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# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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# INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN BRAZILIANS SCHOOLS

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper discusses scope and effect of the isomorphic structure outlined with Direct Money in School Program (DMSP), and the relationship of that conformation with the efficiency of school organizations. It is justified to contribute to the isomorphism understanding in the organizations. The research question ishow the structure caused by the DMSP affects the management in public school. It defined as general objective to analyse structure implications caused by the DMSP in school organizations. It has listed as specific objectives: (1) identify theoretical rules that characterize the school management, (2) characterize the object of study in the factual context and (3) verify the isomorphism implications in the study scenario. We used study case method, involving theoretical survey, unstructured interviews and non-participant observation in the study setting. In view of the results, notes difficulty to adaptschools management practices to the program context, or in the program be able to promote the realignment of these traditional practices. Meet the DMSP methodology maybe reduced to a formal process that legitimizes acquisition of resources and the performance of these organizations. It considered that the structure caused by the DMSP in the organizational, could not provide efficiency gains due to complexity methodology or the difficulty for operationalizing actions at school. It conclude that the emphasis on legitimacy may affect the efficiency and decouple the practices in relation to the results, making up recommended actions subsidiaries in support of the Program. This research provides subsidy to managers, policy makers and researchers.

**KEYWORDS:** Isomorphism. Efficiency. Legitimacy. School management. School organization.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The institutional structures adjustedto the institutional sceneryprovides some benefits such as legitimacy, resources, stability and survival prospects, considering internal Weberian efficiency, and environmental institutional aspects. However, the similarity resulting from this isomorphic process does not necessarily imply higher organizational efficiency and can cause increase and expansion of the complexity in these structures.

In the evolution of the discussion aboutInstitutional Theory, the isomorphism concept linked to proximity in the operating organizations whereis called the organizational field. The similarity process would occur based on connectivity and structural equivalence of the participants of this organizational field, which

affects the structure of those who share an institutional life. (DIMAGGIO; POWELL, 1983).

Meyer and Rowan (1978) apply the concept of institutionalization in the American educational organizationsscenario to discuss the search for legitimacy and dissociation between practices and the evaluation of results, providing opportunities for reflection about Brazilian educational context. According to Gonçalves, Luze Cruz (2004), the Direct Money in School Program (DMSP) was planned as a means to operationalize the efficiencyobjectives, managerial administration and deregulation proposed in Regulatory Frameworks Contemporary State whose effect changes organizational and educational forms, as a outcomeof the way State positioned itself in social reality.

The DMSP Interactive Manual (BRAZIL, 2014), characterized the program as a cooperation form between Federal Government, states and municipalities. Its purpose would be to providethe priority needs of public schools and private non-profit organizations, and promoting participatory management of financial resources transferred, which, according to the document, encourage public schools to social construction management model and allocation of these resources, adapting its application to the particular reality in which it operates.

AboutDMSP objectives and its importance as a provider resource, Valente (2011) and Santana (2011)instigate questions about their results, offering as opposed to finding that, although the methodology has caused changes in scope organizational and teaching in schools, it has not been able to promote direct and effective change in management strategies at the local level.

This phenomenon interpreted in the light of the theory of Organizational Fields defended by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), especially with regard to driving organizations to an isomorphic process that does not necessarily meet the efficiency requirements, but predominantly legitimacy. In this context, the DMSP taken as reference, because it considered as an organizational field strength may lead to public school organizations isomorphism.

In view of the above, itverified the needing to reflect the scope and effect of the isomorphic structure outlined with the DMSP, and on this relationship complying with the efficiency of school organizations. This reflection has raised the following guiding question: How does structure caused by the DMSP affects management in public school organizations.

It defined as general objective to analyse the implications arising from the isomorphic structuring caused by the DMSP in school organizations. It has listed as specific objectives: (1) to identify theoretical precepts that characterize the school management; (2) to characterize the study´sobject in the factual context and (3); to verify the isomorphism implications in the study scenario.

## 2 THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICALREVIEW
### 2.1 Organizational Fields and Isomorphism

The Institutional Theory foundations applied in this study based on the concept of institutionalization recommended by Meyer and Rowan (1977). In their understanding, institutional elements have the potential to influence the organizations making isomorphic with institutions in their operating environment.

The authors Carvalho, Vieira e Silva (2012), as well as Suddaby (2010) and Scott (2007), provide clues to understanding the Institutional Theorysociological aspect. In this perspective, organizations are expressions of social values then their structures and routines reflect or result from institutionalized norms by a relational process between social actors in shared social structures.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) does not turn only to understand the existence and isomorphism phenomenon causes as well as analyse their consequences. For these authors, structural change in organizations is increasingly less associated with competition or need for efficiency; conformation results from processes that make organizations more similar without necessarily making them more efficient. Although the isomorphic similarity of the organization to the institutional setting may provide survival opportunities, it can also lead to loss of organizational efficiency to the extent that compromises efficiency in achieving the objectives.

Carvalho, Vieira e Silva (2012) have a contemporary institutionalization definition that supports the isomorphism perception indicated in Meyer and Rowan (1977). It is a process whereby other processes,

obligations or circumstances get the implicit standard status in thought or social action, not just restricted to human action, but also the interactions of cultural and political nature that permeate the administrative processes.

Following this same perspective, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) discuss the resemblance process between organizations from the environmental influence in the formation of specific isomorphic standards, particularly influential on organizations that maintain some kind of characteristic bond. This defined set of organizations that keep similarities caused by isomorphic reasons could be understood as an organizational field.

Table 1 shows three mechanisms through which institutional isomorphic change occur: (1) Coercive isomorphism - derives from political influences and search for legitimacy; (2) mimetic isomorphism - resulting of standardized responses to uncertainties; (3) normative isomorphism - associated with professionalization (DIMAGGIO; POWELL, 1983).

**Table 1: Mechanisms for isomorphic change.**

| IsomorphismType | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| **Coercive** | It Results of both formal and informal pressures on organizations by other organizations on which they depend, and the society cultural expectations that they operate. |
| **Mimetic** | Uncertainty is the force that encourages imitation organizations taken as a model; this process can provide responses to problems with ambiguous causes and unclear solutions. |
| **Normative** | It Derives from normative pressures from professionalization, may annul variations in traditions and control, creating a paradigm of action that will tend to standardize organizational practices. |

Source: Adapted from DiMaggio and Powell (1983).

The Coercive factors that lead to isomorphism may result from public policies or laws, in view of which organizations can suffer sanctions or penalties for noncompliance. In Mimetic Isomorphism, the prospect of uncertainty facing challenges stimulates the imitation of other organizations taken as inspiration. From the normative point of view, the cognitive and legitimized basis structure the professionalization work can lead to adoption of similar practices in different organizations leading the process to become congruent.

Given the above, the isomorphic characteristics reveal directly related to forces placed on the environment, more specifically within the organizational field. For Vasconcelos and Vasconcelos (2002), these forces are represented by cognitive models or normative with the ability to promote Structural Isomorphism in the field. In this perspective, the incorporation of a new model can occur through four forms of institutionalization: coercion, induction, mimicry and standardization.

It seen that the isomorphism structural institutionalization forms inserted into the mechanisms of change indicated by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), except those that occur through the induction or standardization.

According to Vasconcelos and Vasconcelos (2002), induction occurs when organizations are encouraged to adopt models incentive function or development, like public policies involving government subsidy. Normalization involves authorization or legitimation by a supra-organizational entity, as occurs in the case of standard certifications International Standard Organization (ISO).

Given the difficulty in empirically apply the definition proposed by DiMaggio and Powel, the authors Machado da Silva FilhoGuarido and Rossoni (2010) offer the characterization of field views structured over time. From this characterization, the field concept as a functionally specific arena, which emerges from the interdependent association form between organizations. This field understood from the technical and institutional elements that shape the interaction between organizations and their funding sources and regulators.

Pereira (2012) atributes to the studies of Tolbert and Zucker (1999) empirical description of the process

of institutionalization in organizational field level. The institutionalization process involves the characterization of the habitual actions made by specific types of actors and covers a sequence of stages shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Institutionalization stages and comparative dimensions.**

| Dimension | Pre-institutionalInternship | Semi-institutionalInternship | Total institutionalizationInternship |
|---|---|---|---|
| Processes | Habitualization. | Objectifivation. | Sedimentation. |
| Characteristicofadopters | Homogeneous. | Heterogeneous. | Heterogeneous. |
| Impetus for broadcasting | Imitation. | Imitative / regulatory. | Normative. |
| Activitytheory | None. | High. | Low. |
| Variance in theimplementation | High. | Moderate. | Low. |
| Structuralfailure rate | High. | Moderate. | Low. |

Source: Tolbert and Zucker (1999, apud PEREIRA, 2012).

At first, the process established in habitualization stage, in which diffusion is by imitation of practices. Advancing to the sedimentation stage, the process consolidates and creates a behavioral paradigm adopted by individuals or groups in decision-making.

Confirming the understanding Tolbert and Zucker (1999), Vaz (2013) states that, from the moment that the diffusion of an innovation spreads through the organization, it advances to a threshold beyond which its adoption may provide legitimacy rather than performance , confirming the previously recommended by Meyer and Rowan (1977).

When Meyer and Rowan (1978) dealtthe institutionalization in the American educational organizationscontext, found that the schools structure is much more preparation and accreditation of individuals to exercise social functions, but specifically in the corporate society that meet the specific needs of individuals and families. Bymeet, the specific society´sexpectations, schools gain legitimacy with other organizations and acquire resources needed to continue its activities.

According to Meyer and Rowan (1978), the search for legitimacy through adherence to institutional standards can become a strategy for maximizing opportunities for obtaining resources. Thus, the search for legitimacy caused the dissociation between how school organizations develop their practices and evaluate their results, protecting them from a more external scrutiny that reveals inefficiencies, conflicts or inconsistencies.

Based on the positioning of these authors, institutionalization assumed because of interaction between the organization and its environment.In this context, the presence of isomorphism between organizations in an organizational field would be noticeable not only from structural similarities, as well as from the similarities in the socio-political standard and management practices that support its administrative structure.

## 2.2 School Management

ForAbdian, Oliveira and Jesus (2013) and Castro et al. (2015) dealingabout school management involves going beyond the pedagogical work organization and discuss among other issues, the status of that practice. These authors, Takahashi and Sarsur (2012) agree that the school management involves a process of diagnosis and democratic character and comprehensive evaluation, focused on the definition of institutional development objectives related to the organization's future vision.

In perspective, the school management comprises the set of decisions, actions and operations that, when integrated, favour the achievement of the desired objectives, guiding and controlling the internal and external variables conditions that add to the pedagogical element administrative factors, financial, social, political and human.

It's what Castro et al. (2015) claims to be the current context of school management, marked by interdependence involving the managersknowledge, the use of methods, techniques and administrative technologies, the participatory process and organizational knowledge.

Takahashi and Sarsur (2012) and Castro et al. (2015) emphasize that the school management issue studied under the bias of organizational theories, which is justified because it is a recent theme. This fact would reflect the predominant understanding that people without specific preparation could perform school administration, when in fact there is a need for trained leaders for such action and purpose, depending on the particular characteristics of these organizations integrate educational areas, administrative, financial and social, in touch with the political, human and inter-relational environments.

As shown in DMSP Interactive Manual (BRAZIL, 2014), the DMSP works in line with the National Education Fund (FNDE) and since 1995 has been providing additional financial assistance to schools. The DMSP´sfocus is on improving physical infrastructure, teaching and reinforcing school self-management by financial, administrative and teaching. The financial transfers correspond to a value set by the FNDE according to the number of students enrolled in school. These contributions do not forwarded directly to the school, but private entity non-profit linked to school as a performing unit.

According to Oliveira (2011), the DMSP methodology formulated based on mobilization strategy of the school community through the school management. It emphasizes democratic aspects for the legitimacy of planning, give it transparency and maximize its ability to affecting the reality.

For Dourado (2007), in Oliveira (2011), democratic management relates to the exercise of citizenship by promoting popular participation and decentralization of power, stimulating decision-making and decentralized execution, and integrating the community educational organization.

Indicative of the state of the art offer a perspective of school management in the context of schools that have joined the DMSP, and contributes to the characterization of the research setting. Santos (2004) aimed to indicate the link between the non-state public and democratic school management, by way of executing units (school councils) provided for DMSP. In their perspective, there is need to strengthen public spaces to encourage the democratic control of the school.

Silva (2005) promoted an analysis of autonomy concept that guides the DMSP while decentralization policy of financial resources, to understand the autonomy implications in the management of teaching units. The author concluded that there is need for re-orientation of educational school financial management policies, and management of the application of the appeals process.

The study byAdrião and Peroni (2007) on the implications for public schools management of the changes introduced by the implementation of Direct Money in School Program, pointed out that although there is little community participation in resource management, increased autonomy spent an important turning towards financial management.

Valente (2011) sought to understand the new ways of education and management regulation,and its effect on the school's internal dynamics with regard to school management and organization of the pedagogical work. In its analysis, it found that this intervention resulted in significant changes in school organization and the organization of the pedagogical work.

According to Santana (2011), in his analysis of the effects of receiving coming from DMSP resources in School Management in two different schools, the program seems to be able to promote, directly and effectively a change of local management strategies, or change the management and the work of these institutions.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

Presented the theoretical basis upon which this research, this topic will show the method outlined for its realization. According to Siena, Oliveira and Braga (2011) by method understood to be the way, form and way of thinking in the phenomenal level of abstraction, as well as the set of processes used in the research. Following this reasoning, Figure 1 shows the study design, treated with their description following.

**Figure 1: Methodological study Designate.**
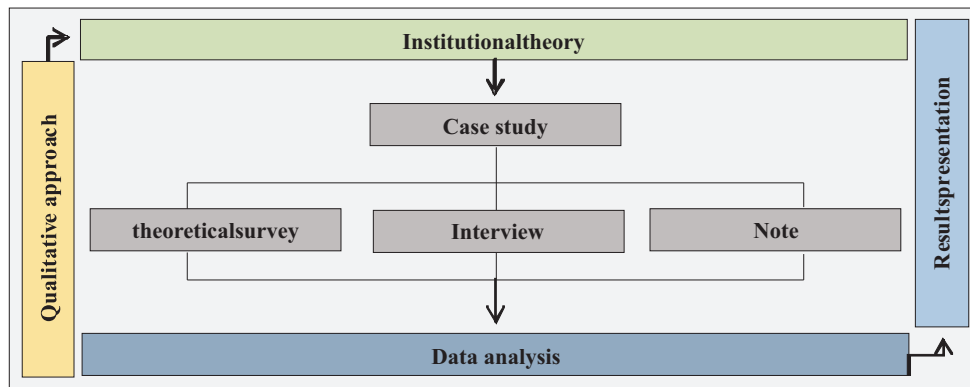


Source: Authors.

**Table 3: Descriptive methodological assign employee study.**

| Methodology | Description |
|---|---|
| Qualitative approach | Approach to the study object. |
| Institutionaltheory | Basic theory used in support of the study. |
| Case study | Scientific method used for the study |
| Theoreticalsurvey | Procedure for lifting theoretical basis. |
| Interview | Procedure for collection of empirical data. |
| Note | Procedure for collection of empirical data. |
| Data analysis | Qualitative analysis of data collected in the face of theory. |
| Resultspresentation | Disclosureofresults. |

Source: Authors.

The qualitative methodbased on Creswell (2010), which considers adequate for interpretive research that require the involvement of the researcher with the subjective description of the investigated reality. The Institutionalist Theory broughtin supportinto the study, more specifically the isomorphism concept on organizational field; Itsearch in DiMaggio and Powell (1983) conceptual support the characterization of isomorphism; based on Machado da Silva,GuaridoFilho, and Rossoni (2010) employs the field concept is used asfunctionally specific arena.

The study case method used for analysis of phenomenonaspects, based on Yin (2010)understanding. It elected procedures for data collection compatible with this method, namely, conducting interviews and observation, in addition to the theoretical research on the subject through scientific literature, to obtain support for the study.

The interviews conducted with staff members of school management from three schools inRolimde Moura Municipality, in the Rondoniastate, taken as a reference of the study setting.

Directors, Deputy Directors and coordinators interviewed using semi-structured instrument with open questions to obtain subjective data from the existential experiences of respondents. This technique for data collection used according to the indication Gil (2009), who recommends its flexibility in relation to the respondent and on the interest points of the researcher.

It used the non-participant observation for understanding the study scenario in objective reality, following the Alencar(2000)understanding about ability of this technique provides the researcher closer to its subject matter.

Thedata´s analysis obtained in the field, compared to theoretical study carried out in support of the study, has provided subsidies for understanding how the structuringphenomenoncaused by DMSP affects the management in public school organizations.

## 4 RESULTSDISCUSSION
### 4.1 Management Parameters in School Organizations

Based on Abdian, Oliveira and Jesus (2013), Russo (2011) and Abdian, Hojas and Oliveira (2012), the main indications that characterize the management of school organizations is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:MainComponents of School Management.**

| Categories | Description |
|---|---|
| Political | It understands the philosophy and set of proposals and guidelines that form the institutional identity, guiding the management of school organization. |
| Pedagogical | It involves the teaching-learning relationships and pedagogical actions to the political-institutional goals. |
| Administrative | It covers the organization of work at school, as a means for the realization of educational activities and achievement of institutional objectives. |

Source: Authors.

It can understand that the Political aspect of school management promotes the interconnection of other categories in a convergent way the educational process, by providing proposals and guidelines in the pedagogical dimension, which guide the educational and methodological practice in favour of which management decisions made.

The administrative component involves material resources as well as understand the tasks necessary for the organization of school´swork. They are developing with the participation of non-teachers servers, and involves a democratic leadership focused on the coordination of collective effort in order to facilitate the construction of new job rationalization standards, appropriate to the context in which they operate social subjects.

The incursion for field data collection pointed out that the receipt of through the DMSP implies adoption the methodology by it, involving the implementation of participatory process to determine the political and pedagogical guidelines organization, and adherence to instruments planning and control specified therein.

Administrative practices in the political and educational fields must not only recognize the right of the school community a say in the organization, but also provide mechanisms to promote their participation in school management. Among these mechanisms is the requirement for full disclosure of information relating to the management of financial resources and the promotion of forums for debate on the application of these resources.

However, although validated normatively, the school community is little participant in school performance, behaviour previously observed by Adrião and Peroni (2007) in similar circumstances in other schools. The perception is commitment or the institutions that permeate the social location in which they are members so that the implementation of successful DMSP depends on other factors extrinsic may affect community participation.

Thus, the low community participation in the face of the obligation imposed by the DMSP to participatory direction of school management can interpreted based on the concept of institutionalization in Carvalho, Vieira e Silva (2012) as an ongoing process.It can acquire the implicit standard status in thought or social action, permeating the administrative processes and causing structural change in school organizations.

It observed that although the developed actions are subject to social control, its results appreciated only by who attend the annual meeting to this critical analysis. Although this debate subsidizes decision-making in

relation to the assessed strategies and opportune the reassessment of organizational guidelines on administrative, political and educational level, the resolutions that emerge become effective customarily in planning the next school year, and are implemented by body technical school without necessary follow-up of other participants in the school management.

Therefore, while in that corroborates of Valente(2011)perception that the DMSP resulted in significant changes in school organization and pedagogical work, it clear that the efficiency gain in this scenario relates to the construction of proposals and guidelines that reflect the school's alignment with its surroundings particular, through effective social participation.

Given the context, Oliveira (2001)understanding that participatory management proposed by the DMSP seeks to legitimize planning before the school community acquires a new parallel connotation to the authenticity of perspective and relating with a form of symbolism.

In this sense, promoting participatory management can reduce service of a formal rite that legitimizes obtaining resources, and its institutionalization can lead to dissociation between the efficiency of practices and evaluation of results. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977, 1978), the structural change in organizations is not necessarily associated with increased efficiency, as phenomenon observed in the field of educational organizations in the United States, were they found that the legitimacy search by forming institutions may become an organizational objective.

With respect to the instrumentalization that supports the school management, adherence to the program involves the use of DMSP Interactive electronic tool whose function is support the construction of organizational planning, linking it to programs funded through the DMSP.

Standardizing these procedures can conduct to similarization process between organizations proposed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), which occurs between those that keep some kind of characteristic bond, understood from the influence of an organizational environment field.

The organizational field perspective that best fits the study scenario is a functionally specific arena, emerging from the association form between interdependent organizations. This field understood from the technical and institutional elements that shape the interaction between organizations and their funding sources and regulators (MACHADO DA SILVA; GUARIDO FILHO; ROSSONI, 2010).

The DMSP way relates to the autonomy of the organization is perceived by managers ambiguously, because they understand that the ability of the school self-determination is restricted when obtaining resources and funding is conditional on compulsory membership of any of the programs by it finances and its resources transfer methodology. On the other hand, when an existing project or pedagogical proposal are revealed converging the purpose of these programs, the DMSP is considered as subsidiary, adding the actions captained by the school, which could be understood from the findings of Adrião and Peroni (2007) as increased spending autonomy.

This finding does not seem to characterize two different realities, because although schools taken as reference in this study depend on the DMSP's resources, it found that the functional structure allows them some autonomy because of the individual capacity of servers contributing to the implementation of projects supported on local sources of funding. Therefore, the contribution of alternative resources to DMSP provides greater freedom of action to the schools, and allow supplementation of emerging needs in the organization.

When taken from the point of view of the autonomy of educational organizations in the management of resources, these limitations reinforce the Silva(2005) understanding and need for re-orientation of school´s financial management policies, and management of the application of the appeals process. Thus, organizational efficiency involves both aspects directly related to the methodology as well as the limitations in terms of operationalization of activities at the school.

The control process proposed by the methodology necessarily involves the community managers and representatives'participation in monitoring of the planning and disbursement of financial resources and, above all, accountability, whose approval entitles the organization to receive future contributions and entrance into other programs funded through the DMSP.

These controls should kept systematically and nurture the assessment on the progress of activities, offering support to the continuity or define new strategies. Have specific format, they must be educated with

appropriate documentation, widely communicated to the school community and be subject to government oversight.

From these results, it is clear that the coercive power of DMSP regulation and the importance of financial resources transferred by it influence the isomorphic structure of this organizational field, affecting school management in its political, pedagogical and administrative.

Among the mechanisms through which occur institutional isomorphic change, which better reflects the phenomenon in the DMSP context is the coercive isomorphism (DIMAGGIO; POWEL, 1983), caused by the force of public policies and their legal norms, in the face of which public school organizations should align, like the bidding requirements and financial instruments control employed by the school management.

However, it agrees with Santana (2011), as his perception that the DMSPdoes not seem to promote effectively strategic changes at the local level. In the scenario used as a reference it was possible to verify that the main emphasis on the participation of the school community is related to the monitoring and surveillance of the application of financial resources and, in this context, is restricted to red tape outlines for legitimation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Participatory management can understood as a structuring process caused by the DMSPnormative pressure, which has spread from isomorphic form in the organizational field, permeating the administrative processes and causing structural change in Brazilian schools. However, the program lacks mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of this management perspective, although the commitment or community participation affected by extrinsic factors to the program.

In despite the existing relativism between the quantity and quality of school community participation, and others interested in the practice of school management. The institutionalization of this guideline does not appear to have acquired a format that effectively reflects the scope and depth required by theory.Because although contemplate other perspectives, the DMSP´s main emphasis is on controlling the financial resources application.

The results obtained show that it is difficult for schools suit their management practices to the program context, or in the program be able to promote the realignment of traditional practices employed. Thus, to meet the DMSP methodology may be reducing in a serviceto formal rite that legitimizes the acquisition of resources and the performance of these organizations.

Therefore, in order to respond to questioning proposed, it is considered that the structure caused by DMSP in this organizational field may not provide efficiency gains to all schools, due to the limitations of each organization in complexity view of the methodology, or their ability to operationalize the actions provided for in the programs financed by it.

It considered that there is an emphasis on legitimacy, which may affect the achievement of organizational efficiency and further decouple the analysis of practices in relation to the results. Thus, the isomorphic conformation caused by the DMSP has the potential of undermining the institutional objectives achievement in school organizations, and it recommended actions subsidiaries to the program to promote technical and operational support for its implementation and enforcement.

This research sought to contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge and social development, providing a theoretical and empirical approach based on institutional theory to understanding the scope and effect of structuring phenomenon caused by the regulation of the DMSP, in the organizational field where the public school organizations are. It offers subsidies to school managers, policy makers and researchers for quality management in school organizations.

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