

# Deciphering Management by Objectives and Results in School Organizations

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## Abstract

This study aims to unveil Management by Objectives and Results implementation process in school organizations. For this purpose, a review of the relevant literature was conducted in order that MBOR is outlined and analytically described through its unfolding in school management and administration. MBOR as a useful tool integrated in the context of New Public Management after its initial introduction and deployment in public administration was later adopted in education and adapted in school settings, so as to contribute to school effectiveness, school improvement and augmented inclusiveness at schools through cultivating inclusive school culture and leadership. Data analysis revealed that MBOR continues to affect school management in several countries, as it appears to be utilized in national education systems influencing mainly the Nordic countries and the UK as well as southern European countries in a more superficial way relate to soft modes of governance. Finally, this study deepens our understanding about MBOR through the detailed presentation of its application in school management and leadership and the impact of this model on teachers and school principals.

**Keywords:** new public management, MBOR, inclusive leadership, school culture, school organizations

## 1. Introduction

New Public Management as a theoretical model, interpretive scheme and methodological choice for the management of the public sector and its affiliated organizations traces its origins to the reforms carried out in the United Kingdom and the United States in the 1970s and 1980s with the aim of reforming and modernizing state structures and public services (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Haque, 2019). In education, however, the influence of New Public Management and the application of its principles intensified in the 1990s with the implementation of corresponding educational reforms. Thus, homologous policies are planned

and implemented, which incorporate the principles of New Public Management, transforming them into practice through a variety of methods, techniques and tools in the producing consequences mainly for the restructuring of local school administration in terms of deregulation, horizontal specialization, strategic management and organization of education (Ball, 2003; Hall et al., 2015; Skedsmo & Huber, 2022a).

Consequently, research interest is focused on the multiple modes of control generated by NPM and employed in educational management and administration that has been penetrated by the powerful market mechanisms and affected by the astonishing prevalence of entrepreneurial ethos and governance. At the same time, intense research activity emerges regarding the role of the educational executives and school leaders, who are called to implement the policies enshrined at the central level (see: Ball, 2008; Ball & Junemann, 2012; Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan, 2018; Brauckmann, Pashiardis, & Ärlestig, 2020). Thus, a significant method adopted in the context of school and educational administration is the Management by Objectives and Results (MBOR) deployed in school management and administration, in order to foster school performance and effectiveness (Herr, 2015; Alexiadou & Lundahl, 2016; Wilkins, Gobby, & Keddie, 2020).

In this context, the present study aims to present the MBOR approach and its possible applications in school organization management regime as well as empirical data that support and at the same time undermine the applicability of the model mentioned above. Accordingly, the structure of this work is split into four sections. Firstly, the MBOR approach is presented and analyzed in association to NPM paradigm. Secondly, the MBOR model as a practical method that can be applied in school management and administration illustrates the main changes occurred in the public schools and the processes supervening for school effectiveness. In the third section, empirical evidence concerning the enactment of MBOR in national educational contexts are discussed portraying the specific benefits and drawbacks of implementing the abovementioned model. Finally, in the last section, some implications and concluding remarks are provided for future investigation.

## **2. Management by Objectives and Results Approach**

Management by Objectives as a modern method of management which combines assessment of individual and collective performance and effectiveness has been suggested by many theorists of classic management (MacGregor, Sloan, Bernhard). However, it was first encountered in Drucker's (1954) work entitled "The Practice of Management" and continues to be the subject of debate even today. This method is also called Management by Objectives and Results, as it adopts the logic of performance standards in combination with cost and labor, value assessment, feedback, and improvement (Ingham, 1995; Turner, 2021).

Thus, MBOR is a relatively new approach to public sector management, under the influence of the New Public Management, so that it is more result-oriented and less rule-oriented. As New Public Management introduces a different conception for the role of the state in the economy and society, using, in fact, many tools of the private sector, it incorporates the MBOR method, which is characterized as a process of identifying goals, aspirations and performance by the highest hierarchical levels of public bodies and public organizations, as well as their

subsequent downward flow, in the form of course, specialized actions, at every lower hierarchical level of the management of the respective public bodies and public organizations (Ingham, 1995, p.35; Rao, 2021).

The goal setting, therefore, holds a prominent and, at the same time, extremely dominant position in the New Public Management discourse, which supports both planning and monitoring of administrative action, always based on goals and objectives. It goes one step further, proposing budgeting, but also payroll systems, based, of course, on performance and results. It is a useful strategic planning tool, which, in fact, includes very critical functions, such as planning and targeting, distribution of duties and responsibilities among the various levels of the organization (organizing), the widest possible exploitation, promotion, development of the human resources (staffing), communication, leadership, and staff management (directing) and, finally, monitoring and evaluation working behavior and corrective action (controlling) (Aggarwal & Thakur, 2013; Rao, 2021).

The specificity of MBOR lies in the participatory way of identifying the goals of the organization based on voluntary cooperation and self-commitment in establishing, implementing, and evaluating the goals and results achieved each time. The adoption of the goals and objectives of each organization is done by mutual agreement of the existing ones with the management of the organization, which actively reflects the importance of this management method and opposes it to the regulatory authorities of the bureaucracy (Aggarwal & Thakur, 2013, Turner, 2021).

In this context, advocates of this method argue that the members of the organization set team and individual goals are closely intertwined with the organizational ones. At the same time, the organization can be seen as a flexible system, where respect for human value is the highest value combined with management. The benefits of applying this method include increasing the effectiveness of the organization, as employees work together harmoniously to achieve common goals in an open communication climate. Also, the interpersonal relationships that develop are built on responsibility, collectivity, initiatives and commitment to pursuing and achieving the organization's goals (Hood & Peters, 2004; Skedsmo & Huber, 2022b).

Management of this form is a process that is gradually implemented and progressively leads to maximizing performance. The researchers converge that the revival of this method in the context of the New Public Management is due to its development, adaptation and applicability to more than one area of management practice (Wehrich, 2000). It consists of four steps: goal setting, action planning, self-monitoring, and periodic review, and includes three processes: setting the objectives, implementation, and feedback based on performance. Combining the three functions of management: goal setting, decision-making, and objective feedback is expected to increase productivity (Ingham, 1995; Rao, 2021).

Wehrich (2000, p.2) argues that the model of MBOR includes seven elements: strategic planning and prioritizing objectives, clear definition of objectives, action planning, implementation of MBOR, monitoring and evaluation, development of organization-management subsystems. The process is implemented as follows: First, the goals and desired outcomes as well as performance standards are determined. Then, the

predetermined objectives are compared with the goals achieved by each employee, while new goals and strategies are introduced that replace the goals that have not been achieved previously.

The obligations of the organization and the management of its departments include the managing and staffing, the direction given to the staff, the establishment of a specific management system and the measurement of efficiency. Thus, the respective executive manager studies and shapes its structure, creates departments and addresses and gives them specific responsibilities. The basic rule for staffing is: “the right person in the right place”. Concomitantly, the effectiveness and survival of the organization depends on the parts that make it up, the staff, the skills and abilities as well as its knowledge. The personnel management system is the basis on which an organization’s human capital is selected, socialized, trained, praised or reimbursed (Hansen, 2011; McMahon, 2013).

On the other hand, performance measurement, as Weihrich (2000, p.3) points out, depends on the organization’s information systems. This axis includes performance studies, statistical tables, and ways to evaluate results. Thus, the managers and executives of an organization make decisions by measuring the degree of approaching the goals, achieving or deviating from the goals or objectives set. The management of the data or the factors surrounding the organization concerns the relationships between the executives of the various departments of an organization, their relationships with interest groups, groups that are part of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental (GO’s), as well as with media and the public. Thus, there are stages or phases of implementation of the administrative project in an organization, as provided by the Management by Objectives approach (Shaout & Yousif, 2014).

### **3. Unfolding MBOR in School Organizations**

All organizations exist for a purpose and in order to fulfill this purpose, the top managers set general and specific goals and objectives that permeate the entire organization. In organizations that use the MBOR model, planning and setting goals to achieve the commonly accepted aims of the organization have a top-down orientation. Elements of dialogue are also introduced into the process of transferring design from one organizational level to another. In educational settings, namely at schools, the supervisor (principal or headteacher) sets specific goals and measures for teachers in meetings organized by executives, so that the contracting parties agree on specific goals and measures that are considered appropriate or contribute to the more efficient execution of the required tasks (Wu, 2005; Kowar, 2011; Turner, 2021).

In the MBOR approach, the process begins with identifying the problem and setting goals. Thus, the current state of the school organization is analyzed, and the desired change is explicitly stated by the application of the proposed technique. After defining the problem and setting the goals, the time plan follows. In this phase, the manager of the department or the authorized education executive gives specific instructions to the teachers, defines the standards on the basis of which the quality of the product (i.e.: teaching, learning, school performance, students’ academic achievement or test results) will be judged and delimits the time of implementation of the goals set, in order to facilitate evaluation and continuous comparison of

the results agreed (Wu, 2005; Cone & Moos, 2022).

Objectives must be clear, compatible with the purpose of the organization, achievable and acceptable to management, in other words SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound) (Wu, 2005; Armstrong, 2014). Chamberlin (2011, p.31) argues that the real reason for goal setting is to know people what they should do, if and under what circumstances they are able to do so, and how they go on until they finish their work.

Once the objectives have been set, executives and teachers must implement a clear and specific agreement on the general and specific objectives to be achieved. Although goals and planning start at the highest levels of an organization, they must also be communicated to all members of the community, and teachers must also have a say in goal setting and decision making. This is appropriate to the extent that teacher involvement ensures their consent and contributes to their empowerment, in order to be effective and increase their productivity (Islami, 2018).

In the next phase, the manager selects the right person to carry out a specific task, if they have jointly designed and agreed on the required time, time frame for implementation and immediate objectives. Discussion, presentation and analysis of data and decision making are mandatory processes to ensure consensus and acceptance of objectives (Szelągowska – Rudzka, 2015). After all, according to Price (2004), this is a system of management, in which the goals of the organization are explicitly stated, so that managers and teachers understand the overall or final purpose for which they work and the specific implications of the realization of this purpose, in accordance with their position and role in the organization.

In the next phase, the specifications, the time horizon and the performance standards are determined, in such a way that the teacher clearly knows that his success can be measured and evaluated. The predetermined performance indicators resulting from this process facilitate the evaluation of the work produced. Maximum performance can only be achieved when teachers have clear feedback on the work they have completed and the degree to which they have responded to the predetermined demands. Additionally, through the whole process strengthens teachers' commitment to the teaching profession, which is realized through participation, discussion and general analysis of the objectives to achieve and the tasks to perform (McMahon, 2013; Ståhlkrantz, 2022).

Therefore, MBOR seems to enhance the participation of teacher groups in the determination and execution of tasks, in the decision-making process and in solving organizational problems. MBOR inevitably involves monitoring, supervising processes, and evaluating, starting with the assignment of work. The executive begins to evaluate and compare the results with the agreed standards, in order to highlight the specific strategy that led to the successful completion of the process (Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2011; Szelągowska - Rudzka, 2015).

For the implementation of the MBOR, it is important that the following terms are followed: Managers and teachers are committed to supporting the aim of the school organization in all possible ways and to engage in goal-setting processes in line with the educational organizational aims and goals. This creates a set of targets, measurable, based on predefined standards, and a time horizon for implementation, within which teachers are required to



achieve their goals and demonstrate their commitment and performance. At the end of the predetermined course they are required to be accountable, while during the planning processes feedback meetings are provided, reassessment and modification of actions and procedures are taking place, the efficiency and effectiveness of which affect teachers' status in the school organizations (Macey et al., 2011; Bringeland, 2022).

The latter are rewarded, promoted, or change positions in the organization or department they belong to, after in-service training or short-term program for professional development. Teachers' performance is assessed based on results of their work and the implementation of the school policy objectives, in the determination of which they participated and committed. The work carried out must be described in writing, the evaluation criteria must be determined, the expected results and feedback must be provided at each meeting. Objectives are clearly defined at the individual and group level and specific actions are taken. Also, autonomy and initiative action should be ensured to the maximum extent, while responsibility and accountability are considered logical consequences and guarantees of teacher professionalism (Crawford, Rich, Buckman, & Bergeron, 2014).

Moreover, it is considered appropriate for teachers to communicate continuously with executives, especially during the planning and implementation phase. In the first case, they agree on the terms, conditions, means and execution of specific actions for the completion of the project, upon setting the framework of objectives, while in the second they exchange information in order to address obstacles and provide advice and guidance on removing the latter and continuing the predetermined course. In this case, the two sides again reach an agreement to improve the situation and, where necessary, make changes and modify the original plan (Brim, 2012; Turner, 2021).

#### **4. Empirical Evidence for MBOR in School Organizations**

Empirical data concerning MBOR model in school management and administration are provided in several studies. In Scandinavian countries, MBOR has been absorbed and even embodied in national legislation for public education. For instance, in Norway, embracement and rejection have been equally testified as regards MBOR and its deployment in school management. Some counties were found to be aligned with the new orthodoxy, whereas others seem to go on with resisting to implement goal-oriented management (Nordkvelle & Nyhus, 2017).

In any case, MBOR was assumed to give teachers latitude to interpret and translate objectives into practice (Nusche, Hala'asz, Looney, Santiago, & Shewbridge, 2011, p. 36), as well as to enact policies in the same way. Thus, it is maintained that there has been a stronger emphasis on MBOR for strengthening efficiency and transparency in Sweden than in Norway, which has transformed the concept in line with educational purposes. Helgøy (2006) contends that in spite of the policymakers' initiatives, neither in Norway nor in Sweden was development pushed further in the same trajectory, rather it was transformed and, in the case of Sweden, radically changed within a larger nationally specific framework of sequence of events, values, norms and traditions of policy making.

Møller & Skedsmo (2013) studying selected policy documents in Norway found that NPM has been closely connected to the introduction of MBOR in the Norwegian education sector, since NPM reforms are adapted more easily due to the fact that the education system is predominantly a public one. The understanding of regulation is also influenced by a long, strong history of national regulation of education in terms of broad curriculum guidelines and regulation by law. However, alongside this strong regulation there is a tradition of teachers having a voice in making curriculum and education policy, and there seem to be high levels of discretion in interpretation of the elements of NPM reforms (Bringeland, 2022, p.202).

Lindberg & Wilson (2011) stress that MBOR contains specific aspects of professional empowerment that entail the upgrading of teachers' status in school organizations. A comparative cross-sectional study has been conducted for the implementation of MBOR in the upper secondary school system in Sweden. Its impact on student performance appears to be basically neutral. That is, it neither improved nor lowered performance in the areas of ratings, through put and admission. Even though there appears to be some retrenchment in effect on staff performance, the approach has the apparent positive effect of reducing stress by providing expectations (Turner, 2021).

In his study for implementing MBOR in school organizations in Sweden, Lundström (2015a, b) suggested that the use of goal-setting theory and MBOR had been implemented fairly well as regards teaching, even if teachers' status was found to be degraded and their discretion in policy implementation decreased. The study also showed that principals had not prioritized the work of long-term school development. The results make it clear that compared with teaching, implementation in this area had a lower average score as regards the degree to which activities are influenced by MBOR and goal-setting theory. Similar findings were reported in the study of Lindberg (2014) concerning MBOR in Swedish school organizations undermining the sustainability of this model in relation to educational objectives' fulfillment and effective output production.

One more time, Lundström (2015b) examining the abovementioned model in the context of the "General Advice" program concluded that MBOR may be useful if it is adjusted to the complex political and administrative context of the central agencies. However, the fact that it is derived from both economic organizational and management theories prescribing both centralization and decentralization guarantees considerable autonomy alongside a more rigid performance-management system, an idea that merges with the individual performance-related pay system. Similarly, the idea of rewarding good and punishing bad performance deeming the cornerstone of the approach may result in the fabrication of desirable results and, furthermore, clashes with teachers' professional culture in which teamwork and cooperation are crucial (Lundström, 2015b, p.39).

In their study, Sundberg & Wahlstrom (2012) reported that many teachers in Sweden had been implementing the new upper secondary curriculum and grading system for over a decade, in accordance with the MBOR model, but that the latitude for interpretation and translation was now smaller due to the standard-based orientation. The increased demands for evaluation, testing and control also contributed to the decreased freedom. The situation also illustrates

inherent contradictions in MBOR, which assumes precise, concrete, specific and hierarchically structured indicators. However, putting too much emphasis on these aspects of MBOR conflicts with the broad goals of the curriculum that are also part of professional values, goals such as the development of democratic citizens, equity, analytical and critical thinking, and creativity. Consequently, a power structure has emerged consisting of MBOR, the more standard-based curriculum linked to the grading system, the audit culture and the pay system (Læg Reid, Roness, & Rubecksen, 2006, p. 251; Ståhlkrantz, 2022).

This is the case described by Taglietti, Grimaldi, & Serpieri (2018) concerning the evaluation and assessment system in Italian education that evolves around MBOR model. More specifically, it is alleged that the school headteacher himself is to be accountable and responsible as he carries the burden of the overall success or failure of the school he manages and leads. The MBOR model is assumed to bring about increased school effectiveness and improved test results as long as the headteacher implements the aforementioned model according to the guidelines suggested by the central government, in order to meet the national standards for student achievement and teacher and school performance as well. The results of this study indicate the complexity of MBOR that has been employed as a method of enhancing school effectiveness having several repercussions, such as the deterioration of teachers and principals' status and position in association with a more demanding educational system.

MBOR has not yet officially enacted in Spanish education. Notwithstanding, an appraisal performance system along with accountability was established in the early 2000s, in Madrid, in which, as an autonomous region of Spain, results-based accountability measures, standardized national testing and increased freedom of parents to choose between schools were introduced. Alongside these policies, in this region several NPM principles and methods were adopted in the educational administration, which nevertheless contradict the long Napoleonic administrative tradition of Spain. The enactment of these reforms was largely due to the strong leadership, entrepreneurial approach and sovereignty of the presiding of the Community of Madrid as well as Education Committee (2003-2012), namely Esperanza Aguirre, who was personally committed to encouraging and promoting the commodifying nature of public services and products, including education. However, the reform lasted only until Aguirre resigned in 2012. The emergence of a new government marked the end of the effort to implement the doctrine of public choice, as well as practices such as publishing school results, periodic examinations and increasing accountability, which is an emblematic principle of the New Public Management facilitated by MBOR (Verger, Fontdevila, & Parcerisa, 2019; Verger & Skedsmo, 2021; Cone & Moos, 2022). In this case, MBOR was implicitly introduced mainly due to the fact that it is inextricably associated with NPM discourse.

Finally, in UK public schools MBOR has been in place for two decades and even more as preferable choice yielding too much performance and performativity fabricating educational management and tailoring educational aims to objectives. Even so, through peculiar and sophisticated accountability systems MBOR seems to thrive pervading school policies and practices being mixed in some cases with performance management and leadership. This combination implies four distinct processes that fall within the scope of management exercise



to achieve maximum performance, namely evaluation for school development and effectiveness, evaluation for school performance, evaluation for school dynamics and evaluation for creating a reward system in the school and its administration (Ball, 2000; Eddy-Spicer, Bubb, Earley, Crawford, & James, 2019).

In developing countries, as for instance, in Nigeria, the implementation of MBOR in schools was found to be interrelated with more satisfied teachers, improved decision quality and work efficiency as well as increased teachers' commitment. More specifically, Bua, Tyokyaa, & Kwaghbo (2016) reported that principals who view and accept teachers as partners in education and effective administration of the day-to-day school activities encouraging them in participative decision-making are expected to be the main factors of augmented productivity, efficiency in administration and teaching or other valued organizational results.

Therefore, MBOR as a method and technique utilized in New Public Management approach is strongly associated with school effectiveness discourse, as the main objectives of educational and school organizations are linked to ameliorating students' achievements in school examinations or national tests, thus contributing to the overall educational effectiveness. In parallel, school and teachers' efficiency constitute a key priority for education in national and international educational environment. But how can these two terms be accurately defined and appropriately conceptualized taking into account the vagueness as well as the ambiguity that characterizes them?

As a result of the conceptual vagueness of school effectiveness and its ambivalent nature, MBOR is confronted with several inhibitions or possible drawbacks in its deployment in educational and school organizations. Moreover, students' educational achievements that have to be the key objectives of school organizations are encountered with exogenous factors (i.e.: lack of resources, cost reduction policies), whose impact is to be eliminated, should MBOR's utility is to produce the desirable outcomes for school management as well as the teachers and students. Nevertheless, this is assumed as the main asset of MBOR, namely its capability of being enacted as a method and utilized as technique in a plethora of managerial conditions constituting certainly a useful tool for school principals and educational executives (Wrigley, 2013; Böse & Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz, 2021).

Nevertheless, MBOR should and can be combined with leadership that reinforces equity, diversity, and inclusiveness, therefore transforming and establishing a homologous school culture, which seeks and struggles for social justice. Even in those settings instilled by the ideas of MBOR and Managerialism, nurturing of an inclusive school culture is fundamental and should be a specific goal of MBOR, as it is such an objective and at the same time a useful tool itself for achieving this goal.

## **5. Inclusive School Culture and Leadership**

School culture as an underlying structure incorporates values, reflected in national visions, goals, laws, policies, curriculum and common beliefs and desires. The school culture consists of meanings shared by those who "live" in school. Often recommended from cultures and underlying cultures, such as that of teachers and that of the students. However, school culture

as a whole is intertwined with perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, predispositions of school members and the relationships that develop between them, but between school and local actors through collaboration networks and synergies with other schools (Kougioumtzis & Patriksson, 2009; Liu, Bellibaş, & Gümüş, 2021).

The school culture that favors collaborations between the school staff, the families and community members is vital to ensuring success and complete participation of all students. Thus, a positive school culture based on inclusive perceptions, values, stances and attitudes favorable to diversity and special need can contribute to the commitment of teachers and the principal in achieving its objectives inclusive education. Similarly, students and their families develop a sense of it belong to the school community, while inclusive practices allow all children to participate seamlessly in teaching and learning (Peterson & Deal, 2011; Haines, Gross, Blue-Banning, Francis, Turnbull, 2015; Pinkelman et al., 2022).

According to Finnan & Levin (2000), the democratic exercise of school leadership, the cooperation of teachers and parents and the active presence of parents in school, the professional development of teachers to strengthen their capacity for productive work and effective involvement in education changes are key elements of the school culture that encourages school empowerment and improvement but also inclusion. Theoretical approaches to school culture are involved the school principal, highlighting his role in inclusive teaching and learning, and even in environments where the methods and practices of school leadership are intertwined with goals and predetermined standards of performance-performance and quantification of teachers results (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Francis, et al., 2016).

Culture change may result from the removal of administrative and organizational restrictions and the emergence of rules of collectivity that will recognize the value of individual and autonomous action, with aimed at enhancing the inclusion of the school organization. The inclusive culture is directly related to the increase in opportunities for continuous professional development, through which transformation of the teachers' habitus can take place, ie enrichment and transformation perceptions, views, knowledge and skills of teaching know-how, so that teachers can become tolerant of otherness and favorably predisposed to diversity while working for the development of forms of collective work that maximize the possibilities of joint solution problems. Collaborative school culture, provided that it empowers and strengthens the teacher initiative and school improvement, urges teachers to inclusive agency (McMaster, 2015; Booth & Ainscow, 2016).

Earley (2013) points out that leaders make the greatest contribution to shaping such a organizational culture. The idea, however, that the school culture is shaped by the leader with the simple dictation on the part of what is to be achieved, although it can largely be considered well-founded, is particularly simplistic of the role that the leader ultimately plays (Bush, Bell, & Middlewood, 2019). Similarly, Katsigianni & Ifanti (2020) point out that in this case the appropriate type of leadership is distributed leadership, since what happens in the school space is regulated by the responsibility of all, while multiple sources emerge guidance and leadership. In this context, schools are being transformed from closed systems into empowered learning professional communities, where teachers act consistently taking decisions towards school

improvement and reinforcement inclusive nature of school policies.

Inclusive leaders value everyone's input and inspire innovation by protecting people at risk from being excluded and marginalized. They are willing to leave their absolute authoritative stance and power, to share responsibility and harness the wisdom of the team to benefit everyone - the leader, the follower and society. Leadership for inclusion works to remove individuals' barriers, who are at risk of educational and therefore social exclusion. This approach seeks to recognize and treat diversity on an equal footing in schools and educational communities, invites and welcomes individual input and encourages participation in decision-making processes on teacher-related issues and students. Thus, the goal of inclusive leadership is to launch changes that will be directed to the creation and consolidation of an inclusive school culture, capable of welcoming and embracing diversity. In the case of distributed leadership, teachers in collaboration with the principal undertake initiatives, so as to execute the objectives and tasks led by inclusive education through the adoption of practices that promote the inclusion of all students in the educational process (Ainscow & Abha-Sandill, 2010; Bortini, Paci, Rise, & Rojnik, 2016; Fagan, Wells, Guenther, & Matkin, 2022).

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, facilitates the cultivation of an inclusive culture in school space, to the extent that it is able to influence teachers, students and the school community in general by inspiring higher ideals and principles such as equity and justice. In this regard, the school principals may take specific actions that respond to the request for the implementation of its pedagogical equality and human rights. The conversion of the school climate and the adaptation of the school culture to accept and manage effectively any kind of diversity, including it in teaching and learning, can be achieved as a result of the exercise of pedagogical, instructional leadership or leadership for learning. These two forms of leadership seem to be appropriate for promoting inclusion in education, especially if are adopted and implemented in succession by the school principals, who should primarily be inspired by the ideals and goals of inclusive pedagogy and education (Angelides, 2012; Higham & Booth, 2018).

Black & Simon (2014) conclude that the effective practice of inclusive school leadership permeates school culture, helping to transform it into an inclusive culture and the school community into an inclusive learning community that promotes teachers' professional development. In addition, within the inclusive school students are encouraged to interact, communicate and exchange knowledge and experiences regardless of whether they fall in cultural, linguistic or religious diversity, if they have learning difficulties or behavioral and emotional disorders. Such a learning community is inclusive in nature and can contribute to the progressive change of teachers' mentality and mental habits each time they enter the classroom through the implementation of collaborative and collective relationships that permeate the interaction and daily contact of teachers and their students (Azorín & Ainscow, 2020).

The operation of schools with the additional status and identity of inclusive learning environments serves the goals of school empowerment and improvement, which implemented in terms of increased inclusiveness. Inclusive school culture supports the learning of students with different ethno-cultural identity taking into account the differences, the difficulties and

obstacles of these children and their families by enhancing school progress and their success through taking action to change the deeply entrenched perceptions and attitudes towards diversity. Schools seeking education without restrictions and work to eliminate exclusion, marginalization and promote the cultivation of inclusive skills in all their members by calling them to participate in decision-making are assisted by the creation of cooperation networks not only among schools but also between schools and education stakeholders. In such a culture, alterity is considered important, as it shows up through listening and authentic acceptance of students' voices, i.e., asserting their needs in a more critical way of requests and demands, while the development of cooperation and synergies at school is considered particularly beneficial (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Majoko & Dudu, 2022).

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

This study was aimed at presenting MBOR approach as survived and revived in New Public Management theoretical and practical settings. More specifically, our study sought to examine MBOR's applicability and effective deployment in school organization context unfolding its phases and unveiling its particular positive or negative effects on the operational level of the school management and administration. This method is based on the approach of setting specific goals in a strict way by the managers and the teachers, in order to periodically monitor and assess the effectiveness and efficiency of a school organization. As it draws upon the management theory and practice applied in entrepreneurial and industrial sector, theorists as well as researchers accentuate the relevant doubts stemming from the original dynamic and fluid nature of MBOR intertwined with the corporate ethos.

In fact, MBOR focuses the attention on the process of setting goals in organizations and lays the foundations for improving the operating conditions of organizations and the consequent services provided, to satisfy the needs of their customers. In other words, the management aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector was pursued with a different approach, which includes holding principals and teachers accountable and responsible for many aspects of their professional life.

Despite its claimed drawbacks, MBOR is considered a useful tool for meeting national standards and augmented responsiveness to test- and results-based accountability alongside facilitating better learning outcomes. In parallel, MBOR is perceived as an advanced form of educational management and it is linked with the improvement of teachers' role and status, thus contributing to their professional empowerment. In other words, it is asserted that MBOR seems to encourage teachers' involvement in defining school organization goals, enhance their professional empowerment and facilitate the satisfaction of their long-term commitment in the school practice.

Additionally, it appears to reinforce teachers to be involved in the decision-making process in their schools, to facilitate the school principals' everyday work, and finally to contribute to the school improvement process. However, the empirical evidence from the countries where MBOR was being implemented did not provide a clear picture concerning its effect on school performance, teachers' status and professional discretion as well as students' learning outcomes assessed by national or international test results and education outputs.

For this reason, a thorough consideration of the various attempts to combine effectively MBOR and inclusive leadership was presented. To put it another way, the potential implementation of both MBOR and inclusive leadership was explored, since the cultivation of a such a school culture can be beneficial for school principals, teachers, and students. Since it contributes to adequately performing managerial goals as well as facilitating inclusiveness and leadership for social justice, MBOR is a valuable and practical tool for proactive leaders. The appropriate leadership style that can serve the above-mentioned purposes driving schools to success is considered to be the transformational and distributed one or a mixture of the two, in order to supplement the managerial features of MBOR.

The dynamic performative nature of MBOR is innate in NPM strategic planning and methodological choices for school improvement. However, it can be identified in several school contexts with a higher level of inclusiveness. Accordingly, the goal-centered, results-based model of management presented in this study is important to be deployed with an inclusive orientation. In this way, it could be adapted to a plethora of circumstances confronting several problems in school organizations. Thanks to its flexibility and adaptability is to be alongside NPM-infused strategical planning, if the imperative for inclusion is the goal as well as the key objective.

The fusion of a managerial model from NPM and a leadership style can be of added value and, thus, has a complementary use for fulfilling school effectiveness objectives and results. That is, MBOR ascribed to managerial set of methods is on the contrary to the inclusive school leadership as regards their origins. Accordingly, this conceptual variation transformed into a holistic approach to cope with school management challenges is identified as the dominant paradigm to educational phenomena, thus being abided by the contemporary, global trends.

Finally, this study sought to enrich our theoretical and practical understanding of the MBOR method by providing significant insights as well critically analyzing school management through the lens of MBOR. Overall, this is a participatory management model and further empirical studies should be carried out, in an attempt to reveal its impact on the school development and its potential stimulation for educational innovations as well as its possible aftermaths of implementing in the educational and school organizations.

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