

Tortured School Committee between Exercising their Authority and the Reality – a Study of Consequences of the Parents’ Participation at Primary Schools in Bolivian Settings

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This paper aims to explore the effects and results of the parents’ participation in school management in the form of school committee in developing countries, with particular focus on the relations among parents, teachers and pupils.

In order to achieve the study objective, focused interviews with six School Committees in public primary schools in an Andean mountainous area of Bolivia were conducted. The data was analyzed using a grounded theory approach.

Using the result of the analysis, the author demonstrates that the School Committees play a role of mediator between parents and teachers, particularly when parents feel anxiety on teachers’ pedagogical instruction to their children. The School Committees have power and function of teaching personnel change, but they attempt to resolve the problem through dialogue with, observation of and suggestions to teachers and to avoid carrying out the authorized power too quickly. This process, however, does not go smoothly in most cases. When the school consisting of illiterate parents in most part, parents have fears on transmitting their anxiety directly to teachers, because these teachers take it as complain and tend to change their attitude toward their children that results the emotional and actual harm on both pupils and parents. In other hand if most of the parents are well literate, this vengeance-like attitude toward children and parents after receiving complains not likely comes up.

The thrust of the argument is that the School Committees’ authorized power does not seem to have preventive effects on the vengeance-like attitude of teachers. It is suggested that the degree of negotiating ability and competences of the parents in general have has an influence -in some part- on whether teachers prevent or bring about this conflictive situation. This is a challenge of the future investigation. The relations between teachers and parents is important since this can be a trigger to make learning environment better or worse, and the authorized power itself does not function as it is expected without the real empowerment of the parents’ negotiating ability.