

Entre desafios e oportunidades: percepções dos professores sobre avaliações externas no contexto do PISA

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Resumo

Este estudo investiga as noções sobre percepções dos professores brasileiros sobre o Programa Internacional de Avaliação de Estudantes (PISA). Com uma amostra de 57 docentes de diferentes regiões, foram coletados dados quantitativos por meio de um questionário online. Os resultados revelam que a maioria dos participantes possui algum conhecimento sobre o PISA, mas há espaço para maior sensibilização. Embora os resultados da avaliação sejam amplamente acessíveis, uma parte significativa dos entrevistados relatou não ter acesso aos resultados. Houve divergências de opinião sobre a importância desses resultados, destacando a complexidade das percepções. Conclui-se que esforços contínuos de divulgação e informação são necessários para a sensibilização sobre o PISA e garantir que suas informações sejam compreendidas e utilizadas de maneira eficaz. Essas descobertas têm implicações importantes para o desenvolvimento de políticas e práticas educacionais.

Palavras-chave: Acesso. Conhecimento. Divulgação. Educação. Sensibilização.

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Between Challenges and Opportunities: Teachers' Perceptions of External Assessments in the Context of PISA

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Abstract

This study investigates Brazilian teachers' perceptions of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). With a sample of 57 teachers from different regions, quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire. The results reveal that most participants know about PISA, but there is room for greater awareness. Although assessment results are widely accessible, a significant portion of respondents reported not having access to them. There were divergent opinions regarding the importance of these results, highlighting the complexity of perceptions. It is concluded that continuous efforts in dissemination and information are necessary for raising awareness about PISA and ensuring that its information is understood and used effectively. These findings have important implications for the development of educational policies and practices.

Keywords: Access. Knowledge. Dissemination. Education. Awareness.

Entre desafios y oportunidades: percepciones de los profesores sobre evaluaciones externas en el contexto del PISA

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Resumen

Este estudio investiga las percepciones de los profesores brasileños sobre el Programa Internacional para la Evaluación de Estudiantes (PISA). Con una muestra de 57 docentes de diferentes regiones, se recopilieron datos cuantitativos a través de un cuestionario en línea. Los resultados revelan que la mayoría de los participantes tienen algún conocimiento sobre PISA, pero hay espacio para una mayor conciencia. Aunque los resultados de la evaluación son ampliamente accesibles, una parte significativa de los encuestados no tiene acceso a ellos. Hubo opiniones diferentes sobre la importancia de estos resultados, destacando la complejidad de las percepciones de los profesores. Se concluye que son necesarios los esfuerzos continuos en la divulgación e información para sensibilizar a los profesores sobre PISA y garantizar que su información se comprenda y utilice de manera efectiva. Estos hallazgos tienen importantes implicaciones para el desarrollo de políticas y prácticas educativas.

Palabras clave: Acceso. Conocimiento. Divulgación. Educación. Sensibilización.

Introduction

External assessments play a fundamental role in shaping public policies within the educational system, guiding school goals through comparisons. Globally, the purpose of these evaluations is to ensure that the quality of the teaching-learning process is aligned with students' retention in school (Santos, 2013).

In the vast landscape of global education, teachers play a crucial role as builders of knowledge, directly influencing the intellectual development of young people and, consequently, the future of society. However, when examining the relationship between educational assessments and basic education teachers, criticisms arise regarding the value they attribute to these educational indicators. Analyzing the circumstances surrounding the practical understanding of global tests reveals that their initial teacher training addresses this aspect insufficiently, as some are still unaware of the assessment (Araujo; Tenório, 2021). Furthermore, the availability of consistent ongoing training opportunities on the subject is limited, and many researchers have focused more on identifying problems than on presenting practical solutions. This study also highlights that the approaches provided regarding this topic often emphasize the need to raise standards rather than promote understanding and capacity building. Sales and Fialho (2020) note that educators generally have limited knowledge about external assessments.

According to the website of the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) is an international organization based in Paris, France, comprised of 38 member countries, including the world's most advanced economies as well as some emerging countries like South Korea, Chile, Mexico, and Turkey. It covers a wide range of areas, such as trade, investments, finance, taxation, energy, and the environment, with over 300 bodies and 252 legal instruments, including specialized intergovernmental committees. Since the 2000s, the OECD has conducted the PISA assessment, which evaluates the academic performance of 15-year-old students in areas such as Reading, Mathematics, and Science, seeking to measure their scientific literacy. The program, which takes place every three years and involves numerous countries, has a global reach, enabling nations to assess whether their youth have acquired the essential skills required by the labor market in a globalized world. The OECD aims to:

improve educational systems by providing evidence to guide national policy, school curricula, instructional efforts, and student learning [...] and supplying countries with

information to assess areas of strengths and weaknesses and to monitor progress. (OCDE, 2007. p.3).

Thus, understanding PISA is fundamental, especially for basic education teachers, as it plays a significant role in shaping students and preparing them to face the challenges of the current job market. This leads to the research question: What do basic education teachers know about one of the world's most comprehensive educational assessments, PISA?

This study was designed to evaluate the level of knowledge and awareness of teachers regarding PISA. The research is based on the increasing relevance of external assessment in the context of Basic Education and the urgent need to investigate the extent to which educators are effectively informed about PISA, considering the significant implications that this program can have in the educational context. As noted by Fontanive (2021):

PISA can be considered the most important student assessment conducted worldwide, not only because of its scope having been administered to 79 countries in its latest edition, with 37 of them being OECD members and 42 partner countries/economies but also because it features test items that address real-world issues requiring more complex skills for their resolution. (Fontanive, 2021. p.08)

At this point, intriguing questions arise about educators' knowledge regarding PISA. To what extent are they aware of PISA results? Do they know when assessments take place? Are they familiar with the program's objectives?

Most importantly, do they consider PISA relevant for education?

Evaluating the educational outcomes of a country as vast and diverse as Brazil presents significant barriers, especially when the sample consists of a small segment of students. It is crucial to recognize that this sampling approach may limit the representativeness of the conclusions, given the heterogeneity of educational realities throughout the national territory.

Furthermore, it is essential to debate the use of a single test, such as PISA, to evaluate educational systems in countries as diverse as those in Latin America. This approach raises important questions about the appropriateness and relevance of PISA indicators, considering the cultural, economic, and social differences that characterize the region.

This article explores significant issues regarding teachers' knowledge, reflecting on the meaning of PISA, the extent of information that educators have about this assessment, and how this knowledge could help identify students' difficulties. Additionally, it contextualizes a global assessment, emphasizing the role of teachers in the future and highlighting how the information and intentions behind these assessments impact national policies.

It presents a quantitative exploratory research study with a non-probabilistic sample, providing relevant data within the educational framework for continuous improvement.

The International Student Assessment Program (PISA)

Brazil began its participation in international cooperation for the development of educational policies in the 1950s, notably through the so-called "MEC-USAID Agreements." According to Minto (2006), these agreements represented a series of partnerships established between the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The main objective of these agreements was to provide technical assistance and financial support for the Brazilian educational sector. During the most active period of these agreements, which lasted from June 1964 to January 1968, a total of 12 agreements were signed, covering areas from primary education (now elementary education) to higher education. Among these agreements, one was responsible for formulating the proposal for the university reform of 196.

In more recent times, during the 1990s, a series of "international agreements," such as the World Declaration on Education for All, gained prominence. This was driven by a perspective that began to view education as an attractive field for investment. According to Freitas (2007), the process of introducing and adopting comprehensive, centralized educational assessments would take about fifty years to solidify as an integral part of the country's policies. Large-scale educational assessment with national scope underwent a long process of development and evolution in the Brazilian context before becoming a routine and regular practice in basic education governance.

According to the information on the MEC website, the internationally recognized assessment today is the Program for International Student Assessment, known as PISA, which represents a landmark in global education. It began in 1997 when the OECD conceived the idea of creating an international assessment that would allow for the comparison of student performance across different countries in key areas such as Reading, Mathematics, and Science. The first assessment cycle took place in 2000 and involved 43 countries, establishing an important reference point in the analysis of educational performance globally. Even though Brazil is not a member of the OECD, it was invited to participate and is noted on the MEC website as the first South American country to carry out the PISA assessment since its inception in the 2000s.

According to the INEP website (2023), PISA is an international comparative study conducted every three years by the OECD. In the words of Fachin (2001), the comparative method involves

investigating and explaining phenomena based on their similarities and differences. This allows for the analysis of specific data and the deduction of similarities and differences between concrete, abstract, and general elements. This method enables investigations that are not conducted directly, but rather through the analysis of similarities and divergences.

The primary purpose of PISA is to measure scientific literacy, that is, the ability of students to apply knowledge and skills acquired in school to solve real-world problems. According to the MEC website, the program's goal is to produce indicators that contribute to discussions on the quality of education in participating countries to inform policies aimed at improving basic education. The assessment cycle is conducted with 15-year-old students, who are typically in the 9th year of elementary school, testing their problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and ability to apply knowledge in practical situations. The test does not focus solely on assessing academic knowledge but on evaluating what students need to face the challenges of the contemporary world. As Machado (2010) notes, since the test evaluates skills for entering the workforce, it is administered at the age of 15.

PISA assessments cover different areas in each cycle, including Reading, Mathematics, and Science, providing a comprehensive evaluation of students' skills, knowledge, and competencies in various social contexts. Each year, one area is the primary focus, featuring more questions. It is important to highlight that each area has a reference framework, known by MEC as the conceptual framework, which is specifically applied in large-scale assessments. This framework establishes the structure and theoretical principles of each test or questionnaire that is part of the assessment. Additionally, the Reference Framework helps identify the underlying skills or characteristics to be evaluated and guides the development of the items that compose the assessment.

To collect data, instruments such as Test Booklets, Questionnaires, and electronic tests are used to obtain information on academic performance, as well as socio-economic and cultural data from the students and schools participating in the program.

An important characteristic of PISA is its real-world situational testing approach. This means that the questions presented to students do not merely assess their memorization ability but rather their capacity to apply concepts and reason in everyday contexts. This approach reflects the need to prepare students to be informed and participatory citizens in an increasingly complex society. This is evident with the inclusion of domains referred to as innovative, such as Problem Solving, Financial Literacy, and Global Competence.

PISA stands out for its global reach. Students from dozens of countries participate in the assessment program. The participating countries represent a wide variety of educational systems, cultures, and levels of economic development. This makes PISA a valuable tool for understanding how different educational approaches impact student performance and for identifying best practices that can be shared globally.

The results of the assessment have implications for education worldwide. Countries that achieve high scores often become benchmarks for effective educational policies. This leads to the dissemination of best practices and inspiration for educational reforms in other nations. Lingard (2016) states that PISA has contributed to the emergence of a new field of global educational policy that is no longer limited to the actions of individual countries. Participating countries use their performance in PISA as a rationale to legitimize their political reforms; the results are used to make decisions about resource allocation, curriculum development, and improving the quality of education. On the other hand, this prompts us to consider to what extent a global assessment should influence local policies (Pettersson; Molstad, 2016).

Considering how the world is constantly evolving, the skills required in the job market are changing rapidly. Assessments also aid in preparing students for both the current and future job markets. According to the Ayrton Senna Institute (2022), the assessment focuses on essential skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and scientific literacy, ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary skills to face the challenges of a globalized labor market. This is particularly important in a world where technology and innovation play an increasingly central role.

PISA is a prominent initiative in the global educational arena. Its history, purpose, and scope reflect its significance in the pursuit of quality education worldwide. It provides a comparative analysis of student performance on an international level, guides public policy, influences educational reforms, and promotes the dissemination of best practices. As such, its impact is noteworthy and helps shape the future of global education.

Desafios e Problemas no Contexto do PISA

PISA represents a significant initiative in the field of global educational assessment. However, when analyzing its application in diverse contexts, especially in countries with realities very different

from those for which it was conceived, barriers and challenges arise that deserve critical attention and analysis.

Developed by the OECD, based in Europe, PISA often reflects its approach and the issues it prioritizes. According to Lingard (2016), the data are used by various countries to inform policy decisions. The author argues that the assessment is designed to prompt participating countries to review their educational policies rather than becoming overly confident or complacent about their existing educational systems. By comparing student performance internationally, this type of system can reveal areas where a country is lagging behind others, encouraging actions to improve the quality of education. However, this creates a fundamental challenge, as the underlying Eurocentric perspective may not be directly applicable to countries with different social, economic, and cultural contexts. These assessments often reflect Western values and perspectives, which may not fully capture the nuances and challenges faced by students in other parts of the world.

Education in Brazil follows a Eurocentric model, considered monocultural and exclusionary (Araújo, 2014). Fontanive (2021) further reinforces that this assessment model does not contribute to the social development of diverse groups within its own context. When educational policies are based on international tests created by entities from different countries responding to their own requests to assess their educational systems, this reinforces colonialism. It is worth noting again that the OECD is a European-origin organization, of which Brazil is not a member. Dias Sobrinho (2002) highlights that such assessments are not neutral; rather, they legitimize oppressive values and ideologies.

Another evident challenge is the sample size in vast countries like Brazil. The country has significant regional and socioeconomic diversity. However, PISA assesses only a small sample of students, which may not adequately represent the complexity and variability of the Brazilian educational system. In 2022, according to INEP data (2020), only 14.017 students participated in the assessments across 420 municipalities. Considering that Brazil has about 5.570 municipalities and the 2022 school census indicated the presence of 7.9 million adolescents in high school, it is clear that this sample is limited. The differences between regions in Brazil are substantial, and the restricted sample does not adequately reflect the educational disparities within the country. Medeiros et al. (2013) state that Brazil presents educational disparities when analyzing the Municipal Human Development Index for Education (IDHM Educação) across different states. In this context, the use of PISA neglects the significant existing differences, prioritizing commercialization, privatization, and global comparison. As a result, these assessment systems contribute to the intensification of resource accumulation and control, further exacerbating social inequalities and injustices.

Additionally, there is a considerable lack of awareness regarding this type of assessment, both concerning its implementation and the results obtained. Many educators, parents, and even students are unaware of the program's existence or how it functions. The lack of transparency in disseminating results and associated policies related to PISA is also a concerning issue. This makes it difficult for key stakeholders, including educators and basic education managers, to understand the program's relevance and how its results can be used to improve education. As noted by Ossucci and Della (2018), the dissemination of results is often ineffective, with management, coordination, and teachers struggling to comprehend the outcomes. A notable aspect is the emphasis placed on comparative rankings between countries in the results, rather than a deeper analysis of disparities within their own contexts.

O PISA busca medir o desempenho dos estudantes em habilidades consideradas essenciais para a vida contemporânea, como leitura, matemática e ciências. No entanto, ao aplicar uma abordagem padronizada a alunos de diferentes origens, ele pode não considerar adequadamente as diversidades educacionais e individuais. Nas palavras de Silva e Delgado (2018), cada aluno é único, e as políticas educacionais não podem ser desenvolvidas de forma eficaz se não levarem em consideração essa diversidade.

The disconnect between PISA and basic education teachers is another pressing issue. Many teachers are not familiar with the program and do not fully understand how it affects their work (Araujo; Tenório, 2021). Furthermore, PISA results are often used as performance indicators for education but have little control over the evaluation process and are rarely consulted on how to improve education based on these outcomes.

PISA is a tool for assessing global educational performance and identifying areas in need of improvement. However, it is crucial to recognize and address the challenges and problems associated with its application in diverse contexts, such as Brazil. Eurocentric perspectives, small sample sizes, lack of dissemination, standardization, and disconnection are issues that need to be considered for PISA to be more effectively utilized in improving education worldwide. After all, the quality of education cannot be assessed solely through numbers and statistics; it must take into account the complex and varied realities of each educational system and each student.

Teachers' Perceptions of External Assessments

External assessments play a fundamental role in the contemporary educational system, providing valuable information about student performance, guiding educational policies, and ultimately seeking to improve the quality of education. However, behind these numbers and statistics are the teachers, who play a crucial role in preparing and supporting students throughout these processes.

International tests, such as PISA and national examinations, are essential tools for measuring educational performance. They offer a comprehensive view of students' skills and knowledge, allowing for comparisons between schools, regions, and countries. Although these assessments have gained increasing importance in shaping educational policies at state and municipal levels, the information they generate is still not being fully utilized to guide educational management and improve teaching, as noted by Blasis et al. (2013). This creates a disconnect due to inadequate access to these data.

One of the main setbacks is that these assessments often introduce additional pressure on the school as a whole. The emphasis on results can create a teaching environment focused solely on testing, where the primary goal becomes achieving good grades rather than fostering meaningful learning.

Furthermore, external assessments do not always encompass all the important aspects of education. They tend to focus on specific areas such as reading, mathematics, and science, while neglecting other subjects and skills that are equally important, such as the arts, geography, and more. Casassus (2013) points out that often the subjects and skills assessed do not align with the social needs and developmental possibilities of students.

There is a prevailing mindset that aims to prepare students specifically for these assessments, leading to an excessively standardized curriculum where teaching is directed toward topics likely to be covered in the tests, at the expense of a broader and more diverse education, as noted by Santos (2013). This, in turn, could result in a narrowing of the curriculum, sidelining other essential content for basic education.

Global assessments also prompt deep reflections among educators. They find themselves questioning whether the evaluations truly capture the breadth of their students' capabilities and potentials. Many argue that education cannot be reduced to numbers and statistics and that genuine learning extends beyond what can be measured by a test. Additionally, external assessments raise

questions about educational equity. In schools, it is observed that not all students have access to the same preparation opportunities for these assessments. This can create significant inequalities and perpetuate the divide between those with resources and those without. Oliveira et al. (2013) assert that the pursuit of improvements in outcomes can lead to increased inequality, as directing more resources toward higher-performing students may seem a more attractive approach than addressing the learning issues faced by lower-performing students.

There are also concerns about the lack of autonomy in the educational process. International tests often dictate what should be taught and how it should be taught, leaving teachers with the feeling that they are losing the ability to adapt instruction to the individual needs of their students.

Despite the setbacks and reflections, educators continue to play a crucial role in preparing students for external assessments (Pettersson; Molstad, 2016). They not only provide the necessary knowledge and skills but also play a fundamental role in fostering students' confidence and reducing test-related stress.

Teachers also have an important role in promoting a critical understanding of assessments. They can help students recognize that tests are one part, but not the only part, of evaluating their learning. They can encourage students to view tests as an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned, rather than merely as a measure of their worth as students. In the words of Evers and Walberg (2002), it is possible to hold students accountable for their learning process by continuously encouraging them to seek improvements in their results and creating incentives for enhancing their learning skills.

External assessments are an integral part of the modern educational system, providing valuable information to improve the quality of education. However, teachers face significant challenges, such as added pressure on students, an overly standardized curriculum, and issues of educational equity. They also engage in profound reflections on the nature of learning and the role of assessments in education.

Despite these obstacles and reflections, teachers play a crucial role in preparing students by providing knowledge, skills, and confidence. They also have the ability to promote a critical understanding of assessments and their place in evaluating learning. Therefore, it is essential to recognize and support the role of teachers in the context of global assessments, finding ways to balance the need for evaluation with a broader and more diverse education.

Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study involved a quantitative exploratory analysis aimed at studying a phenomenon through hypotheses and knowledge that will be tested, emphasizing measurement for replicability. Flick (2013. p. 22) highlights that in this form of research, "data collection is designed in a standardized manner."

Data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire containing closed-ended questions. This technique, defined by Gil (2017), consists of a series of questions presented in writing to participants, aimed at exploring opinions, beliefs, feelings, interests, expectations, and experiences. The development of the questionnaire was carefully planned to align with the general and specific objectives of the study, as well as the research theme and working hypotheses, following the guidance of Santos (2017).

For this research, the questionnaire was created using Google Forms, a free tool that allows for online storage and practical analysis of information (Monteiro; Santos, 2019. p. 34). It included five (5) questions specifically designed to gather perceptions and knowledge about PISA, addressing various aspects, including its importance, frequency, availability of results, and general understanding of the program. By focusing on these key areas, the aim is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of perceptions regarding this external assessment and how it impacts the educational context in which teachers operate.

The research was conducted as part of a course in the Professional Master's Program in Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the Regional University of Blumenau (FURB). Due to time constraints, the sample comprised 57 basic education teachers who voluntarily participated from different regional contexts in Brazil. The regional distribution was approximately 40% from the South, 30% from the Southeast, 10% from the Central-West, 5% from the North, and 15% from the Northeast. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, and participation was confirmed through their virtual acceptance of the Informed Consent Form (ICF). Additionally, various subjects were represented, providing a comprehensive view of educators' perceptions.

Teachers from different regions of Brazil were chosen, and the questionnaire link was shared on social media (WhatsApp groups formed during conferences and seminars) to reach a larger number of respondents. However, since participation was voluntary, the same percentages were not achieved in each region.

Through this methodology, the aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions and knowledge regarding external assessments. However, it is important to acknowledge that this study has inherent limitations related to its sample size and the nature of the responses obtained through closed-ended questions.

Research Results

The results of this study provide valuable data on the challenges and opportunities associated with external assessments and can contribute to the development of more effective educational policies and practices.

The collected data provided insights into knowledge, access, and perceptions regarding PISA. Participants' responses revealed nuances about the frequency of assessments and their understanding of the program's primary objectives. The implications of these findings can contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of external assessments in the educational context. This examination of the results will allow us to identify various ways to address some of the barriers identified, ultimately fostering better alignment between assessments and educational practices.

The first question regarding knowledge of PISA provided table above:

Table 1: Knowledge of PISA

Alternative	Percentage (%)
Very familiar with PISA	22.4
Some knowledge about PISA	72.4
Never heard of PISA before	22.4
Only heard of it, without details	1.7

Source: Author's data.

When analyzing the responses to the first question regarding knowledge of PISA, it becomes evident that the majority of respondents are aware of its existence, indicating a considerable level of recognition in the educational landscape. A significant portion of participants stated that they are very familiar with the assessment, suggesting a deeper understanding, while others reported only having heard of the program in a superficial manner. However, some respondents admitted they had never heard of it before, highlighting the need to increase awareness of the program through appropriate dissemination efforts.

The second question regarding access to PISA results provided the table above:

Table 2: Access to PISA Results

Alternative	Percentage (%)
Yes	74.1
No	25.9

Source: Prepared by the Author.

In the second question, access to PISA results among respondents is explored. The vast majority of participants reported having access to these results, highlighting the importance attributed to this information by a broad educational audience. However, it is notable that some respondents do not have access to the results. This suggests that there may be opportunities to make the information more widely available, ensuring that a larger number of educators and stakeholders can access these important data. This underscores the relevance of disseminating the results and raises the question of accessibility to the assessment and its outcomes.

The third question regarding the frequency of PISA assessments provided the table above:

Table 3: Frequency

Alternative	Percentage (%)
Annually	30.4
Every 2 years	30.4
Every 3 years	39.3
Every 5 years	0

Source: Prepared by the Author.

Regarding the frequency of PISA, the results show an almost equal division among respondents who believe that the program occurs annually, every 2 years, and every 3 years. No one indicated that it occurs every 5 years. This distribution of responses highlights a potential common misconception about the frequency of the assessments. Therefore, it is crucial to clarify information about the program's periodicity in communications related to PISA. Ensuring that educators are well-informed can help enhance their understanding and engagement with the assessment.

The fourth question regarding the main objectives of PISA provided the table above:

Table 4: Main Objectives

Alternative	Percentage (%)
Evaluate student academic performance globally	7.1
Compare the educational system of one country with others	17.9
Provide information on student satisfaction with school	71.4
Measure individual student progress over time	7.1

Source: Prepared by the Author.

In the question regarding the main objective of PISA, the majority of respondents correctly identified the primary goal as evaluating student academic performance from a global perspective. However, some still believe that the objective is to compare educational systems between countries. It is important to note that this distribution of responses aligns with the stated goal but may also indicate an opportunity to better explain the program's comparative role. While the primary emphasis on student assessment is understood, there is a chance to clarify the comparative nature of the program, making it clear that such comparisons can lead to competition among countries. This understanding can help educators navigate the implications of PISA more effectively.

[...] What matters most is that the results can be compared, allowing institutions and individuals to be hierarchically ranked according to objective criteria. This serves to ostensibly guide clients in the quasi-educational market and fuel competitiveness, as well as to enable the exercise of governmental control. Such comparisons can create a framework that influences educational policies and practices, reinforcing existing power dynamics and potentially overshadowing the broader purpose of fostering meaningful learning experiences for students (Dias Sobrinho, 2002. p. 175-176).

The fifth question regarding the importance of PISA results for basic education teachers provided the table above:

Table 5: Importance

Alternative	Percentage (%)
Yes, for reference in pedagogical practices	42.9
Yes, to understand Brazil's education globally	28.6
No, unfortunately it's not comparative due to the small sample size	23.8
No, I do not consider the information from these assessments relevant	4.8

Source: Prepared by the Author.

When evaluating the importance of PISA results in basic education, we observe a division in the responses of the participants. While the majority considers the results important, either as a reference for their pedagogical practices or for understanding education in a global context, a

significant portion does not assign substantial importance to the results, citing concerns about sample size or the relevance of the information. This division underscores the need for a more in-depth discussion about the perceived value of basic education results, addressing both the benefits and concerns raised by respondents.

Teachers' perceptions reflect trends identified in the literature, highlighting the complexities and nuances involved in external assessments like PISA. As discussed by various scholars, including Casassus (2013), there are doubts about the validity and appropriateness of the instruments used and the reliability of the results from these standardized evaluations. The findings of this study support these concerns, revealing gaps in teachers' understanding of the purpose and comparative nature of PISA, as well as their accessibility to the results. However, they also align with the literature by demonstrating that educators' perceptions can directly influence pedagogical practices and educational policies.

In critically discussing the results in light of the reviewed theory, we identify similarities, differences, and potential gaps in the current understanding of the topic. This contributes to existing knowledge by providing valuable insights into how teachers' perceptions can inform future research and interventions in education. For example, the findings of this study suggest the need for more comprehensive teacher training programs and more effective educational policies that address not only educators' understanding of PISA but also the interpretation and application of its results in pedagogical practices. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of strategies to increase awareness of external assessments among educators, administrators, and parents, aiming for a more complete and informed understanding of the role these assessments play in the educational context. In summary, this study contributes to a critical and informed perspective on external evaluations, highlighting the necessity of a reflective and contextualized approach to interpreting and utilizing their results.

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the methodology employed and the results obtained in this study on educators' perceptions of PISA, several significant conclusions can be drawn.

A certain level of familiarity among teachers with the assessment has been evidenced, highlighting its visibility in the educational landscape. However, there remains a portion of educators

with only superficial knowledge or who have heard about the program without details, underscoring the importance of ongoing dissemination and informational efforts.

Accessibility to results is a reality for most participants, yet a significant number still lack access to this information. This indicates the need to make results more widely available and comprehensible, as well as to provide clear guidance on their interpretation and application in pedagogical practices, emphasizing the importance of training on this topic.

Regarding the objectives, while the majority correctly identified PISA's primary purpose, a significant portion mistakenly believes it aims to compare educational systems between countries. This highlights the complexity of understanding the program and the importance of more effectively communicating its emphasis on student assessment.

The importance of results in basic education generates divergent opinions, highlighting the complexity of educators' perceptions regarding external assessments. It is essential to discuss both the benefits and concerns associated with these results to promote a more comprehensive and informed understanding. One possible avenue for such discussions could be through training sessions, conferences, and seminars, which reiterate the importance of professional development for educators.

This study provided a sample of educators' perceptions of PISA and external assessments, emphasizing the ongoing need for awareness, accessibility, and clarification regarding the program's objectives. In the ever-evolving educational context, understanding educators' perceptions is crucial for developing policies and practices that promote quality education.

Additionally, it is suggested that future research explore more in-depth investigations into the perceptions of students, parents, and school administrators regarding PISA, as well as longitudinal studies to assess the impact of educators' perceptions on educational practices and student performance over time. Integrating these aspects can provide valuable insights for enhancing the educational system and guiding effective interventions in the future.

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