

Review Article

The Problems of Brazilian Education in the Final Years of Elementary School

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Abstract

Brazil's educational problems in the final years of elementary school are a highly relevant issue in society. These problems are complex and some are interconnected. Elementary school is comprised of grades 6 through 9, and is an important stage in the students' learning process. Numerous problems affect these grades, which end up making it difficult for teachers or managers to control teaching. Some of these problems are: school dropouts, continuing education, violence, indiscipline, socio-economic factors, lack of resources and school inclusion. These problems, when left unresolved, can lead to failures in the teaching-learning process. The aim of this study was to analyze the main educational problems faced in the final years of elementary school and propose solutions to improve teaching quality and student performance. The methodological approach is a qualitative bibliographical study, which aims to meet these objectives. As a result, authors often comment on the learning gap. Pupils leave elementary school with no command of writing and reading. Measures must be taken to control the situation, but they require the attention of government officials. Therefore, teachers and school managers must look for strategies and methods to reduce the educational problems in Brazilian education.

Keywords

Education, School, Problems, Brazil

1. Introduction

The final years of elementary school are essential for students, as this is when they seek to consolidate knowledge in preparation for high school, requiring greater attention and presenting increased learning challenges. This stage is marked by numerous educational issues that compromise the quality of instruction. Daily, teachers and school administrators face problems such as school dropout rates, learning gaps, lack of preparation for the job market, inadequate infrastructure, social inequalities, violence, among others. This educational phase is extremely important in

students' academic development; therefore, it is crucial that knowledge be conveyed in the most effective way possible.

Until recently, it was commonly stated that Brazil's educational problems were related solely to a lack of schools. After extensive analysis, this perception has shifted, and it is now understood that these issues are linked to multiple factors, making the search for solutions an ongoing and challenging endeavor. Given this scenario, controlling these problems requires the commitment of the entire school community,

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thereby improving the quality of education and enhancing student performance.

This study aimed to analyze the main educational challenges faced by schools in the final years of elementary education and to propose solutions to improve teaching quality and student performance. Additionally, it sought to examine the role of technology and public policies in the educational process. These objectives were followed to comprehensively structure the research, discussing different aspects that influence the quality of education in the final years of elementary school.

The methodological approach consists of a qualitative bibliographic research designed to align with these objectives. Digital platforms were used to locate relevant works, namely: Google Scholar, SciELO, and Capes. This research analyzed various articles, books, theses, and other scientific works.

Addressing the educational challenges in the final years of Brazilian elementary schools requires a thorough understanding of these issues. This knowledge is fundamental to developing effective strategies that can resolve these problems, necessitating focused attention from federal and state governments in formulating effective public policies.

2. Methodology

This chapter presents the research process, that is, the methodological procedures and approaches adopted for its development. Initially, it was understood that conducting comprehensive research and analyzing the selected literature were of utmost importance, as they provided frameworks for refining the methodological pathways and thus enabling the completion of the study.

The emphasis falls primarily on bibliographic research, as this choice is justified by the fact that the selected method represents the first stage and, throughout this study, aims to gather information and data that will be used as foundation for the investigation on educational challenges in the final years of elementary school. Digital platforms were used to locate relevant works, namely: Google Scholar, SciELO, and Capes. This research analyzed various articles, books, theses, and other scientific works that discuss and present reflections and suggestions which may contribute to a deeper understanding of the theme presented in this article.

Thus, this is a qualitative study that offers reflections and values the experiences of the subjects involved. It employs a qualitative approach by focusing on obtaining descriptive data rather than numerical representation, being oriented towards analyzing the opinions of the research participants. According to the author:

The qualitative research approach has its roots in the late 19th century when social scientists began to question whether the investigation method used in physical and natural sciences, which was based on a positivist perspective of knowledge, should continue to serve as a model for studying human and social phenomena. [...] Dilthey [...] was one of the first to seek

a different methodology for the social sciences, arguing that human and social phenomena are too complex and dynamic [...]. Furthermore, [...] the particular context in which an event occurs is an essential element for its understanding [...] [3].

Therefore, focusing on this study, the qualitative approach enables researchers to reflect on the responses provided by the research participants. Thus, it is believed that this approach aligned with our objectives, allowing for analyses and inferences about educational challenges in the final years of elementary school. Regarding the importance of this investigation, it aims to provoke reflections among teachers, administrators, and all those interested in this theme. Particularly concerning educational problems as non-neutral elements, since, consciously, teachers have intentionality when selecting them for the teaching-learning process. These elements must be directly connected to the content to be addressed, the lesson objectives, and especially to the reality of the students, the school, and the school community, thereby fostering a more effective teaching-learning process.

To this end, this research aimed to describe and explain how educational challenges are addressed and worked on with students in the classroom, as well as their potential contributions to student learning. We can describe explanatory research as:

This type of research is primarily concerned with identifying the factors that determine or contribute to the occurrence of phenomena. It is the type of research that most deepens the understanding of reality because it explains the reason, the "why" behind things. For this very reason, it is the most complex and delicate type, since the risk of committing errors increases considerably [19].

Thus, these are studies that encompass the factors that either contribute to or hinder the occurrence of phenomena. Therefore, we considered it pertinent to report and discuss the main educational challenges faced by the school community in the final years of elementary education and to propose solutions to improve teaching quality and student performance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Educational Challenges in Brazilian Education and Stakeholders in the Pursuit of Solutions

It is widely known that Brazilian education faces various complex challenges across all grade levels. Among these educational issues, one can cite school dropout, inadequate teaching quality, lack of infrastructure, student disobedience, social inequalities, among other problems. Research indicates that these problems are interconnected, requiring school management to adopt a rigorous, competent, and comprehensive approach to find solutions [28]. Effective public policy investment, a qualified teaching staff, and adequate infrastructure are necessary to implement innovative methodologies capable of improving the quality of education in Brazil.

It is important to recall what is written in the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988: "Education, which is the right of all and the duty of the State and the family, shall be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, his or her preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and his or her qualification for work" [6]. Society must be involved in addressing educational challenges, seeking to resolve problems through meetings and discussions, thereby ensuring the full academic development of students.

School management is extremely relevant in seeking solutions to problems, as it is at the forefront of educational challenges within the educational institution. It can be considered that school management must pursue knowledge and specializations to ensure better results. It can be regarded as a system that brings together people who share the same objectives, "considering the intentional nature of their actions and the social interactions they establish among themselves and with the socio-political context, in democratic forms of decision-making" [23]. The author uses the term school management when referring to a school leader. School management leads one to think about sharing ideas, where individuals work towards the proper functioning of the school, and decision-making occurs collectively through discussions held, adds [25]. It is considered that for good management, the active participation of teachers and the broader school community is important to organize teaching and ensure educational quality for all students.

Another important stakeholder in addressing educational challenges are the families and guardians of students. With this purpose, it is important that teachers and family members know their students/children well. However, "it is necessary to emphasize that parents are of great importance for a healthy child development process" [11]. Furthermore, they should allow the development of their children's personal identity. Similarly:

Each school deals with this issue in its own way. It is very easy to perceive when a student is going through this type of difficulty. When a student who always completed activities starts neglecting them or becomes withdrawn, the educator should seek to talk with them, and then contact the coordination [31].

Many educational challenges are related to students who did not have an adequate educational foundation. It is frequently observed that they were raised by grandparents, uncles/aunts, cousins, or older siblings, argues [20]. In pursuit of educational success, these aforementioned stakeholders are important in addressing educational problems.

There are various educational challenges. The authors state, "the main problems are the poor quality of schools and grade retention, that is, the tradition of holding back students who do not perform well on tests, a practice widely disseminated in Brazil" [29]. Besides these two issues, there are others that drastically affect the teaching-learning process across all grade levels.

It is worth adding regarding school dropout, characterized

as "a symptom of a human development problem, whose roots are formed since early childhood. The accumulation of deficiencies in a child's development culminates in some cases in dropout, and in most cases, in low cognitive and socioemotional capacity, and low learning" [15]. Within this context, this issue is related to socioeconomic factors. Students from low-income families leave school due to the need to work and provide financial help at home, considers [21]). In such cases, it is necessary to talk to the family and monitor the attendance of these students, a situation that frequently occurs in Brazilian schools.

According to the author's perspective, Brazil faces issues of low teaching quality in its schools, an aspect that demands attention primarily from the state, notes [14]. The quality of education in Brazilian schools is widely questioned, encompassing shortcomings in pedagogical practices, inadequate teacher training, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of resources. The methodology used in the classroom is highly indicative of educational success, as follows:

Traditional teaching methods have withstood the test of time, continuing to prevail in school practice. It is common in our schools to assign teaching the mere task of transmitting knowledge, overloading students with information that is memorized without question, assigning only repetitive exercises, imposing discipline externally, and using punishments [...] [22].

This is not to say that these techniques are irrelevant to the teaching process; however, by themselves, they make teaching tedious, repetitive, and devoid of interaction between teacher and student, student and student, nor allow for contextualization with social practices. Within this model, knowledge is imposed upon the learner, who is educated to achieve, through their own effort, their full self-realization as a person [22]. Thus, it can be said that when teaching occurs solely in this one-directional manner (from teacher to student), knowledge can become neutral, as it does not enable the student to develop a critical perspective based on their own reality, remaining merely an act of memorization. From the author's point of view:

[...] in Brazilian education, three distinct meanings of quality have been constructed and have circulated both symbolically and concretely in society: a first one, conditioned by the limited supply of schooling opportunities; a second, related to the idea of flow, defined as the number of students who progress or not within a given education system; and finally, the idea of quality associated with performance assessment through large-scale tests [26].

Unlike other countries, Brazilian education is limited and offers only the basics. Another point that must be addressed concerns socioeconomic factors and inequalities, as noted by Savin [28]. Rural and peripheral areas suffer from precarious infrastructure, a lack of resources, and access to low-quality education. Evidence suggests that "since education is a relatively complex activity and certainly also occurs outside the school environment, a list of

determinants of educational inequalities can be quite extensive" [24]. The lack of opportunities limits children's ability to attend school.

The lack of resources results in schools with precarious infrastructure, absence of libraries, laboratories, technological resources, and adequate classrooms, which can hinder the teaching-learning process. This directly affects the quality of education and the students' school environment, explain [29]. Building upon the idea advocated by the authors:

It does not seem, therefore, to be a justifiable educational policy to keep students and teachers in precariously equipped schools in such a deplorable state of repair. However the accounts are made, it is expensive to pay for learning over several years what could be learned in just one. Compared to what we are paying today (more than a year and a half of instruction for each grade completed and four dropouts for every student who finishes elementary school), everything else is ridiculously cheap [12].

It is evident that since 1986 schools were already in precarious conditions, and this scenario persists in many Brazilian schools, notes [21]. Addressing this significant challenge requires trained professionals to seek solutions. In this context, we emphasize the continuing education of school management and the teaching staff. Continuing education allows for the adaptation and use of new strategies within the educational system. Teachers should be able to conduct their classes not only using basic methods but must be proficient enough to find tools capable of enabling effective teaching, states [28]. Ensuring the full development of students is a challenge, but utilizing creativity and dynamic approaches can change this situation. The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) [7] recognized in 2018 that early childhood education is the primary foundation for a child's future development; thus, it is essential to innovate teaching methods to facilitate learning and the construction of new pathways, considering the child as the central focus in the classroom.

The teacher creates interdisciplinary learning environments, proposes challenges and explorations that can lead to discoveries and promote the construction of knowledge using the computer and its programs (software) to problematize and implement projects [1].

However difficult it may be to deal with this issue in the classroom, there are strategies to manage the situation until a plausible solution emerges. Numerous studies highlight teachers who find great difficulty in delivering these contents, both due to the school's physical aspect and the lack of adequate teaching materials, as exposed by [32].

As can be observed, the educational challenges are numerous. Crucially, literacy education is fundamental, especially for marginalized students. Many students reach the end of elementary school without the necessary knowledge to advance to the next grade, possessing only basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, characterize [14]. A conducted study reveals that "learning difficulties are very present in schools, as a common complaint among educators. Various factors cause

essential issues to be overlooked while others are amplified and left unresolved" [5]. It is important to emphasize the insufficient class time available to develop further strategies to address these educational challenges.

These educational challenges represent complex issues that require measures and strategies at governmental, social, and educational levels to be eliminated from Brazilian education. This necessitates society's attention through meetings to discuss the problems that most concern educational development, while also resorting to strategies and new methodologies that yield positive results for the teaching-learning process.

3.2. Challenges Faced in the Final Years of Elementary School

Based on various sources analyzed, educational challenges in the final years of elementary school are an evident issue. Teachers daily seek strategies aimed at changing the educational landscape for these young students. Evidence indicates that students in the initial grades face difficulties in the teaching-learning process, such as disinterest in learning, socioeconomic reality, and problems in writing and reading. In this context, there is a concern to find approaches to solve the problems and educational challenges present in the final years of elementary school.

As previously presented, educational challenges are related to all grade levels. This topic, in particular, is intended to discuss the educational challenges of the final years of elementary school. The final years of elementary school comprise grades 6 to 9, and educational challenges are observed in Brazilian schools [18]. Therefore, some educational issues are present at this stage of education. It is worth mentioning that:

Learning Disabilities (L. D.) are problems related to a series of factors and can manifest in various ways, such as: disorders, significant difficulties in understanding and using listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, and developing mathematical skills. These disorders are inherent to the individual, possibly resulting from central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur throughout the lifespan. Also associated with these learning difficulties may be problems related to the individual's behavior, social perception, and social interaction, but these do not, by themselves, constitute a learning disability [17].

The numerous observed problems hinder student learning. This finding is closely related to learning gaps, as many students reach the final years of elementary school with significant learning deficits, notes [2]. From the author's perspective:

The finding that a significant portion of students who reach the final years of Elementary School presents great difficulties in reading, writing, and text comprehension is widely reported in the press, especially when it publicizes the results of diagnostic assessments such as Prova Brasil, SAEB, Prova ABC, and PISA, among others [27].

These results reflect the state of student learning and, consequently, allow for the annual observation of learning levels

through these assessments. Students leaving elementary school with an educational gap hinders their performance in high school [18]. This results in low outcomes for Brazil's overall educational development.

According to the authors' understanding, other educational challenges plaguing elementary education are demotivation and lack of engagement. The school management and teaching staff must understand the students' reality, explain [9]. School management is responsible for seeking solutions to problems, using meetings to encourage the use of different methodologies that engage students in their lessons. Similarly, "an important consideration of school motivation from a qualitative perspective relies on the sense of autonomy. Thus, alongside students motivated merely by controlling forces, there are others who can be motivated through autonomy" [9]. Various methodologies can be found to seek solutions to some problems. Regarding engagement, it "means the student's active involvement in a task or learning activity, in class or in another environment" [9]. It is important to emphasize that all members of the school community must be committed to the same objectives.

In this reality, school dropout is a problem present across all grade levels. In the final years of elementary school, students often end up leaving the classroom to help support their families, states [31]. This is one of the reasons why children do not complete their studies. The author comments:

In this sense, it is necessary to consider that school dropout is a problematic situation, produced by a series of determinants. It is important to clarify that the term 'school dropout' will be understood as a result of the student's academic failure and that of the school institution itself, as will be seen later when studying the causes and consequences of school dropout, as well as its effects on school productivity [13].

Considering the points presented, the author further elaborates on the idea of school dropout as "involving students' cognitive and psycho-emotional issues, sociocultural and institutional factors, and those related to economics and politics" [13]. This is a problem that the school must address together with the family and guardians of these students, understanding their environment and financial situation. Here, it is crucial to emphasize that school dropout is linked to socioeconomic issues, making knowledge of the student's social context essential.

Continuing with the educational challenges in the final years of elementary school, violence and indiscipline in schools have been increasing significantly. Both teachers and students feel insecure and this affects their interaction in the classroom. As reported:

It is necessary to distinguish school indiscipline from other forms of violence that sometimes affect school life, often caused by individuals external to it. While school indiscipline can border on delinquency, it rarely is delinquency, as it does not violate the legal order of society, but only the order established within the school to meet the needs of collectively organized learning. [34].

This violence and indiscipline are related to teachers, principals, students, and society. This is a concerning problem that plagues the entire school community. Students in the final years of elementary school are beginning to encounter numerous opportunities, and it is through these opportunities that they sometimes find the wrong path, as indicated by [8]. It is the beginning of youth, a time when new ideas and friendships emerge. In this manner:

In Brazil, the phenomenon of school violence has received special attention from fields such as Education, Social Sciences, and Psychology, with a growing body of scientific research since the end of the last century. It is also a concern for society as a whole and the media, particularly regarding its most visible form physical violence or violence against property [33].

Violence and undisciplined students are present in all Brazilian schools, making it a relevant issue to be discussed and requiring urgent strategic solutions. It is pertinent to consider ongoing teacher training to deal with undisciplined students. Therefore, "to be a teacher in current times, it is essential to constantly broaden professional competencies, considering that knowledge and society are constantly transforming worldwide" [30]. The lack of specific training to work with adolescents and the need for pedagogical updating are constant challenges.

It is also necessary to address inclusive education. Students with special needs still face significant barriers, including lack of teacher preparedness, absence of specialized resources and adequate methodologies, and insufficient school infrastructure. Within this conception, Andreozzi [4] points out the need to remove the barrier constructed between education and disability, emphasizing the necessity of means to introduce individuals with disabilities into the school environment. For this, the role of the specialized teacher is fundamental to improve the student's integration in their academic and social journey. Similarly, Camargo and Carvalho [10] state that the teacher has the role of assisting the student with special educational needs so that they can advance both intellectually and socially. In this way, these students can surpass the expectations and barriers created for them, being able to enjoy their rights.

The practice of including students with special educational needs at all levels of education is currently an educational policy guaranteed by legislation, in both public and private networks in Brazil, although it has not yet been fully achieved across the entire national territory. Thus, Andreozzi [4] argues that adaptation in all areas, in conjunction with federal and municipal bodies, is essential for effective integration. In summary, Figueira [16] notes that governmental bodies guarantee and assist the processes ensured by law, in addition to sharing the necessary materials with these institutions for the better integration of individuals with disabilities in the school space. It is necessary to work and direct inclusive education towards hard-to-reach areas, as they suffer the most from exclusion in Brazil. The institution should also present methodologies for unifying the school and the student, making the student feel

included in the school environment.

4. Final Considerations

In light of the arguments presented by the studied theorists, it is evident that the educational challenges in the final years of Brazilian elementary schools are deeply rooted in a complex interplay of factors extending far beyond the school walls. These issues are multifaceted and systemic; as analyzed, prominent among them are school dropout, socioeconomic disparities, significant learning gaps, the inclusion of students with special needs, inadequate teacher continuing education, and outdated curricula. These elements are often interrelated, creating a cycle where one problem perpetuates another.

Addressing these deep-seated challenges effectively requires a nuanced understanding of their origins and a concerted effort that bridges policy, school management, and community engagement. As demonstrated throughout this study, sustainable solutions demand decisive action from political leaders in formulating and funding effective public policies, coupled with a committed and well-supported school management capable of innovative leadership. Furthermore, the active involvement of families and the wider community is not just beneficial but essential, creating a necessary support network for the student.

Therefore, this discussion must remain at the forefront of public debate, continuously engaging government bodies, families, guardians, and civil society. The ultimate goal is to collaboratively contribute to enhancing the quality of Brazilian education. This entails a unwavering commitment to ensuring all students have equitable access to meaningful learning experiences, fostering a mutual dedication to academic success, and systematically working towards the elimination of the educational problems that pervade not only elementary school but all levels of the educational system.

Abbreviations

BNCC	National Common Curriculum Base
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
CAPES	Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel
SAEB	Basic Education Assessment System
L. D.	Learning Disabilities

Author Contributions

Jhoy Pereira de Souza is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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