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## Democratic practice of managers and quality of administrative management in public educational institutions

### Abstract

*The study sought to determine the relationship between democratic praxis and quality in the administrative management of managers in public educational institutions. The research was basic, descriptive-correlational, non-experimental, cross-sectional design. Two questionnaires designed on the Likert scale were used. The population was 235 teachers and the simple random sample of 147 teachers. It was concluded that there was a direct relationship between democratic praxis and quality of administrative management; as well as the level of democratic praxis was low and the level of administrative management was of medium quality in the directors of public educational institutions.*

*Keywords: democratic praxis, educational management, democratic values, democratic principles.*

### Introduction

Generating favourable conditions within public educational institutions for the formation of a sense of democracy is not an easy task, since principals and teachers cannot impose this feeling on students; they must therefore build a social environment in which students assume the responsibilities of a democratic life for themselves (Doddington, 2018). According to Dewey's approach, individuals achieve fulfillment by using their unique talents to

contribute to the well-being of their community. (Apple, 2018)

The educational institutions (IIEE) of basic education constitute the most significant space of socialization, after the home, since they assume an important role in the formation of the civic competences of the individuals (Martínez and Tadeu, 2018; Sohrabi, 2017). The work of training citizens is a task that goes beyond just teaching what the individual requires in his or her training, but there is the role of violating the values of a democratic

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community, becoming the platform in which participation is active, seeking to contribute to conditioning citizen habits and virtues (Carabantes and Contreras, 2020).

In accordance with the above, the democratic practice of the IIEE's directors must become an essential element that can be linked to coexistence, institutional development, quality of service, transparency of management and motivation of the staff working in them, since, as a representative institution, it is a forum for democratic practice which, if it does not assume this role, will result in commitment or disenchantment among its members (Doddington, 2018). Assuming as a conjecture that the deficient administrative management is closely linked to the deficient democratic practice of those responsible for management in educational institutions, that is, the inadequate exercise of the values of democracy, added to the laziness and the scarce awareness of the importance of teaching, the overloaded work due to the need to work in other workplaces, among other aspects. The suppositions exposed as possible causes or factors of the deficiencies in administrative management that demonstrate inadequate democratic practice on the part of managers will be the subject of this paper.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy has its foundations in the many works carried out by the Institute for Social Research in Germany, also known as the Frankfurt School, whose main representatives have been Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren and Paulo Freire (Giroux, 2019; Yeh, 2018). To assume critical pedagogy in the context of education is to assume a new paradigm in the professional praxis of the teacher, thinking of an academic way of life based on the process of formation, taking into consideration aspects such as: for whom, why, how, when and where certain academic activities are developed. (From Lissovoy, 2018)

The teacher trained under the optics of critical pedagogy, considers the educational process from the context of communicative interaction; analyzing, understanding, interpreting and transforming the objective problems that affect a particular community. They have the capacity to conceive education as a possibility oriented to the search for viable alternative solutions, from the possibilities of their context. It always keeps in mind that science is the option of spiritual rejuvenation, as a very useful tool that contradicts the past in order to reconfigure the

present and forge the future. These aspects, according to Karagrignoriou (2016), are viable since critical pedagogy considers the following aspects

(1) Social participation, which is responsible for raising awareness among members of the educational community and members of the social group attached to it; since their participation will strengthen democratic thinking in order to assume problems and alternative solutions.

(2) The horizontal communication, allows the shared participation of those who intervene in a discursive act; under ethical parameters of mutual respect in the speech, without implying absence of differences.

(3) The significance of symbolic imaginaries links historical, socio-cultural and political reconstructions. Historical, because it determines the way in which the behaviours and procedures of a social group have been configured in the face of a situation or phenomenon. Socio-cultural, because the pedagogical process includes the discernment of the scope and limitations of the social group's lifestyles. Political, because the ideologies are constructs set by the organisms and forms of government, the school, society and the media.

(4) The humanization of education processes, which is the axis of humanization of intellectual abilities, the sharpening of the senses and the cultivation of the complex world of feelings; with the possibility of generating collective scenarios that tend to self-governance and self-instruction.

(5) The contextualization of the educational process, understood as the possibility of educating for life in community. That is why the school becomes the possible scenario for questioning and criticizing hegemonic social models in order to bring about possible changes in various situations.

(6) The transformation of social reality, an aspect that not only implies change or adaptation in function of immediate needs, but also its understanding from crucial aspects such as the area of social awareness, strengthening of teamwork, and consolidation of permanent research.

### **Democratic practice**

Democratic practice is understood as the conscious and reflective exercise of values such as equality, justice, freedom, tolerance, solidarity, equity, inclusion, consensus, social responsibility and participation that underpin democracy as a way of life (Wilkinson, Niesche and Eacott, 2019). In addition to awareness, democratic practice requires

certain levels of criticality, analysis and holistic vision. On the other hand, Dewey understands democracy as something that goes beyond a form of government, since he considered it a way of social life, in which its components are developed, characterized by the suppression of barriers of class, race and equality of duties and rights (Beech, 2018).

It cannot be denied that, in the current Western democratic context, there are differences that generate a series of contradictions that affect the lives of its components in various areas (Carabantes and Contreras, 2020), including education. With particular regard to the latter, the gap between theory and democratic practice widens, especially when teachers are not active in conscious reflection on what education for democratic citizenship means and the words and discourse surrounding these issues (Karagrigoriou, 2016; Golkar, et al, 2014). It is in function of this absence that democratic values are dimly perceived in the educational context, since among so many reasons "Student participation as an expression of civic and democratic values that citizen training in this new curricular approach seeks to install is not free of obstacles". (Castillo, Rodriguez and Escalona, 2019, p.111)

### ***Administrative management in education***

As stipulated by Espinoza, Zúñiga and Ojeda (2019), a school has a series of resources (human, material and economic) at its disposal to achieve certain objectives according to the model to which it responds. In addition, it must be borne in mind that any change in its order or operation is likely to result in a sequence of events that are fruitful or harmful to the institution and its context (García, Juárez and Salgado, 2018). In accordance with the proposal of Espinoza & Campusano (2019), for an adequate management of such a system, aspects such as the structure, functions and relationships of the educational institution must be taken into account, in order to ensure the structural integrity and adequate functioning of all its components, according to the objectives.

The notion of the general functions that circumscribe the application of management in activities such as planning, development,

#### **Table 1.**

*Population and sample used.*

School	Population	Sample	%
5117 "Jorge Portocarrero"	24	15	10,21
512 "Andrés Razuri Estevez"	25	16	10,64
5124 "Libertador Simón Bolívar de Hiroshima"	35	22	14,90
5125 "Casuarinas"	22	14	9,36

execution and control and their links with schoolwork requires an approach to basic concepts in the administrative field (Ooiwa, 2018). However, in view of the current state of school administration, it is necessary to take into consideration those elements that make up the dynamics of schools, which range from the relationship of the school with its surroundings, the distribution of functions, the planning of the teaching-learning process, including the management of personnel and the administrative activities of the institution itself (García et al., 2018).

Quintana (2018) conceived of the administrative dimension of management as the core of processes for the use of resources in terms of the achievement of some objective. On this point, the availability of resources (economic, logistical, administrative, among others) is a function of specific processes such as planning of activities and defined action protocols, work hierarchies, all of which are subject to the essence of the curriculum and the mechanisms of governance of an institution (García et al., 2018).

### **Methodology**

The research was of the basic type as it was oriented towards investigations for educational facts. The design of the research was non-experimental, cross-sectional, correlational, and non-causal because it described the relation between two variables (democratic practice and administrative management) at a given time. The present work belongs to the theoretical-empirical-descriptive type of research, since it was aimed at generating rational explanations, based on objective evidence, for facts or events that occur in the real world (Hernández and Mendoza, 2018).

The population was made up of 235 teachers from the secondary level of the Regular Basic Education Public Educational Institutions belonging to Network No. 01 of the Local Educational Management Unit (UGEL) in Ventanilla, Lima, Peru. The probability sample was estimated at 147 teachers, using a simple random sample. These data are shown in Table 1.

5127 "José Olaya Balandra"	46	29	19,57
5128 "Sagrado Corazón de María"	31	19	13,19
5130 "Pachacútec"	39	24	16,60
5142 "Virgen de Guadalupe"	13	8	5,53
Total	235	147	100

The research and data collection technique used was the survey, as this technique allows for the collection of data from a diverse group of individuals, whose opinions are of interest to the research. Two questionnaires were developed as instruments for measuring the variables: (a) Questionnaire for the practice of democratic values, with a

total of 20 items, and (b) Questionnaire for evaluating administrative management, with a total of 30 items, both structured under the Likert scale. It is worth mentioning that both questionnaires were submitted to expert judgment and the reliability analysis is shown in table 2.

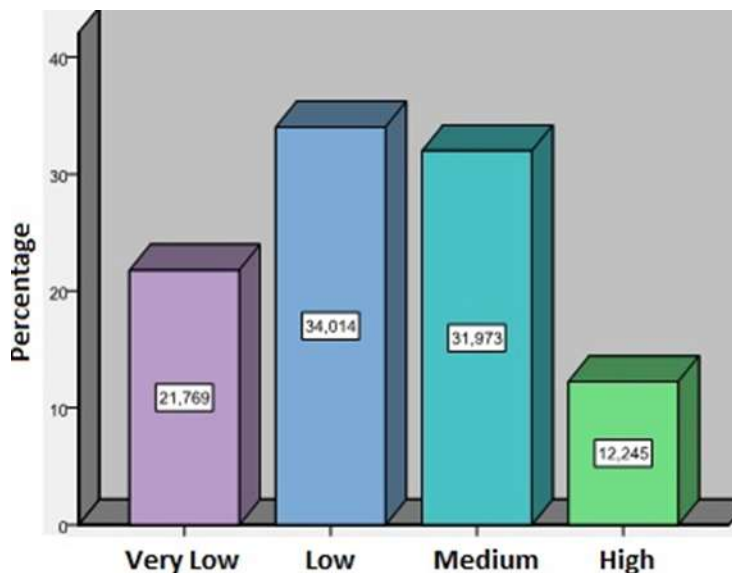
**Table 2.**  
*Reliability test of the instruments of democratic practice and quality of administrative management*

Instrument	Alfa de Cronbach	Nº Items
Democratic practice	,726	20
Quality of administrative management	,944	30

**Results**

From what is observed in figure 1, we can say that in relation to democratic practice approximately 21.7% showed a "very low"

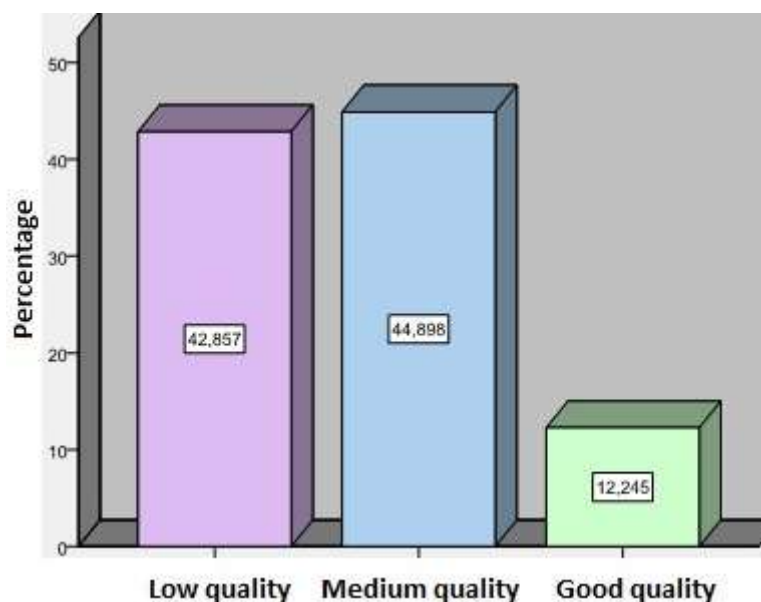
level, 34% were at a "low" level, 31% were at a "medium" level and only 12.2% were at a "high" level.



**Figure 1.**  
*Description of the democratic practice variable*

From what was observed in figure 2, it could be affirmed that 44.8% of those surveyed maintained that the administrative management of the managers is of "medium quality"; a situation that is almost similar to the 42.8% that said parameter was estimated to

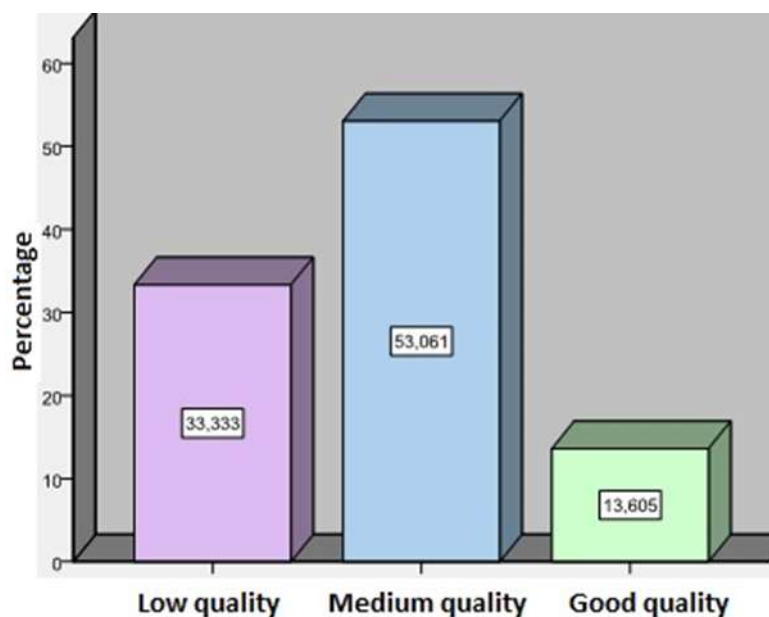
be of "low quality", and only 12.9% perceived that it was of "good quality".



**Figure 2.**  
*Description of the quality of administrative management variable*

From the observations in figure 3, it was concluded that 53% of the respondents said that the management of material resources by managers in the public U.S. was perceived as

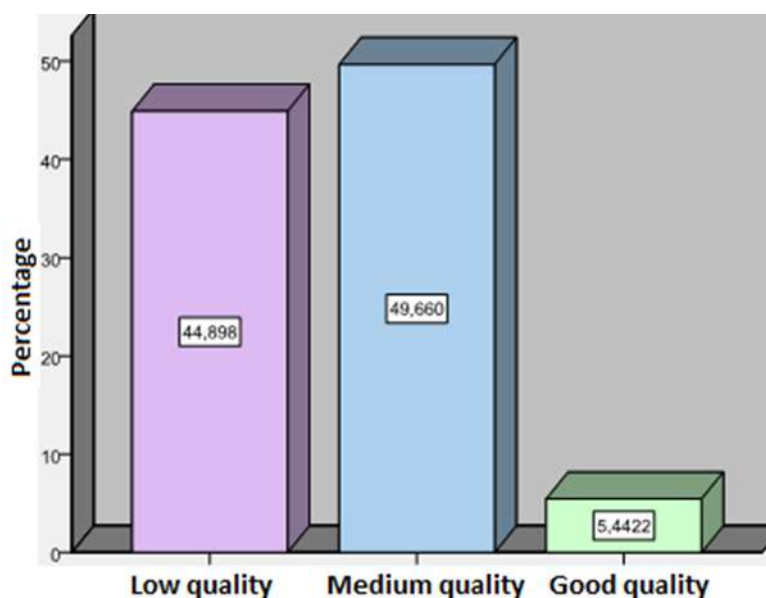
"medium quality"; 33.3% perceived it as "low quality" and only 13.6% said it was "good quality".



**Figure 3.**  
*Description of the material resource management dimension.*

From what was observed in figure 4, it could be seen that 49.6% of those surveyed stated that the management of financial resources by managers in the public EE. It was of "medium quality", while a considerable

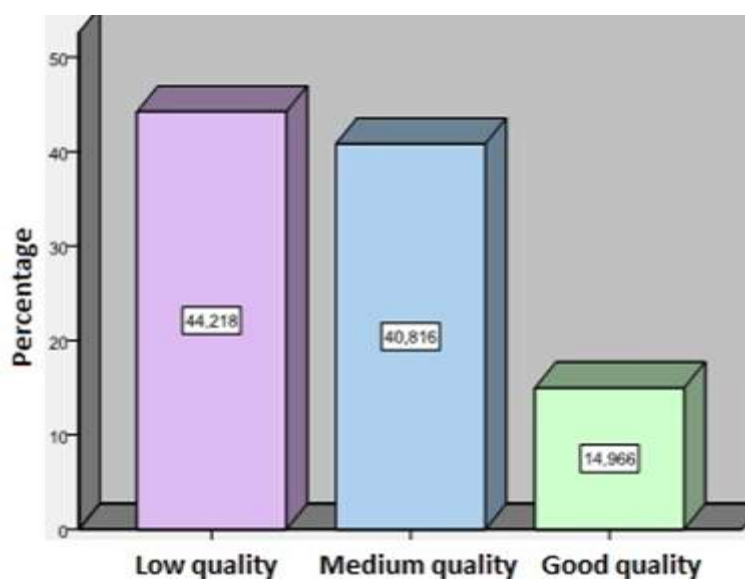
44.8% perceived that this process was of "low quality" and only 5.4% stated that this parameter was of "good quality".



**Figure 4.**  
Description of the financial resource management dimension.

According to figure 5, it can be concluded that, with respect to the financial resource management dimension of the executives in the public U.S. analyzed, 44.2% of those

surveyed said it was of "low quality", while 40.8% considered it to be of "medium quality" and only 14.9% said it was of "good quality".



**Figure 5.**  
Description of the human resources management dimension.

**Table 3.**  
Spearman's correlation coefficient between the variables democratic practice, administrative management quality, and material resource management dimension, and financial resource management dimension.

			Democratic Praxis	Calidad de la gestión administrativa
Rho of Spearman	Quality of administrative management	Correlation Coefficient	,725**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)		
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.

Material Resource Management (MM. RR.)	Correlation Coefficient	,651**	1,000
	Sig. (bilateral)		
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
Financial Resource Management	Correlation Coefficient	,634**	1,000
	Sig. (bilateral)		
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	
Human Resource Management	Correlation Coefficient	,670**	1,000
	Sig. (bilateral)		
	Sig. (bilateral)	,000	
	N	147	147

\*\* . The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

As shown in Table 3, the significant direct relationship between the democratic practices of the directors and the quality of administrative management in the public EE. Similarly, the same table shows a significant direct relationship between the democratic practices of directors and the management of

material resources in the public sector (p-value = ,000 < ,05; Rho = ,651). It was also found that there was a significant direct relationship between the democratic practices of managers and the management of human resources in the public sector (p-value = ,000 < ,05; Rho = ,634).

## Conclusions

According to the results found, approximately 70% of those surveyed stated that the democratic practice exercised by the directors of the II. This value is far below the desired level, which would mean that democracy, as a lifestyle, is being ignored by the managers of the II. This would mean that democracy, as a life style, would be ignored by principals in the secondary schools evaluated, a delicate aspect since such elements, besides the authority that they exercise and represent, are the principal link for communication and management with the corresponding higher levels, besides being in direct contact with the work of teachers and being the nexus of integration in their respective areas. The above would confirm what was stated in the study by Carabantes and Contreras (2020), who in the case of Chile have perceived a series of contradictions that are generated from the State itself towards its citizens and that in this spectrum of seriousness it is the children and the school that are most affected; therefore they suggest a rethought dialogue on democracy and the empowerment of people. Similarly, the spectrum of situations analyzed by Beech (2020) emphasizes the importance of democratic values from the perspective of practice, as proposed by Dewey's pedagogy when he makes clear that "work in the classroom on citizen training, instead of taking abstract norms as a point of departure, begins with the experiences of students and teachers"

(p.84), which shows the intrinsic need for such a delicate aspect.

In regard to the quality of administrative management in the public schools analyzed, it was found that 44.8% of those surveyed perceived that it is of "medium quality"; while 42.8% of them responded that it is of "low quality", and only 12.9% of those surveyed considered that it is of "good quality". This means that more than 86% of those surveyed thought that the quality of the administrative management within the spectrum analyzed is not of good quality, that is, the management of material resources, such as actions that optimize the support resources for the teaching-learning process and the development of the expected competencies, is not adequate to meet the requirements of the educational area. Similar situations are expressed by Erke et al. (2019), who point out that in order to mitigate deficiencies in management processes in view of the democratization of such mechanisms, leaders should develop a sense of responsibility in order to support new initiatives and avoid rushing into decision-making, since democratic leadership is the most viable mechanism for developing adequate management processes. On the other hand, Martínez and Tadeu (2018), mentioned that in order to overcome the obstacles generated by the low quality of the administration mechanisms in the education sector, they bet on pedagogical leadership of a democratic order, since they

have shown that shared leadership modalities that invite other members of the educational organization to participate in a common project are associated with a greater commitment to the improvement and inclusion of all its components.

On the other hand, faced with the complex context of the globalizing market economy; Collin, Hess and Lowery (2019), instead of asking whether there is space for democratic education in the midst of neoliberal barriers, proposed that managers and teachers of an educational community have the capacity to generate their own spaces of democracy for their students; since in the democratic structure, spaces can be created in which students experience and exercise their own personal freedoms as citizens and individuals, since democratic education is necessary to prepare citizens who can interact meaningfully within a free democratic society.

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