

Article

To Understand the “Brazilian Way” of School Management: How National Culture Influences the Organizational Culture and School Leadership

Ana Maria de Albuquerque Moreira * and Maria Zélia Borba Rocha 

Department of Planning and Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Brasília, Campus Darcy Ribeiro, 70910-90 Brasília, Brazil; zrocha@unb.br or zrocha.unb@gmail.com

* Correspondence: ana_moreira@hotmail.com or anaalbuquerque@unb.br

Received: 16 April 2018; Accepted: 4 June 2018; Published: 13 June 2018



Abstract: This study aims to identify characteristics of national culture in the culture of Brazilian school management and leadership. Considering the broad literature that deals with the peculiarities of Brazilian culture and its influence on Brazilian management, it is assumed that as an institution belonging to a particular society, the school offers internal dynamics that are organized under influences of historical and cultural determinants of this society. This work is an exploratory study that uses secondary data found in studies on the profiles of principals, leadership, climate, and organizational culture in schools and primary data from research applied in public secondary schools located in the Federal District, Brazil. The results demonstrate that the initial premise—national culture influences the organizational culture and school leadership—has been confirmed and aspects that merit further analysis are identified.

Keywords: national culture; school organizational culture; leadership

1. Brief Introduction

The studies about the influence of national culture on the culture of organizations have achieved greater prominence in Brazil since 1980s, in particular, after the publication of the results of Hofstede’s 1970s research, in which the researcher analyzed the dimension of culture associated with the management of companies in several countries, including Brazil. However, only limited studies relating to this dimension of culture exist in studies on management of educational organizations and schools. This article seeks to address this gap and answer the question: In what way could characteristics of Brazilian culture influence the organizational culture and leadership of schools? It is assumed that the school, as an organization belonging to a particular society, has its culture influenced by historical and social factors, as well as the cultural rights of this society. The literature review employed studies that show how the management of companies in Brazil is influenced by traits of the national culture, such as “the Brazilian way”, relations of power and hierarchy, authoritarianism, personalism, plasticity, cordiality, and results orientation [1–6]. Many of these studies draw on theories and local studies from recognized Brazilian anthropologists, economists, and sociologists such as Gilberto Freire, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Caio Prado Junior, and Roberto Da Matta. The present exploratory study will be developed in two steps: the first step will explore the existing literature on relationships between traits of national culture and culture of Brazilian organizations, seeking concepts associated with the organizational culture and leadership of schools. The second step will analyze data on profiles of principals, structure, and procedures for the management of Brazilian public primary schools. The secondary data will be from the Census Data of Basic Education in Brazil, the Evaluation of Primary Education (Ministry of Education, Brasília, Brazil), and the Teaching

and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (OECD). The primary data will identify traits of national organizational culture in aspects of leadership and management in public schools of the educational system of Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil.

2. Literature Review

Brazilian culture results from the historical process of colonization of the country and, as such, it constitutes a synthesis, and therefore a new thing, resulting from the intercultural contact between three main cultures (It is necessary to remember that, from the second half of the 19th century, new peoples were brought to Brazil by the policy of replacing slave labor by wage labor, as promoted by the second empire. Thus, the intercultural contact between different cultures in Brazil is much more complex and diversified, since it includes Germans, Italians, Spaniards, Slavs, Czechs, Poles, and Chinese. After World War II and the wars of Korea and Vietnam, a large number of Japanese and Koreans entered, and since the 1990s, mainly Arabs and Turks. Moreover, the existence of specificities among the various Amerindian peoples, among the various African tribes, and even the differences between Portuguese and Spanish are not unknown. However, due to the cultural abyss between Europeans, Amerindians, and Africans, we chose not to consider the idiosyncrasies between each of them to highlight the abyssal cultural differences existing among the three colonizing matrices of Brazil.): Iberian, Amerindian, and African.

There are important classical Brazilian studies on Brazilian culture that form the basis for understanding the central aspects that are related to the culture of Brazilian organizations [7–17]. These works emphasize, in common, the famous Brazilian way, as characteristic of the national culture. This way comes from the colonizing process in which ethnic miscegenation occurred and is therefore intercultural. The “little way” constitutes the identity of the Brazilian, configuring as much as he sees himself as he is seen by other peoples of other societies.

The main authors point out traits that mark the “character” of the Brazilian: authoritarianism; personalism; patriarchy; paternalism; hierarchy; mixing between the public and private spheres; and cordiality. These traits are so intertwined that they are inseparable and constitute the “little Brazilian way”.

Authoritarianism is an inheritance of Iberian absolutism. This was a power system (The testament structure is characterized by the rigid division of the social segments, with fragile possibilities of distribution of wealth and power and, therefore, with very low social mobility [18,19] in which all the riches of the land belonged to the royalty and it made concessions to the nobility at its pleasure, originating from the confusion between the public and the private spheres, which led to nepotism and clientelism. The inequality of power and the strong hierarchy were inherited from our historical slave and patriarchal family structures, which also permeated the relations between the public and the private. This patriarchal family structure was pregnant with authoritarianism and paternalism. These relationships of kinship have gained the “street” and have raised flights towards institutional policies [5,6,10–14].

From these patriarchal family relations and power was born the famous “Do you know with whom you are speaking?”, an expression that indicates the social, class, family, and institutional position of the one who argues and thus imposes his will upon the other, including in conditions in which the other is a public servant, whose activities are based on the law. This is the Brazilian way: the law is broken, the institutions are doubled, the common good is ignored to serve the private, and personal interests of the class estates that hold the material wealth and direct the patrimonial State. According to this perspective, the State patrimony of an elite perpetuates itself in political power and implements public policies that will exclusively attend to its class and family interests.

Some of these characteristics can be applied to organizations because the culture of organizations reproduces in their structures and internal relations, to a certain extent, the culture of the society in which they are situated. The studies that deal with the relations between national culture traits and organizational culture are more frequent in the area of administration in general and have gained

more evidence from the Hofstede's investigative work carried out in 72 countries, between 1968 and 1972, about on the impact of the culture of the country/region on managerial practices. Among the countries studied was Brazil. As a result, Hofstede [2] defined a classification scheme of cultural dimensions for analysis of organizations in different contexts (Table 1).

Table 1. Scheme of classification of the culture of organizations according to Hofstede.

Dimension	Definition
Hierarchical distance	how each society deals with the issue of hierarchy and the inequality of power between people.
Degree of individualism X degree of collectivism	a degree of interdependence between members of the group, as well as the degree of solidarity and commitment.
Degree of masculinity X of femininity	prevalence of values of society: femininity: quality of life and relationships. masculinity: competitiveness.
Control of uncertainty	degree of tolerance to the uncertainties of future events.
Long-term guidance X short-term guidance	respect for traditions and the fulfilment of social obligations.

Source: Hofstede [2].

Based on the Hofstede research, the essential characteristics of the Brazilian style of management were highlighted:

- a. high power distance;
- b. behaviors more collectivist than individualists;
- c. high need to avoid uncertainties;
- d. feminine values orientation;
- e. low-performance orientation, short orientation.

In other investigative works [4–6,20–27], researchers point out the existence of a Brazilian way of management with common components, both in the public and in the private sector, which is:

- a. Little way or the Brazilian way: harmonization of rules—a strategy to soften the impersonal forms that govern society;
- b. Inequality of power and hierarchy: historical slavery marks power relations and the greater distance between decision-making and executive bodies, which characterizes the model of authoritarian management with concentration and centralization of power in the hands of organizational leaders;
- c. The existence of simple pyramidal structures of power relations in organizations with few internal segments and with low levels of intermediation between the central leadership and the base of the organizational pyramid;
- d. Paternalistic leadership style, which is associated with personalism, leading to confusion between the public and private instances of the individual and therefore management is based more on loyalty and docility to the leadership (clientelistic relations of favoritism) than on professionalism, both of the leadership, when of the subalterns;
- e. The existence of an abyss of power among the professional segments of an organization, associated with personalism, leads to a rigid formalism of structures, which is related to the hierarchy and standardization of procedures;
- f. A rigid system of punishment of the base segments of organizations based more on interpersonal criteria than on a model of professional skills and abilities;

- g. Minimization of risks, which is associated with paternalism, favoritism, clientelism, and nepotism, as national private companies expect and pressure the state to assume the risks of the enterprise;
- h. Distancing from the systematic planning for the short, medium, and long term, focusing more on the formal rules, in most cases, and at the same time as on individual creativity, with no formal structures of teamwork;
- i. A gap between participation discourse and effective practices of involvement of the human sectors that make up the base of the organization, which is umbilically tied to the concentration and centralization of power; rigid hierarchizing; to paternalism;
- j. Aversion to conflict, which is in line with the warmth of the Brazilian;
- k. Viewpoint which awaits the decision of the head and avoids taking the initiative in decisions;
- l. Religiosity, which is a mark of Brazilian cultural identity and is taken to public spaces and management.
- m. The existence of tenuous boundaries between the formal and the informal. The Brazilian, on average, brings to the public sphere of work the informality of customs and relations acquired in the space of rule-free sociability of the street [5,10].

After the economic globalization and institutional diversification that occurred from the 20th century, other studies have been conducted to identify possible changes in cultural traits of Brazilian organizations [1,28] showed that the central traits, as the inequalities of power and hierarchy, the flexibility, plasticity, and personalism were maintained, while the Brazilian way and the formalism passed by resignification in consequence of a more critical view and the need for more skilled work systems. The same authors affirm that among the cultural traits that are called peripherals, the results orientation, guidance for action, and planning, passed by resignification in reason of strengthening the planning and management by results and goals. However, the inefficient management of time, the authoritarianism, the aversion to conflict, the posture of the spectator, and the cordiality remained. Tanure [28] structured her analysis on three pillars of Brazilian culture: distance from power and hierarchy, relationship and power, and flexibility. According to the author, such pillars did not suffer significant changes after financial globalization. The visions of the two authors coincide in relation to relevant characteristics of the national culture, which leads us to believe that they are also relevant for the analysis of influences of national culture in the formation of a culture of management of Brazilian schools.

3. Overview of the Brazilian Context

Several studies show the influence of national culture traits on the culture of Brazilian organizations. We seek in these studies the references for traits of Brazilian culture that could influence the culture of school organizations. We assume that schools, as historically constituted organizations and members of a given society, cannot escape the influence of culture.

We adopted in this work the structuralist approach of school culture, which considers it as "...the culture produced by the school form of education..." [29] (p. 22). The approach suggests that the educational organization, in its systemic structure, produces a specific culture that, while subsuming elements of the national culture and the regional subculture, presents idiosyncratic characteristics of the educational system. It means that the school organization has a life of its own, not only in the traditions of the past, but also in the adventitious directives of future political plans, and it is capable of creating a synthesis—a new thing—that contains traces of the general culture and generates microcultural specificities.

There are few Brazilian studies about the correlations between the traits of the national culture and the organizational culture of the schools as constituted in their daily life [30,31]. This exploratory study is inserted in this niche with a view to further the expansion for a national survey. The general objective is to respond, empirically, to how national culture influences organizational culture and school

leadership. The exploratory character is due to the complexity of the proposed theme, taking into account Brazil's specificities: territorial vastness, cultural diversity, and the organization of education.

The organization of Brazilian Education has been settled by the Federal Constitution of 1988 and in a specific education law (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional—LDB/1996) of 20 December 1996. This legislation defines the principles, goals, and the structure of Brazilian education at two main levels: basic and higher education.

The basic level comprises three steps: early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education. The higher education level includes: the bachelor's degree, the licentiate, and the technologic graduate and postgraduate studies.

Brazil is a continental country that adopts a federative regime that includes three spheres of power that play a role in education matters: federal union, state level, and municipalities. The administration of education faces a challenge regarding the necessary interaction among the educational systems. The federal system is administrated by the Ministry of Education (MEC), while each state of the federation administrators its system through their secretaries of education, as well as the municipalities through their own secretaries. The Federal District follows the same dynamics of the state systems. Furthermore, public and private schools coexist in each sphere of the federation. The education service in public schools is unpaid at all levels.

The legislation also defines the responsibilities of each federated entity regarding education. Concerning the offer in public institutions, the Union gives priority to university education, while the States give priority to secondary education. Municipalities are focused on early childhood to primary and secondary education, as is the Federal District.

In this complex context, we understand that the analysis of the influence of national characteristics in school management should start as an exploratory work on the subject in the theoretical field and empirical insertions. As a preliminary study that provides clues to in-depth research, the results of exploratory research provide elements to delimit the object more accurately, to define hypotheses more clearly, to select the population with more security, and to choose the most appropriate methodology and techniques.

The objective of the study here is to explore the relationship between national culture and organizational culture of schools. It was assumed that the management culture of public schools subsumed elements of Brazilian culture in their practices. Thus, we sought research methods in order to identify traits of the national culture that are present in the management of public schools.

4. Research Methods

For this exploratory study, we worked with the three pillars of Brazilian culture highlighted by Tanure [28], such as categories of analysis to develop a first analysis of the culture of management of Brazilian schools, which are: distance from power and hierarchy, relationship and management, and flexibility. We believe that these three dimensions synthesize the fundamental characteristics of our national culture and, therefore, serve the objective proposed in this work. In addition, as they appear in other studies previously conducted and are academically recognized, they allow comparability between the management of Brazilian organizations and the management of school organizations in future studies.

In the empirical work, we related data that address: profiles of teachers and managers, leadership, organization of educational work, and symbols and celebrations in school. Our focus of analysis was centered in the public schools of basic education, which have the largest number of enrollments at this stage of formation.

As the source of information, we used secondary data collected from the Census of Basic Education and Research TALIS, and primary data collected by means of a questionnaire applied to teachers in primary schools located in the Federal District.

The Federal District (DF) was selected for its cultural syncretism. It is located, territorially, in the center-west region, the center of the Brazilian territory, and includes the capital of the country,

Brasília, where the headquarters of the powers of the Republic is located. The DF has an estimated population of 3 million inhabitants and a population in the age group of 5–19 years (school age) of 218,709 inhabitants.

The Federal District is a synthesis of Brazil with regard to population characteristics. The construction of Brasilia at the end of the 1950s attracted a population coming from practically all the regions of the country who came in search of work opportunities: manual workers from the north and northeast; southeast public officials; and traders from the southeast and south. Some of this population settled in the new capital and their descendants are already in the third generation.

Another important migratory factor was the electoral strategy created for the governor Joaquim Domingos Roriz, from the 1980s to the first decade of the 21st century, which attracted unskilled labor to the Federal District. Roriz was governor of the Federal District for four terms. He was the last governor appointed by the Military Regime and he knew that he would not be elected in the democratic period after the Federal Constitution of 1988. When Joaquim Roriz began his first term in the late 1980s, the Federal District had 17 satellite cities and a population of 1 million. Today, in 2018, the DF has a population of three million inhabitants in 32 administrative regions.

The fact that Brasília is the seat of the Republic's power continues to attract a migratory contingent that accompanies its representatives (federal deputies and senators of the Republic) to advise them on legislative activity. A little of this contingent managed, over the decades, to settle in the city by means of approval in federal public competitions. This continues to attract skilled labor from all over Brazil, as they are the highest wages of the federation, compared to salaries of state, municipal, and even district public servants.

Thus, if the population of the Federal District was already a population sample of Brazilian diversity in the 1950s, this characteristic remains in the second decade of the 21st century. Therefore, to study the district subsystem of education is to have a synthetic view of the school culture of Brazil, because in this subsystem of education, we find actors from all corners of the country: teachers, students, managers, employees, and parents.

The choice of schools was random, and in total, 25 questionnaires were distributed in five schools. The respondents were teachers of the public schools in the Federal District, with higher education, mostly male, and with more than 10 years of teaching experience.

The mixed questionnaire, with open and closed questions, contained the following topics: profile of respondents; management; school culture; and leadership. Management issues covered the subthemes: community participation; pedagogical management; teacher training; and changes. The questions about school culture included: routines; symbology; and rituals and religious teaching. For the purpose of analyzing the data in this exploratory research, only issues related to culture and school leadership were considered. In the following, section we present and discuss the findings of the research.

5. Discussion of the Research Findings

The analysis of the culture of school management and leadership was performed considering three main categories from the literature of Brazilian organizational culture: distance from power and hierarchy, relationship and management, and flexibility.

5.1. Distance from Power and Hierarchy

In the analysis of data for this exploratory study, we identified that in spite of the movements toward a culture of democratic management of education, high distance from power, centralization, and hierarchy are characteristics of the national culture observed in the culture of the Brazilian educational organizations.

First, we highlight the profile of the teachers and principals of basic education schools because they understand that they belong to the category of teaching professionals, those who have a direct relationship with the pedagogical achievement of the school, its objectives, and major objectives. Other

studies that deal with the effect of in-school factors on students' performance show that the first factor for good results is teaching performance, and the second factor is the direction of the school.

In Brazil, the public schools are responsible for more than 80% of enrollments in basic education schools. Consequently, most (more than 70%) of Brazilian teachers work in the public schools. The way of hiring teachers is a relevant aspect. After the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988, hiring for admission into the teaching profession in public schools occurs by civil service examination (Civil service examinations are examinations implemented in various countries for admission to the civil service. They are intended as a method to achieve an effective, rational public administration on a merit system. [Wikipedia]), a process in which meritocratic and impersonal characteristics prevail. The inclusion of this legal device in the public administration was essential for the mitigation of the authoritarian and paternalistic character, which represents a strong Brazilian cultural trait, observed in the structuring of the Brazilian state apparatus.

This group of public school teachers is mostly composed of women (71%), in the average age group of 35–40 years, and of predominantly white race/color. In terms of training, the absolute majority (94%) of these teachers has the upper level completed, in percentages varying according to the stage of basic education in which they teach: child education, 80%; in primary education, 89%; and in high school, 98%.

Regarding principal profiles, according to the data from Census Data of Basic Education in school Brazil (Ministry of Education, Brazil) and TALIS, the majority of them (about 75%) are women and they are, on average, 45 years old. The majority (88%) completed a course in school management in addition to the initial training.

The average time of experience in the position of principal is seven years, varying among the Brazilian states. About the time dedicated to the management of the school, a little more than half (53%) of the directors work full time in this function, and the remaining 47% combined their management responsibilities with other teaching obligations.

Considering the object of study, it is worth mentioning the form of filling the position of principal. According to Amaral [32] (p. 52).

The role of school principal in Brazil was constituted as part of the consolidation of the hierarchical and bureaucratic structure of Brazilian education and, up to the present day, is not always exercised by professionals with technical training, which have been evaluated by the public authorities in order to certify competences for the exercise of school management or, which have been chosen by the school community. (Free translation.).

This hierarchical structure reveals a strong trait of the national culture present in the educational systems and public schools of education. Currently, different practices coexist with regard to the filling of the position of principal: appointment or election of the principals of Brazilian public schools. Despite the progress made in consolidating the principles of democratic management after the 1988 Federal Constitution, it is not always possible to fill the post of the principal on the basis of impersonal criteria such as technical training or selection by public authorities based on the objective of certifying competencies for the exercise of the position.

According to the survey of the Evaluation System of Basic Education on the topic held in 2011, 46.9% of school directors had reached the position through some form of indication, both at municipal and state levels, and the other 43.6% arrived by selection in the context of networks or by-election. The remainder, i.e., a large minority, came to office through a public tender or mixed schemes. A survey conducted by the National Council of Education in 2015 also revealed that the majority of the directors arrived at the office by indication.

Despite advances in choice for election by the school community, the practice of appointment or indication of the school principal is still common. In this case, the principal is chosen in the same schema of positions of trust. Under this condition, the principals can be replaced at any time in accordance with the political moment and conveniences. Sometimes, the appointment may be carried out by the executive power through the Department of Education or other organs. The indications can

also be made by local politicians, which reveals an undemocratic scenario. These characteristics of the culture of management of schools for basic education in Brazil—strong hierarchy, centralization, and the high distance of power—also identified as influenced by national culture are issues that deserve more in-depth studies in order to verify the way that they are impeding the progress in democratic management and the autonomy of schools.

5.2. Relationship and Management

In order to understand the relationship and management, we analyzed variables related to leadership, the organization of educational work, symbols, and celebrations in the schools.

Leadership is undoubtedly important in basic education schools for improving learning outcomes and is generally related to the ability of the principal to influence the teachers and the school staff [33].

The data for leadership analysis come from the TALIS research and from the answers to the questionnaire applied to secondary school teachers in the Federal District.

The TALIS research uses two main leadership styles: instructional and administrative. The first one is related to the ability of the principal to influence the processes of teaching and learning in school through pedagogical coordination, encouragement of teacher training, and use of large-scale learning assessment indicators. The second one is related to the execution of bureaucratic processes.

With regard to three major questions about the principal role based on the Instructional Leadership Index developed by TALIS, the answers of the Brazilian principals were:

1. Took measures to support cooperation among teachers for the development of new teaching practices: 54.9% said they do this frequently, and 20.3% responded that they did this very often. Only 1.6% said they never do this;
2. Took measures to ensure that teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching skills: 54% said that they do it often, and 21.3% said they do it very often. Only 2.2% said they never do it;
3. Has taken steps to ensure that teachers feel responsible for the learning outcomes of the students: 60% said that they do it often, and 23.8% said they do it very often. Only 1.8% responded that they never do this.

The answers show variations by regions of the national territory and education systems, which is expected considering the complexity of the Brazilian organization. In member states of the southern region of Brazil, there was a greater involvement of the directors in pedagogical matters, and in federal schools, the level of involvement of the directors in this subject was observed as higher. Regional differences are an aspect that deserves further in-depth studies.

An important point observed both in the TALIS results and in the questionnaires applied to secondary school teachers in the Federal District concerns the leadership that is not centered on the unique figure of the principal. Public school teachers who responded to the questionnaire answered that they identified leadership among the teachers (68%), a smaller group (12%) answered that they did not, and the others did not know (16%) or did not respond (4%).

However, when questioned whether this leadership is associated with a position (director, deputy director, or coordinator), 40% answered yes, 36% said they did not, and 8% said they did not know. Despite the perception that leadership is associated with the position being in a higher percentage than not being associated with the position, the difference is relatively low. From the inclusion of the principle of democratic management of educational institutions in the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Law on the Guidelines and Bases of National Education in 1996, which also recognized the need to strengthen the management autonomy of schools, most public systems of teaching work with the design of the school management team. In general, the management team is made up of the school's director, deputy director, and pedagogical coordinator. In the TALIS survey, the absolute majority of managers replied that they worked with a management team (92%).

After the Federal Constitution and the Law on the Guidelines and Bases of National Education determined the principle of democratic management of public education, the focus on the performance

of school management teams, instead of focusing on the principal, has been strengthened in public basic education schools.

In addition to the perception of the existence of leadership in the school, the respondents pointed out the attributes they observed on this leadership, i.e., the attributes they observed on a person who exerts the leadership (Table 2).

Table 2. Leadership attributes.

Attributes	%
Technical competence	44
Charisma	60
Rationality	44
Political competence	20
Tradition	20
Negotiation capacity	44
Ethic	44
Initiative	64
Conciliation capacity	44
Others	8
No answer	16

Source: Questionnaire data, 2017.

In the characteristics listed, we emphasize the attributes of greater weight, charisma and initiative, followed by technical ability, rationality, negotiating capacity, and the ability of conciliation in similar percentages. These responses observed the presence of personalism which marks the relationship in the Brazilian management, especially in regard to the charisma and the capabilities of negotiation and reconciliation.

In the second analysis, when we associate the composition of school leadership (management team) and the ways of organization of educational work in school, we deduce the existence of a character more collectivist than individualist, another important trait of Brazilian culture [2,3].

This trait of collectivism was observed in activities developed by teachers in moments of pedagogical coordination and activities in addition to the classes, which we call complementary activities in the training of students (Table 3).

Table 3. Complementary activities to classes.

Description	%
Educational tours	22
Lectures for students	24
Lectures for teachers	13
Films for all the school	17
Celebrations with the internal community	20
Celebrations with the external community	17

Source: Questionnaire data, 2017.

The majority of teachers (90%) replied that in the moments intended for pedagogical coordination, they work on: planning individual classes, collective planning of lessons, deliberation of interdisciplinary themes to be developed in all disciplines, and planning collective and extracurricular activities.

In complementary activities to lessons, this aspect is reinforced in the types and frequency of activities performed (Table 3). The activities of greatest interest and often carried out by schools involve groups, the internal community, and the community outside the school.

According to the classification of Hofstede [2], another important cultural trait observed in the culture of school organizations, coinciding with the culture of the Brazilian organizations, is a higher degree of femininity that values the relationships and the well-being of the group. We cite data from the TALIS Research, in which the principals agreed, for the most part, with the following statements:

The school's team shares a common set of beliefs about education/learning	91%
There is a high level of cooperation between the school and the local	72%
The management team openly discusses the difficulties	85%
There is mutual respect for the ideas of colleagues	92%
There is a culture of sharing the success	93%
The relationship between teachers and students is good	94%

The variables that express these opinions of directors formed the Index of Mutual Respect, which varies by country. The Federal District is among the places that have the highest Index of Mutual Respect, coinciding with the trend in appreciation collectives, cordiality, and feminine values found also in the responses to the questionnaire applied to the teachers.

In regard to the last perspective to analyze the relationship and management, symbols and celebrations are essential among the visible artefacts used to understand the organizational culture [34]. In relation to these aspects, we identified another facet of personalism, a trait of national culture which merges public and private spaces and joins the religious aspect, which is evident in existing symbols in schools. The individual religious beliefs are taken, by means of symbols, to a public and secular space, such as the school, and loaded this space with meaning.

Although in lower percentages in relation to the flag of Brazil, the flag of the Federal District and the flag of the school, the images of saints, the crucifix, and the Bible are important symbols present in schools, according the answers of the teachers (Table 4). The flags represent the relationship with the public, which is common to all, and the identification and exploitation of the school as a collective. The flag of the school and slogans are related to demonstrating the identity of the school. Even now, the presence of crucifixes, the images of saints, and the Bible are individual beliefs which are conveyed to the public space. This is associated to a relevant mark of the national culture: the relations between the house and the street, and the existence of subtle boundaries between the public and private sectors.

Table 4. Symbols at school.

Symbol	%
Flag of Brazil	68
Flag of Federal District	64
Flag of the football team	8
Flag of the school	52
The image that symbolizes the school	68
Lemma that symbolizes the school	8
Crucifix	8
Bible opened	8
Images of saints	16
Images of orixas	0
Images of Buddha	0
No answer	4
Other	0

Source: Questionnaire data, 2017.

Personalism is also associated with the high distance of power, hierarchy, and the authority that we observed before. In this case, the authoritarianism is also associated with the religiosity which is a mark of Brazilian cultural identity and it is taken to public spaces and to the management of the schools. The religious symbols represent the strong religiosity of the national culture. The calendars of public organization and of public schools subsume the Christian dates with commemorative activities

in the workspaces. Moreover, the public spaces of work are full of Christian symbols such as crucifixes, statues and images of saints, and quotations taken from the Bible, and in the curriculum of basic education, religious education is a compulsory subject in public schools [35,36]. Other religious beliefs are strong and very present in Brazil, e.g., the Candomblé, but Catholicism is the strongest religious belief in hierarchical line since colonization, as the official religion of the Court. The Candomblé, as a religious belief arising out of slaves, until today suffers discrimination. So, there are not images of Orixás in the schools.

The national traits need to be analyzed in association to understand the management culture. So, when we associate high distance of power hierarchy, authority, personalism, and religiosity, we observe the cult of social traditions strengthened in the celebrations held at schools (Table 5). Among these celebrations which deserve highlighting are the inclusion of dates International Women's Day, as a response to the movement of society, and the Day of Black Consciousness, imposed by their own legislation in order to stimulate the correction of historical distortions in the country.

Table 5. Celebrations at school.

Celebration	%
Carnival	4
International Women's Day	20
Easter	8
Anniversary of Brasília	4
Discovery of Brazil	0
Labour day	4
Mother's Day	64
"Festas juninas"	84
Father's Day	12
Independence of Brazil	4
Children's Day	8
Teachers Day	60
Students Day	17
Proclamation of the Republic	68
Day of Black Consciousness	60

Source: Questionnaire data, 2017.

In the next section, we will discuss the last central trait of Brazilian culture: flexibility.

5.3. Flexibility

The Brazilian cultural trait related to flexibility has different connotations: creativity and adaptation to the contexts and the Brazilian way, a manner to circumvent the rules. According to Tanure [28] (p. 3).

The flexibility, a characteristic in general positive, also has two negative manifestations in Brazil: The first is the use of the "Brazilian way" to circumvent the rules and procedures; the second is the indiscipline, which hinders the stabilisation of some processes and makes many activities are conducted outside of the term (Free translation.).

The trait of flexibility was observed in the TALIS Research on the profile of the teachers. We emphasize the criterion "adequate training", which is defined, in the same way, according to the teaching stage in basic education. In early childhood education, teachers with a baccalaureate degree with pedagogical complementation are adequately trained. In the initial years of elementary education, teachers with a degree or a baccalaureate with pedagogical complementation in pedagogy or in the discipline they teach (e.g., Mathematics, Portuguese, Language, Arts, etc.) are adequately trained. In the final years and in high school, it is necessary to have a bachelor's degree or a baccalaureate with pedagogical complementation in the discipline taught, specifically. Just over half of the teachers in

basic education (55%) have adequate training in the area where they work in public schools. In child education, this group is half (50%), and already in elementary school, especially in the final years, this percentage falls to 48% and in high school is 59%.

The data show that a reasonable percentage of teachers do not attend to the adequate relation between training and area of activity. In this situation, suggested by the lack of teachers, we observe the famous Brazilian way, when teachers with training in diverse areas are hired to teach in another areas. As an example, we can point out religious education, which is a compulsory subject in elementary education. Only 3.6% who teach in this discipline have adequate training. In secondary schools, the most critical situations are observed in the disciplines of sociology (23%), physics (39%), arts (39%), and philosophy (41%) (percentages indicate teachers with adequate training for the area of activity).

Justified by the managers of education systems by the scarcity of teachers, the sharp problem in Brazil, the “adaptations” between the area of teacher education and teaching discipline in schools, becomes, in the context of flexibility, a blocking factor of stabilization of pedagogical processes that compete for the highest quality of learning by students.

6. Preliminary Conclusions

As an exploratory study, we cannot reach definitive conclusions nor prescribe generalizations from what has been observed. Therefore, we will conclude this work with some preliminary findings of our research.

First, we emphasize that our initial argument is true: we found influences of traits of national culture in the Brazilian style of managing public schools of basic education. To move this understanding, first, understand the school as an organization that interacts with its surroundings. This interaction occurs in different forms: institutional, collective, individual, and by punctual and/or planned actions. We observed that as organizations, schools have characteristics of national culture in common with the other organizations.

Then, we sought the most frequent studies about the national culture and the formation of a Brazilian way of management. In these studies, we found categories that were relevant to the analysis of primary and secondary data and identified trends for the understanding of the culture of Brazilian school management, summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Trends in the culture of management and leadership in Brazilian schools.

Traits of National Culture	Trends in the Culture of School Management and Leadership in Brazil
Distance of power	A high distance of power and hierarchy Centralization Limited autonomy of the schools
Relationship and management	Collectivism Feminine values Personalism Authoritarianism Respect the traditions
Flexibility	The Brazilian way

In addition to the trends, the exploratory study pointed out methodological considerations and issues to be expanded on more broadly and deeply in future studies.

The first of them focuses on the complexity of school organization and educational systems. In Brazil, the educational systems are composed of networks of public and private schools. Thus, in order to reach the culture of management of Brazilian schools, it is necessary to broaden the study in terms of the sample of public schools and to include a sample of private schools in order to arrive at

common characteristics and specific characteristics that reveal the administrative nature of each type of school.

The second consideration, in methodological order, needs to observe the extent of the national territory. Divided into five geopolitical regions, Brazil has cultural characteristics that vary from one region to another, and this variation may be reflected in a culture of management of schools according to its location.

The third concerns the characterization of the school as a diverse space, composed and under construction by individuals of different cultural nuances. This is accentuated considering the structure of economic, social, and cultural development of Brazilian society.

These considerations are indispensable when planning further studies from this exploratory study to obtain clearer contours and greater evidence for the understanding of traits of national culture, such as personalism, plasticity, relations of authority, time management, and results orientation.

Finally, we note that, although exploratory in nature, the results shown here are relevant to the knowledge of the cultural aspects of school management that show clues for the understanding of obstacles and the advancement toward the improvement of educational organizations.

Author Contributions: A.M.A.M. conceived and coordinated the study. M.Z.B.R. conceived, designed and collected the questionnaire data for this research. The data analysis was undertaken by A.M.A.M. with M.Z.B.R. supporting interactions. All authors worked on the theoretical framework and wrote the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Chu, R.A.; Wood, T., Jr. Cultura organizacional brasileira pós-globalização: Global ou local? In *Revista de Administração Pública*; FGV: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2008; Volume 42.
2. Hofstede, G. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*; McGraw Hill: New York, NY, USA, 1997.
3. Motta, F.P.; Caldas, M.P. Introdução: Cultura Organizacional e Cultura Brasileira. In *Cultura Organizacional e Cultura Brasileira*; Atlas: São Paulo, Brazil, 1997.
4. Caldas, M. Culturas brasileiras: entendendo perfis culturais no plural e em mutação. In *Cultura e Diferença nas Organizações: Reflexões Sobre Nós e os Outros*; Barbosa, L., Ed.; Atlas: São Paulo, Brazil, 2009.
5. Tanure, B. Singularidades da gestão à brasileira?! In *Cultura e Diferença nas Organizações: Reflexões Sobre Nós e os Outros*; Barbosa, L., Ed.; Atlas: São Paulo, Brazil, 2009.
6. Prates, M.A.S.; Barros, B.T. O estilo brasileiro de administrar: Sumário de um modelo de ação cultural brasileiro com base na gestão empresarial. In *Cultura Organizacional e Cultura Brasileira*; Motta, F.C.P., Caldas, M.P., Eds.; Atlas: São Paulo, Brazil, 1997.
7. Adorno, S. *Os Aprendizes do Poder: O Bacharelismo Liberal na Política Brasileira*; Paz e Terra: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1988.
8. Do Nascimento Arruda, M.A. *Mitologia da Mineiridade: O Imaginário na Vida Política e Cultural do Brasil*; Brasiliense: São Paulo, Brazil, 1999.
9. De Azevedo, F. *A Cultura Brasileira*, 6th ed.; Edunb: Brasília, Brazil; Edufrj: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1996.
10. Damatta, R.A. *A Casa e a Rua: Espaço, Cidadania, Mulher e Morte no Brasil*, 6th ed.; Rocco: São Paulo, Brazil, 2003.
11. DaMatta, R. *Carnavais, Malandros e Heróis: Para Uma Sociologia do Dilema Brasileiro*; Rocco: São Paulo, Brazil, 1997.
12. DaMatta, R. *O que Faz o Brasil, Brasil?* Rocco: São Paulo, Brazil, 1997.
13. DaMatta, R. *O que é o Brasil?* Rocco: São Paulo, Brazil, 2004.
14. Freyre, G. *Casa-Grande & Senzala: Formação da Família Brasileira Sob o Regime da Economia Patriarcal*, 49th ed.; Global: São Paulo, Brazil, 2004.
15. Freyre, G. *Sobrados e Mucambos: Decadência do Patriarcado Rural e Desenvolvimento do Urbano*, 15th ed.; Global: São Paulo, Brazil, 2004.
16. Holanda, S.B. *Raízes do Brasil*, 25th ed.; José Olympio Editora: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1993.
17. Vianna, L.W. *A Revolução Passiva: Iberismo e Americanismo no Brasil*, 2nd ed.; Revan: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2004.

18. Weber, M. *Economia e Sociedade: Fundamentos da Sociologia Compreensiva*; EdUnB: Brasília, Brazil, 1991; Volume 1.
19. Weber, M. *Economia e Sociedade: Fundamentos da Sociologia Compreensiva*; EdUnB: Brasília, Brazil, 1999; Volume 2.
20. Barbosa, L. *O Jeitinho Brasileiro: A Arte de ser Mais Igual do Que os Outros*; Campus: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2005.
21. Barlach, L. *O Jeitinho Brasileiro: Traço da Identidade Nacional?* USP: São Paulo, Brazil, 2013; Volume 3, pp. 228–245.
22. Bertero, C.O. *Gestão à Brasileira. Gestão*; FGV/EAESP: São Paulo, Brazil, 2004; Volume 3, pp. 47–52.
23. Flach, L. O Jeitinho Brasileiro: Analisando Suas Características e Influências nas Práticas Organizacionais. *Rev. Gest. Planej.* **2012**, *12*, 499–514.
24. Mansur, J.A.; Sobral, F. Política na Terra do “Jeitinho”: Implicações dos Comportamentos Políticos em Organizações no Brasil. In Proceedings of the XXXIV Encontro da Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 25–29 September 2010; Available online: <http://www.anpad.org.br/admin/pdf/eor2083.pdf> (accessed on 25 January 2018).
25. Motta, F.C.P.; Alcadipani, R. *Jeitinho Brasileiro, Controle Social e Competição*; FGV/EAESP: São Paulo, Brazil, 1999; Volume 39, pp. 6–12.
26. Penteado Pedroso, J.P.; Massukado-Nakatani, M.S.; Baron Mussi, F. *A Relação Entre o Jeitinho Brasileiro e o Perfil Empreendedor: Possíveis Interfaces no Contexto da Atividade Empreendedora no Brasil*; Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie: São Paulo, Brazil, 2009; Volume 10, pp. 100–130.
27. Resende, M.M. Jeitinho Brasileiro tem Jeito? O Efeito do Jeitinho Brasileiro e da Identidade Moral no Comportamento Ético nas Organizações. Master’s Thesis, Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, Brazil, 2015.
28. Tanure, B. Paradoxos Culturais. Available online: <http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/ojs/index.php/gvexecutivo/article/view/34602> (accessed on 30 January 2018).
29. Barroso, J. *Cultura, Cultura Escolar, Cultura de Escola*; Unesp: São Paulo, Brazil, 2012; Available online: https://acervodigital.unesp.br/bitstream/123456789/65262/1/u1_d26_v1_t06.pdf (accessed on 30 January 2018).
30. Camurça, M.A.; Martins, S. *Laicidade e o “Jeitinho Brasileiro”: Formas Diversificadas e Improvisadas de Regulação do Religioso em Ambientes Laicos e Públicos: O Caso de Escolas Municipais de Juiz de Fora/MG. Numen: Revista de Estudos e Pesquisa da Religião*; UFJF: Juiz de Fora, Brazil, 2014; Volume 17, pp. 141–171.
31. Rosistolato, R.; do Prado, A.P.; Fernández, S.J. Cobranças, Estratégias e “jeitinhos”: Avaliações em larga escala no Rio de Janeiro. *Estud. Aval. Educ.* **2014**, *25*, 78–107. [CrossRef]
32. Amaral, D.P. *Gestão Escolar Pública: Desafios Contemporâneos*; Fundação Vale, UNESCO: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2015.
33. Bush, T. *Leadership and Management Development in Education*; SAGE: London, UK, 2005.
34. Schein, E. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*; Atlas: São Paulo, Brazil, 2005.
35. Rocha, M.Z.B. A luta político-cultural pelo ensino religioso no Brasil. *Rev. Bras. Hist. Educ.* **2013**, *13*, 217–248. [CrossRef]
36. Rocha, M.Z.B. Expressões religiosas em escolas públicas: Representações sociais ou ideologia? *Acta Sci. Educ.* **2016**, *38*, 231–246. [CrossRef]



© 2018 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).