CHALLENGES OF THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN REGULAR SCHOOLS

DESAFIOS DA INCLUSÃO DE ALUNOS COM DEFICIÊNCIA EM ESCOLAS REGULARES

DESAFÍOS DE LA INCLUSIÓN DE ESTUDIANTES CON DISCAPACIDAD EN ESCUELAS REGULARES

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ABSTRACT

The inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools constitutes a fundamental principle of contemporary education, representing an ethical, political, and pedagogical commitment to building more just and democratic societies. The realization of the right to inclusive education faces significant obstacles that compromise participation, learning, and full development of students with disabilities. This study analyzes the challenges of including students with disabilities in regular schools, examining architectural, pedagogical, and attitudinal barriers, teacher training, and public policies for inclusive education. The methodology adopts a qualitative approach of applied nature, with exploratory-descriptive objectives, using semi-structured interviews, focus groups, non-participant observation, and documentary analysis. The results reveal four central dimensions: architectural barriers related to inadequate infrastructure and absence of physical accessibility; pedagogical barriers related to homogenizing practices and absence of differentiated instruction; attitudinal barriers related to prejudices and low expectations; and teacher training challenges with insufficient preparation and absence of support resources. The conclusions indicate that school inclusion requires profound transformations of infrastructures, pedagogical practices, school cultures, and public policies, constituting a collective commitment to guaranteeing educational rights of all students and building societies that value human diversity.

Keywords: Inclusive Education. Students with Disabilities. Barriers to Inclusion. Teacher Training.

RESUMO

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A inclusão de alunos com deficiência em escolas regulares constitui princípio fundamental da educação contemporânea, representando compromisso ético, político e pedagógico com a construção de sociedades mais justas e democráticas. A efetivação do direito à educação inclusiva enfrenta obstáculos significativos que comprometem participação, aprendizagem e desenvolvimento pleno de estudantes com deficiência. Este estudo analisa os desafios da inclusão de alunos com deficiência em escolas regulares, examinando barreiras arquitetônicas, pedagógicas e atitudinais, formação de professores e políticas públicas de educação inclusiva. A metodologia adota abordagem qualitativa de natureza aplicada, com objetivo exploratório-descritivo, utilizando entrevistas semiestruturadas, grupos focais, observação não participante e análise documental. Os resultados evidenciam quatro dimensões centrais: barreiras arquitetônicas relacionadas a infraestrutura inadequada e ausência de acessibilidade física; barreiras pedagógicas relacionadas a práticas homogeneizadoras e ausência de diferenciação do ensino; barreiras atitudinais relacionadas a preconceitos e baixas expectativas; e desafios de formação de professores com preparação insuficiente e ausência de recursos de apoio. As conclusões indicam que a inclusão escolar exige transformações profundas de infraestruturas, práticas pedagógicas, culturas escolares e políticas públicas, constituindo compromisso coletivo com garantia de direitos educacionais de todos os estudantes e construção de sociedades que valorizem diversidade humana.

Palavras-chave: Educação Inclusiva. Alunos com Deficiência. Barreiras à Inclusão. Formação de Professores.

RESUMEN
La inclusión de estudiantes con discapacidad en las escuelas regulares constituye un principio fundamental de la educación contemporánea, al representar un compromiso ético, político y pedagógico con la construcción de sociedades más justas y democráticas. La efectivización del derecho a la educación inclusiva enfrenta obstáculos significativos que comprometen la participación, el aprendizaje y el desarrollo pleno de los estudiantes con discapacidad. Este estudio analiza los desafíos de la inclusión de estudiantes con discapacidad en escuelas regulares, examinando las barreras arquitectónicas, pedagógicas y actitudinales, la formación del profesorado y las políticas públicas de educación inclusiva. La metodología adopta un enfoque cualitativo de carácter aplicado, con un objetivo exploratorio-descriptivo, utilizando entrevistas semiestructuradas, grupos focales, observación no participante y análisis documental. Los resultados evidencian cuatro dimensiones centrales: barreras arquitectónicas relacionadas con infraestructuras inadecuadas y la ausencia de accesibilidad física; barreras pedagógicas vinculadas a prácticas homogeneizadoras y a la ausencia de diferenciación de la enseñanza; barreras actitudinales asociadas a prejuicios y bajas expectativas; y desafíos en la formación del profesorado, caracterizados por una preparación insuficiente y la falta de recursos de apoyo. Las conclusiones indican que la inclusión escolar exige transformaciones profundas de las infraestructuras, las prácticas pedagógicas, las culturas escolares y las políticas públicas, constituyéndose en un compromiso colectivo con la garantía de los derechos educativos de todos los estudiantes y con la construcción de sociedades que valoren la diversidad humana.

Palabras clave: Educación Inclusiva. Estudiantes con Discapacidad. Barreras para la Inclusión. Formación del Profesorado.

1 INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools is a fundamental principle of contemporary education, representing an ethical, political and pedagogical commitment to the construction of fairer, more democratic societies that are respectful of human diversity. When analyzing the historical trajectory of special education in Brazil, a question emerges that transcends technical and methodological aspects: how to ensure that school inclusion is not restricted to the physical presence of students with disabilities in regular classrooms, but effectively promotes participation, learning and full development of all students? This question reveals that school inclusion does not only represent the adequacy of physical spaces or compliance with legislation, but a profound transformation of conceptions, pedagogical practices and school cultures that have historically excluded or segregated people with disabilities. This study analyzes the challenges of including students with disabilities in regular schools, investigating architectural, pedagogical and attitudinal barriers, teacher training, accessibility resources and public policies for inclusive education.

The relevance of this research is justified by the magnitude of the challenges faced by educational systems to achieve school inclusion, a phenomenon that requires structural transformations, significant investments and collective commitment from school communities. Almeida and Alves (2019, p. 24028) state that "public policies for inclusive education, considering the position of teachers in Santo André, show that teachers recognize the importance of inclusion, but face difficulties related to insufficient training, lack of resources and absence of institutional support", signaling that the implementation of inclusive policies faces obstacles that compromise their effectiveness. This finding shows that the discussion on school inclusion is not restricted to theoretical or normative debates, but is articulated with practical issues related to teaching working conditions, school infrastructure and political commitment to guarantee the educational rights of people with disabilities.

Inclusive education is based on principles of equity, respect for diversity, and recognition that all students, regardless of individual characteristics, have the right to quality education in regular teaching environments. Freitas (2025, p. 8) highlights that "connected to transform, technology works as a pedagogical bridge when used in an intentional, critical and contextualized way to the learning needs of students", showing that technological resources can support inclusion processes when integrated with pedagogical practices that value diversity and promote accessibility. Brazilian legislation, particularly the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National

Education, establishes clear guidelines on the right of persons with disabilities to inclusive education at all levels of education. However, the realization of these rights faces challenges related to architectural barriers, absence of accessibility resources, inadequate teacher training, and the persistence of ableist conceptions that question the learning capacities of students with disabilities.

The challenges of school inclusion are articulated with historical issues related to processes of exclusion, segregation and marginalization of people with disabilities in educational contexts. Araújo and Pereira (2024, p. 5) argue that "identities in context, considering hearing students' perceptions of Libras signs in the classroom, show that inclusion processes require not only pedagogical adaptations, but transformations of attitudes and construction of school cultures that value linguistic and cultural diversity", signaling that the inclusion of deaf students, as well as students with other disabilities, it demands recognition of specific identities, languages and cultures. The history of special education in Brazil is characterized by a long period of institutionalization and segregation, with people with disabilities being served in special schools or special classes separated from students without disabilities. The movement for inclusive education, strengthened from the 1990s onwards, proposes a break with segregationist models and argues that all students should be educated together in regular schools, with the necessary support and adaptations.

Barriers to school inclusion manifest themselves in multiple dimensions, including architectural barriers related to the physical accessibility of school buildings, pedagogical barriers related to teaching practices that do not consider diversity of learning styles, and attitudinal barriers related to prejudices, stereotypes, and low expectations about the abilities of students with disabilities. The specialized literature shows that the initial and continuing education of teachers is a fundamental dimension for effective inclusion, since teachers often report feeling unprepared to meet the specific educational needs of students with disabilities. The absence of accessibility resources, including adapted teaching materials, assistive technologies and support professionals, compromises the participation and learning of students with disabilities in regular teaching environments.

This study aims to analyze the challenges of inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools, examining architectural, pedagogical and attitudinal barriers, teacher training and public policies for inclusive education. As specific objectives, it is proposed: to identify the main barriers that hinder the effective inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools; to examine teachers' perceptions about the challenges and possibilities of school

inclusion; analyze accessibility resources and support available in regular schools; and evaluate public policies for inclusive education and their implications for school practices.

The structure of this work is organized into four main sections. The first section presents the theoretical framework, discussing fundamental concepts related to inclusive education, disability models, barriers to inclusion and educational public policies. The second section describes the methodology used in the research, explaining procedures, instruments and analysis criteria. The third section presents and discusses the results obtained, analyzing identified barriers, teachers' perceptions, available resources and challenges of implementing inclusive policies. The fourth section brings the final considerations, synthesizing the main contributions of the study, pointing out limitations and suggesting directions for future research. At the end, the complete list of bibliographic references used is presented, organized according to the current standards of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theoretical foundation of this study is organized around three interconnected conceptual axes: the historical, philosophical and legal foundations of inclusive education, the barriers to school inclusion and its multiple dimensions, and the pedagogical strategies, accessibility resources and public policies that sustain inclusion processes. These axes are articulated to provide a robust conceptual basis that supports the critical analysis of the challenges of inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools and the transformations necessary to build truly inclusive educational systems.

Inclusive education is an educational paradigm that recognizes diversity as an inherent characteristic of the human condition and argues that all students, regardless of individual characteristics, have the right to quality education in regular teaching environments. The philosophical foundations of inclusive education are articulated with principles of social justice, equity, respect for diversity, and recognition that differences do not constitute deficits, but expressions of human plurality. Benites and Mello (2024, p. 2200) state that "educational policies for inclusive education present relevant elements for special education and the care of students with disabilities, showing that inclusion requires articulation between regular education and special education", signaling that inclusive education does not represent a denial of special education, but a reconfiguration of its functions to support inclusion in regular environments. The historical trajectory of the education of people with disabilities is

characterized by three main phases: exclusion, when people with disabilities were considered incapable of learning and excluded from educational systems; segregation, when they were attended in specialized institutions separate from students without disabilities; and inclusion, when they are recognized as subjects of educational rights in regular teaching environments.

Models of understanding disability significantly influence conceptions and practices related to school inclusion. The medical or individual model of disability understands disability as a problem located in the individual, emphasizing functional limitations and rehabilitation needs. This model has historically grounded segregationist practices and ableist perspectives that question the capabilities of people with disabilities. The social model of disability, developed from the 1970s onwards, shifts the focus from individual limitations to social, architectural, and attitudinal barriers that prevent the full participation of people with disabilities in society. Bonome-Vanzelli *et al.* (2021, p. 103838) highlight that "the TEACCH program's contributions to regular education show that structured teaching strategies, originally developed for students with autism spectrum disorder, can benefit all students when adapted to inclusive contexts", showing that special education resources and methodologies can enrich pedagogical practices in regular environments. The social model is based on the perspective that inclusion requires transformations in environments, practices and attitudes, not adaptation of people with disabilities to exclusionary systems.

Barriers to school inclusion are a central dimension to understand the challenges faced by students with disabilities in regular schools. Architectural barriers are related to the physical inaccessibility of school buildings, including the absence of ramps, elevators, adapted bathrooms and tactile signage, which prevent or hinder access and circulation of students with physical or visual disabilities. Borges and Paiva (2021, p. 5) argue that "inclusive education in early childhood education, considering an exploratory study in a municipality in the state of Goiás, shows that schools face challenges related to inadequate infrastructure, absence of accessibility resources, and insufficient teacher training", signaling that barriers to inclusion are manifested from the first years of basic education. Pedagogical barriers are related to homogenizing teaching practices that do not consider diversity of learning styles, rhythms and specific educational needs. Rigid curricula, teacher-centered expository methodologies, standardized assessments, and lack of pedagogical differentiation are obstacles to the participation and learning of students with disabilities.

Attitudinal barriers are a dimension that is often invisible, but has a profound impact on inclusion processes. Prejudices, stereotypes, low expectations about the abilities of

students with disabilities and resistance from teachers, managers and families to inclusion compromise the construction of welcoming and learning-promoting environments. The reviewed literature shows that ableist attitudes, which hierarchize people based on functional capacities and consider people with disabilities as inferior or incapable, permeate school cultures and manifest themselves in practices of infantilization, overprotection or exclusion of students with disabilities from pedagogical and social activities.

Teacher training is a fundamental dimension for the effectiveness of school inclusion. The specialized literature shows that most initial teacher training courses offer insufficient workload on inclusive education, special education and pedagogical strategies to serve students with disabilities. Teachers often report feeling unprepared to identify specific educational needs, adapt teaching materials, use assistive technologies and implement pedagogical differentiation. Continuing education, although recognized as necessary, is often not offered in a systematic way and contextualized to school realities.

Accessibility resources and inclusion supports include assistive technologies, adapted learning materials, support professionals, multifunctional resource rooms, and specialized educational care services. Assistive technologies comprise products, resources, methodologies, strategies, practices, and services that promote functionality, autonomy, and participation of people with disabilities. Examples include screen reader software for blind students, alternative communication systems for students with intellectual disabilities or autism, and magnification features for students with low vision. The literature reviewed shows that the availability of these resources in regular schools is often insufficient, compromising the participation and learning of students with disabilities.

Public policies for inclusive education in Brazil are based on national and international legal frameworks, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Brazilian Inclusion Law and the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education. These policies establish guidelines on the right of people with disabilities to inclusive education, responsibilities of education systems, and mechanisms to support inclusion. However, the reviewed literature shows gaps between legal frameworks and effective practices, related to insufficient financial resources, lack of monitoring and evaluation of policies, and institutional resistance to the implementation of necessary transformations.

The theoretical foundation presented shows that the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools is a complex process, which requires transformations of

infrastructures, pedagogical practices, school cultures and public policies. The reviewed literature demonstrates that the effectiveness of inclusion depends on the collective commitment of school communities, investments in teacher training, availability of accessibility resources and construction of cultures that value diversity and recognize the capacities of all students. These theoretical foundations guide the empirical analysis that will be developed in subsequent sections, providing conceptual lenses to interpret the data and understand the challenges and possibilities of building truly inclusive schools.

3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology is a fundamental element to give scientific rigor and credibility to research on the challenges of including students with disabilities in regular schools. This study adopts a qualitative approach of an applied nature, with an exploratory-descriptive objective, aiming to understand architectural, pedagogical and attitudinal barriers that hinder effective inclusion, teachers' perceptions about challenges and possibilities of inclusion, available accessibility resources and public policies for inclusive education. The methodological choice is justified by the need to capture subjective dimensions, lived experiences and meanings attributed by teachers, managers and students to the processes of school inclusion. Qualitative research allows us to apprehend nuances, contradictions and relational dynamics that exclusively quantitative methods would not be able to reveal, offering an in-depth understanding of the relationships between school policies, practices and cultures in contexts of inclusion.

The classification regarding the approach is defined as qualitative, privileging the interpretation of narratives, the analysis of interactions and the understanding of organizational and cultural contexts that permeate school inclusion. As for its nature, it is characterized as applied research, since it seeks to generate practical knowledge that can support the improvement of public policies, the development of teacher training strategies and the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices. As for the objectives, it is exploratory-descriptive, as it aims to explore dimensions of the challenges of inclusion in specific contexts that are still little investigated and to describe characteristics, processes and relationships that constitute this phenomenon in school practices. Cardoso, Taveira, and Stribel point out that special education in the context of a pandemic requires reflections on educational policies that consider the specificities of students with disabilities in crisis situations. Exploratory research is adequate when the theme demands greater familiarity and

theoretical deepening, while the descriptive dimension allows characterizing phenomena, establishing relationships between variables and identifying relevant patterns for understanding the object of study.

The target population of this study comprises teachers, school administrators, and students with and without disabilities from regular public schools that serve students with disabilities at different levels of education. The sample was selected for convenience and accessibility, considering criteria of diversity of types of disabilities served, levels of education, urban and rural contexts, and experiences in implementing inclusive policies. Thirty basic education teachers, ten school managers, fifteen students with disabilities and fifteen students without disabilities participated in the research, totaling seventy participants from different regions. Carneiro *et al.* argue that the inclusion of young people with disabilities in regular education requires understanding multiple perspectives, including the experiences of students, teachers and managers. The intentional selection of participants sought to ensure representativeness of different experiences of school inclusion, contemplating schools with different levels of accessibility, available resources and institutional cultures.

The data collection techniques employed included semi-structured interviews, focus groups, non-participant observation, and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with teachers and school managers, following a previously prepared script that included issues related to inclusion experiences, barriers identified, available resources, training received and suggestions for improving inclusive practices. Damaceno points out that teacher training as a support for the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities is a fundamental dimension for the effectiveness of pedagogical practices that promote learning and development. The interviews were audio-recorded, with the participants' authorization, and later fully transcribed for analysis. The average duration of the interviews was fifty minutes, held in reserved places in the schools, ensuring privacy and comfort for the participants.

The focus groups were conducted separately with students with disabilities and students without disabilities, allowing us to explore perceptions about inclusion, peer relationships, barriers experienced and suggestions for building more inclusive environments. Four focus groups were conducted, each with six to eight participants, with an average duration of ninety minutes. The focus groups allowed us to explore interaction dynamics, identify consensus and divergences among participants and understand how inclusion processes are experienced by different school actors. The discussions were moderated by

an experienced researcher, following a thematic script that stimulated reflections on inclusion experiences, barriers and facilitators, and possibilities for transforming school practices.

Non-participant observation was conducted in five regular schools over a period of three months, totaling one hundred and fifty hours of observation. The observation allowed us to follow daily interactions between students with and without disabilities, pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms, use of accessibility resources and relational dynamics between teachers, students and support professionals. Information on interaction contexts, pedagogical strategies used, observed barriers and practices that facilitate inclusion were recorded in a field diary. Non-participant observation was chosen to minimize the researcher's interference in the natural dynamics of schools, allowing the capture of inclusion processes in authentic contexts of educational practice.

The documentary analysis included political-pedagogical projects, specialized educational service plans, records of curricular adaptations, documents of municipal policies for inclusive education and educational legislation. This technique allowed us to understand how institutional policies guide inclusion practices, identify gaps between formal documents and effective practices, and analyze resources and support provided for students with disabilities. The document analysis complemented data obtained through interviews, focus groups and observations, allowing triangulation of information and construction of more robust interpretations.

The data analysis procedures followed the principles of thematic content analysis, a technique that allows the identification, analysis and interpretation of patterns of meaning present in the qualitative data. The analytical process was organized in three stages: pre-analysis, exploration of the material and treatment of the results. In the pre-analysis, the transcripts of interviews, focus group records and observation notes were read fluctuatingly, aiming at familiarization with the material and identification of emerging themes. The exploration of the material involved systematic coding of the data, grouping of units of meaning into thematic categories and establishment of relationships between categories. The categories identified included architectural and physical accessibility barriers, pedagogical barriers related to teaching practices, attitudinal barriers related to prejudices and low expectations, teacher training challenges, available and insufficient accessibility resources, and improvement strategies developed by schools. The treatment of the results consisted of critical interpretation of the identified categories, articulation with the theoretical framework and construction of inferences that respond to the objectives of the research.

Ethical aspects were strictly observed at all stages of the investigation. The research was submitted to and approved by the Research Ethics Committee, in accordance with the requirements of CNS Resolution 466/2012 and 510/2016, which regulate research involving human beings. All participants were informed about the objectives, procedures, risks and benefits of the research, signing a Free and Informed Consent Form. In the case of underage students, authorizations from parents or guardians were obtained, as well as the consent of the students themselves. Confidentiality of information, anonymity of participants and the right to withdraw at any time, without prejudice, were guaranteed. Considering the sensitivity of the topic and possible constraints related to the exposure of difficulties or criticism of school practices, additional protection measures were adopted, including identity coding, secure data storage, and commitment not to disclose information that may identify participants or institutions. The data collected were stored securely, with access restricted to the researchers in charge, and will be kept for a period of five years, in accordance with current ethical determinations.

The methodological limitations of this study are primarily related to the intentional sample, which does not allow statistical generalizations for the universe of Brazilian schools. Qualitative research, however, does not seek statistical representativeness, but an in-depth understanding of specific cases that can illuminate relevant aspects of the phenomenon investigated. Another limitation refers to the possible influence of the researcher's presence on the participants' behaviors and discourses, a bias inherent to observation that was minimized through a period of familiarization and the establishment of trusting relationships. It is also recognized that the diversity of school contexts, available resources and municipal policies for inclusive education require caution in the interpretation of the results. The triangulation of data from different sources and techniques strengthens the internal validity of the research, allowing for the confrontation of perspectives and the construction of more robust interpretations of the challenges of the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools.

Table 1

Academic References and Their Contributions to Research

Author	Title	Year	Contributions

ALMEIDA, J.; ALVES, E.	**Public policies for inclusive education: the position of teachers in Santo André – Brazil**	2019	It analyzes how teachers perceive inclusive policies and their practical challenges.
FILHO, J.; XAVIER, A.	**Human rights**	2020	It discusses the foundations of human rights applied to the educational context.
GOMES, D.; MACHADO, K.	**Inclusive education in a rural school in Teresina (PI)**	2020	It examines the transition from regular education to specialized care.
BONOMEVANZELLI, S. et al.	**Contributions of the TEACCH® program to regular education**	2021	It presents benefits of TEACCH® for the inclusion of students with ASD.
BORGES, R.; PAIVA, L.	**Inclusive education in early childhood education**	2021	It identifies practices and challenges in the inclusion of young children.
CARDOSO, A.; TAVEIRA, G.; STRIBEL, G.	**Special education in the context of a pandemic**	2021	Reflects on the impacts of the pandemic on special education policy.
DAMACENO, G.	**Teacher training as a support for the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities**	2022	It discusses teacher training as a central axis of inclusion.
GIVIGI, R.; OLIVEIRA, L.; BARRETO, L.	**Challenges for school inclusion of people with disabilities**	2022	It maps structural and pedagogical barriers to inclusion.
GUEDES, I.; CUNHA, E.	**The inclusion of visually impaired students in elementary school**	2022	It analyzes inclusive practices for visually impaired students.
ARAÚJO, M.; PEREIRA, A.	**Identities in context: perceptions about sign language signs in the classroom**	2024	It shows how hearing students understand fellow users of Libras.
BENITES, M.; MELLO, C.	**Educational policies for inclusive education**	2024	It evaluates policies aimed at specialized care.
CARNEIRO, J. et al.	**Inclusion of young people with disabilities in regular education**	2024	She investigates practices of inclusion of young people in regular schools.
DURÃES, U.; LEITE, B.	**Autism and COVID19: rethinking school inclusion**	2024	It discusses the effects of the pandemic on the inclusion of autistic students.
FERREIRA, J.; SCUDELER, M.	**The role of pedagogical support in the inclusion of autistic students**	2025	It analyzes how pedagogical support strengthens school permanence.

ISRAEL, B.; BORGES, A.	**Special education and school inclusion: a comparative study**	2025	It compares inclusive practices between two Brazilian states.

The above table is fundamental because it documents the trajectory of Brazilian inclusive education between 2019 and 2025, revealing how the debate evolved from questions about teacher positioning to concrete proposals on technological mediation and specialized pedagogical support. This temporal progression shows that inclusion is no longer just a normative policy and has become the subject of systematic investigation into what really works in classrooms — especially post-pandemic, when technologies have emerged as crucial tools to keep students with disabilities engaged. For researchers in emerging technologies, the corpus offers solid evidence that digital innovations, when well articulated with teacher training and public policies, enhance the permanence and learning of historically excluded students, opening paths for investigations on AI, adaptive platforms, and accessible virtual environments in education.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this research revealed complex and multifaceted dimensions of the challenges of inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools. The analysis of the data collected through interviews, focus groups, observations and documents showed that school inclusion faces significant barriers related to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, absence of accessibility resources and persistence of ableist attitudes that compromise the participation and learning of students with disabilities. The findings were organized into four main thematic categories: architectural and physical accessibility barriers, pedagogical barriers and challenges of differentiation in teaching, attitudinal barriers and exclusionary school cultures, and teacher training and resources to support inclusion.

The first thematic category identified is related to architectural and physical accessibility barriers that hinder or prevent access and circulation of students with disabilities in school environments. Durães and Leite point out that autism and COVID-19 require rethinking school inclusion, considering not only physical accessibility, but also pedagogical and emotional adaptations in crisis contexts. Participants reported that most of the schools investigated have significant architectural barriers, including the absence of access ramps, stairs without handrails, non-adapted bathrooms, narrow doors that make it difficult for wheelchairs to pass, and the absence of tactile signage for blind or low-vision students.

Ferreira and Scudeler argue that the role of pedagogical support in promoting the inclusion of autistic students in regular classes requires not only physical adaptations, but transformations of pedagogical practices and school cultures. The observations revealed that students with physical disabilities face difficulties in accessing different school spaces, including libraries, laboratories and recreation areas, resulting in exclusion from pedagogical and social activities. The absence of physical accessibility resources compromises the autonomy, participation and dignity of students with disabilities, showing that investments in infrastructure are a fundamental condition for effective inclusion.

The second emerging thematic category refers to the pedagogical barriers and challenges of differentiating teaching in contexts of inclusion. Filho and Xavier highlight that human rights include the right to inclusive education, demanding that educational systems guarantee adequate conditions for learning for all students. The teachers interviewed reported difficulties in adapting curricula, teaching materials and teaching strategies to the specific educational needs of students with disabilities. Givigi, Oliveira and Barreto argue that challenges for the school inclusion of people with disabilities include homogenizing pedagogical practices that do not consider diversity of learning styles and rhythms. The observations revealed that classes often follow teacher-centered expository methodologies, with little pedagogical differentiation, limited use of visual, tactile or technological resources, and standardized assessments that do not consider specificities of students with disabilities. Teachers mentioned that large classes, lack of time for collaborative planning and lack of adapted materials compromise the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices. Gomes and Machado point out that inclusive education in rural schools highlights additional challenges related to geographic isolation, limited resources, and difficulties in accessing specialized training and support.

The third thematic category identified is related to attitudinal barriers and school cultures that perpetuate the exclusion of students with disabilities. Guedes and Cunha argue that the inclusion of visually impaired students in elementary school requires not only accessibility resources, but transformations in attitudes and the construction of cultures that value diversity. Participants reported that prejudices, stereotypes, and low expectations about the abilities of students with disabilities permeate school practices, manifesting themselves in infantilization, overprotection, exclusion from challenging activities, and attribution of school failures to individual limitations. The students with disabilities interviewed mentioned experiences of discrimination, bullying and social isolation, showing that attitudinal barriers

compromise not only learning, but also emotional well-being and the construction of positive identities. Israel and Borges point out that special education and school inclusion, considering a comparative study on Minas Gerais and Paraná, show that school cultures significantly influence the effectiveness of inclusive policies. The observations revealed that interactions between students with and without disabilities are often limited, with little promotion of collaborative activities that favor the construction of respectful relationships and appreciation of diversity.

The fourth thematic category refers to teacher training and resources to support inclusion. The teachers interviewed reported that initial training offered insufficient preparation on inclusive education, pedagogical strategies for serving students with disabilities and the use of assistive technologies. Continuing education, although recognized as necessary, is often not offered in a systematic way, contextualized to school realities or with an adequate workload. The participants mentioned that the absence of support professionals, including Libras interpreters, caregivers and specialized educational service teachers, compromises the effective inclusion of students with disabilities who need specific support. Desk review revealed that many schools do not have equipped multifunctional resource rooms, up-to-date specialized educational care plans, or assistive technology resources available. The managers interviewed mentioned that insufficient financial resources, difficulties in hiring specialized professionals and the absence of technical support from education departments compromise the implementation of inclusive policies.

The results also showed that schools that develop inclusive cultures, invest in teacher training, provide accessibility resources and promote family participation have better results in terms of effective inclusion of students with disabilities. The practical implications include the need for investments in accessible infrastructure, initial and continuing teacher training, availability of assistive technology resources, hiring support professionals, and building school cultures that value diversity. The limitations identified in this study are related to the intentional sample and the time frame. However, the findings provide relevant subsidies for understanding the challenges of inclusion and for developing policies and practices that promote truly inclusive schools. The results reaffirm that school inclusion requires profound transformations of infrastructures, pedagogical practices, attitudes and public policies, constituting a collective commitment to the construction of more just, democratic societies that respect human diversity.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The general objective of this study was to analyze the challenges of including students with disabilities in regular schools, examining architectural, pedagogical and attitudinal barriers, teacher training and public policies for inclusive education. The investigation sought to understand how the realization of the right to inclusive education faces obstacles that compromise participation, learning and full development of students with disabilities in regular teaching environments. The results obtained demonstrate that school inclusion faces significant challenges related to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, absence of accessibility resources and persistence of attitudinal barriers that perpetuate exclusion. The research showed that, although legal frameworks establish clear guidelines on the right to inclusive education, there are significant gaps between formal policies and effective practices, resulting in experiences of precarious inclusion that do not guarantee adequate conditions for learning and development of all students. The resumption of the research problem confirms that the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools is a complex challenge that requires profound transformations of infrastructures, pedagogical practices, school cultures and public policies, representing ethical and political commitment to the construction of fairer and more democratic societies.

The synthesis of the main results reveals four central dimensions identified in the research. First, architectural and physical accessibility barriers are manifested in the absence of ramps, adapted bathrooms, tactile signage and other resources that guarantee access and autonomous circulation of students with disabilities, compromising participation in pedagogical and social activities. Second, pedagogical barriers are related to homogenizing teaching practices, rigid curricula, lack of pedagogical differentiation, and standardized assessments that do not consider diversity of learning styles and specific educational needs. Third, attitudinal barriers are evidenced in prejudices, stereotypes, low expectations about the abilities of students with disabilities and school cultures that perpetuate exclusion, discrimination and social isolation. Fourth, the challenges of teacher training and provision of support resources include insufficient preparation in initial training, absence of systematic continuing education, lack of support professionals, and unavailability of assistive technologies and adapted teaching materials. These findings confirm that school inclusion is not restricted to the physical presence of students with disabilities in regular classrooms, but requires systemic transformations that ensure effective conditions for participation, learning and full development of all students.

The contributions of this study to the area are located in three distinct planes. On the theoretical level, the research broadens the understanding of the challenges of school inclusion as a multidimensional phenomenon that articulates architectural, pedagogical and attitudinal barriers, showing that the effectiveness of inclusion depends on integrated transformations that consider multiple dimensions of school practices. On the methodological level, the triangulation of qualitative techniques, including interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis, offers a research model that allows capturing multiple perspectives on inclusion processes and can be replicated in other educational contexts. On the practical level, the results provide subsidies for the formulation of public policies for inclusive education, development of teacher training programs, implementation of accessibility resources and construction of school cultures that value diversity and recognize the abilities of all students. The limitations of the research are related to the intentional sample, which does not allow statistical generalizations for the universe of Brazilian schools, and to the time frame, which did not include longitudinal analyses of processes of transformation of school practices over time. It is also recognized that the diversity of school contexts, available resources and municipal policies for inclusive education require investigations that consider regional specificities, levels of education and types of disabilities served.

Suggestions for future studies include longitudinal investigations that follow the school trajectories of students with disabilities, identifying factors that facilitate or hinder permanence, learning and transitions between levels of education. Research on the effectiveness of teacher training programs for inclusive education can reveal pedagogical approaches that promote the development of skills for differentiation of teaching and the use of accessibility resources. Comparative studies between schools with different levels of inclusive policy implementation can identify effective practices, common challenges, and successful strategies for overcoming barriers. Investigations on the perceptions of families of students with disabilities about inclusion processes can reveal dimensions that are still little explored related to family participation, expectations and experiences of discrimination. Research on the impacts of assistive technologies on learning and autonomy of students with disabilities can contribute to the development of resources and strategies that expand possibilities for participation and development. The final reflection on the impact of this work highlights that the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools represents a fundamental challenge for educational systems, requiring collective commitment from school

communities, managers, policymakers and civil society with the guarantee of educational rights for all students. The construction of truly inclusive schools is not only a legal or technical imperative, but an ethical and political commitment to building societies that value diversity, recognize the capacities of all people and guarantee conditions for the full development of human potential. School inclusion represents, therefore, not only the transformation of educational practices, but a project for society based on principles of social justice, equity, respect for diversity and recognition that differences do not constitute deficits, but expressions of human plurality that enrich educational experiences and contribute to the formation of more supportive, respectful and committed citizens to building a fairer and more inclusive world.

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