

Perception Gaps as Managerial Signals in School Governance: Evidence from a Six-Actor Survey

Ioan Marius Câmpean

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania

Abstract

School governance is increasingly understood as a participatory, multi-actor process, yet many institutional analyses still focus primarily on formal leadership structures and decision-making procedures. This study addresses this limitation by examining perception gaps among key educational stakeholders as diagnostic signals for school management and institutional development.

The research is based on doctoral fieldwork conducted in the Romanian pre-university education system. Data were collected through a structured survey administered to six actor groups involved in school life: principals, teachers, auxiliary and non-teaching staff, students, parents, and community actors. The analysis uses descriptive and comparative methods to examine perceptions of participation, communication, transparency, accountability, collaboration, school climate, and institutional quality.

The findings indicate that governance is perceived unevenly across actor groups, with relevant gaps between formal expectations and lived institutional experience. These differences suggest that perception gaps can function as managerial signals, helping school leaders identify areas where participation, communication, and stakeholder involvement require targeted improvement.

The study contributes to educational management research by proposing a six-actor diagnostic perspective for analyzing school governance and institutional quality.

Keywords: school governance; perception gaps; educational management; stakeholder participation; institutional quality