education system. According to one of the studies, the conception of educational quality can change depending on the individual's role and the context in which they find themselves. Lastly, despite numerous reports contradicting how IDEB has been implemented in educational institutions, there is a lack of identified resistance to the index.

In light of the study's findings, a relevant issue to highlight is the fact that all schools mobilize to achieve a satisfactory result in IDEB, adhering to the dictates set forth by this index, often without questioning why this pursuit is necessary. It was noted that the proposal undertaken by the Ministry of Education (MEC) regarding the proposition of educational public policies was not fulfilled based on the results gathered. Thus, the main question revolves around why there is such a relentless pursuit of results without the necessary questioning, following a kind of "docility-utility"¹ on the part of educational institutions.

Additionally, the importance of the study entitled "State of Knowledge" is emphasized for a better elucidation of the researched object in this dissertation, as well as its contribution to thinking beyond what has already been addressed in the investigated works. In this regard, it is suggested that students and researchers undertake further development of this study to enrich both their research and their understanding of the world.

¹ The term used by Foucault in "Surveiller et Punir," when he discusses the methods of control operated on bodies, which imposes a relationship of docility-utility on the part of the subject, is "docility-utility."

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