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**CONTEXTUALIZATION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN
DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN GENERAL
EDUCATION**

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance of the topic. The promotion and protection of children's rights constitute an essential indicator of democratic development and societal well-being. The evolution of the educational paradigm, driven by the recognition of child participation as a fundamental principle through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [6], has led to the abandonment of an adult-centered perspective and to the recognition of students as active agents in both the educational process and decision-making processes. Research demonstrates that authentic student participation in learning and decision-making processes contributes to increased school motivation, improved educational outcomes, and a stronger sense of belonging to the school community. Student involvement in institutional processes is not only an expression of a fundamental right but also an important mechanism for strengthening the school's social capital, fostering the development of a democratic organizational culture grounded in dialogue, responsibility, and meaningful participation.

Findings from empirical studies confirm that students who are actively involved in school life develop relevant social and civic competencies, demonstrate higher levels of motivation and belonging, and contribute to improving the quality of educational decision-making. At the same time, the absence of genuine participation mechanisms generates adverse effects, including reduced trust, passivity, and the perception that decisions are imposed, thereby undermining the democratic functioning of educational institutions.

Furthermore, empirical data available at the national level, including findings from the first National School Barometer, reveal a discrepancy between the normative framework and educational practice. Although the majority of respondents (90%) acknowledge the importance of participation in decision-making processes, the level of actual involvement remains limited, being predominantly consultative and sporadic [3]. This situation points to a gap between the existing regulatory framework and educational practices, resulting from the insufficient conceptualization and operationalization of student participation in decision-making processes.

Description of the research situation. An analysis of the specialized literature highlights the existence of well-established theoretical models of student participation developed at the international level, which define the levels, forms, and conditions of authentic participation. From a psycho-pedagogical perspective, J. Piaget [31], through his *theory of cognitive development*, emphasizes the progressive nature of students' autonomy, while L.Vygotsky, through *sociocultural theory* [35], underscores the role of social interaction in the development of competencies and the internalization of norms.

J. Dewey [22] provides the foundation for student participation through democratic pedagogy, further developed by M. Fielding [23] and A. Cook-Sather [17], who emphasize *the student's role as a partner in the educational process*. In this context, L. Lundy [30] proposes *an operational model of participation structured around four key elements: space, voice, audience, and influence*, which constitutes a relevant framework for implementing authentic student participation in decision-making processes.

From a *sociological perspective*, W. Corsaro [18], through the concept of “interpretive reproduction,” and R. Putnam [10], through the theory of social capital, conceptualizes participation as a mechanism of social integration and cooperation. Models of participation have been further developed by Sh. Arnstein [15] and R.A. Hart [25], who formulated *the ladder of participation*, later complemented by the typologies proposed by S. White [36] and H. Shier [34], which identify *different levels and conditions of student involvement*. Along the same line, an integrative approach is proposed by M. Jans and K. Backer [28] through *the triangular model of participation*, which explains participation as the interaction among challenge, capacity for action, and social connection.

Recent national scientific literature also contains relevant contributions addressing the impact of student participation on the educational environment and the quality of the teaching–learning process, as well as strategies for motivating students to become actively involved in institutional decision-making processes [1, 8, 13, 14]. Academic literature published in the Republic of Moldova and Romania further demonstrate that the implementation of student participation is strongly influenced by organizational culture and by the capacity of educational stakeholders to operationalize participatory principles. Nevertheless, existing research remains fragmented, and current approaches are predominantly descriptive or focused on policy development and isolated interventions [1, 7].

It is important to note that, although the Republic of Moldova has established a favorable legal framework for student participation—including the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova, which enshrines the principle of respecting students' right to express their opinions [5], the Education 2030 Development Strategy [9], and the Quality Standards for Primary and General Secondary Education Institutions from the Perspective of Child-Friendly Schools, approved by Order No. 970 of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova on 11 October 2013—a *deficit in the culture of student participation in decision-making processes continues to be observed* [13].

Studies conducted in the Republic of Moldova indicate that, although the regulatory framework promotes the democratic participation of students, its implementation remains fragmented and largely formal in nature. Student councils operate in most educational institutions; however, their involvement in decision-making processes is limited, and mechanisms for

consultation and monitoring are insufficiently developed [1]. Furthermore, a discrepancy is observed between teachers' perceptions of participation opportunities and students' actual experiences. Students frequently report predominantly formal consultations, limited opportunities to express their views, and inadequate integration of their feedback into institutional decision-making processes. Research also highlights the insufficient development of teachers' pedagogical competencies in the field of democratic participation, which constitutes a significant barrier to the authentic involvement of students in school governance and decision-making [7].

The analytical-synthetic examination of actual research, the international and national regulatory framework, and educational practice has enabled the identification of the following research contradictions:

a) *the conceptual–operational contradiction* between the multiplicity of concepts (“involvement,” “consultation,” “participation,” and “co-decision”) used in the specialized literature and the lack of a clear delimitation and a contextualized pedagogical model for general education;

b) *the normative–practical contradiction* between the formal recognition of the child's right to participate and the lack of an authentic participatory culture and effective pedagogical mechanisms within general education institutions;

c) *the axiological–institutional contradiction* between the educational ideals, values, and principles emphasized in the Education Code and the traditional hierarchical structure of general education institutions, which remains based on unilateral authority and decision-making centered on the manager, teacher, or adult;

d) *the competency–development contradiction*, reflected in the need to cultivate democratic competencies among students and the insufficient level of teachers' competencies in facilitating student participation in decision-making processes;

e) *the model–transfer contradiction* between internationally established participation models and the lack of a clearly defined framework for contextualizing student participation in decision-making processes within the general education system of the Republic of Moldova.

Thus, the insufficient theoretical, methodological, and operational substantiation of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education institutions limits its transformation from a normative principle into an authentic and functional educational practice. This situation gives rise to the following **research problem**: *What are the theoretical and methodological foundations of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education?*

The aim of the study is to provide a theoretical and methodological foundation for, and to develop, contextualize, and validate, a pedagogical model of student participation in democratic decision-making processes, applicable in general education

Research Objectives

1. Establishing the conceptual basis and scope of student participation in democratic decision-making processes through a critical analysis of relevant theoretical models.
2. Articulating the formative value of student participation and identifying the pedagogical, psychological, and social dimensions through which it contributes to personality development and the competencies for a democratic culture.
3. Analysis of the regulatory framework and international and national participatory practices, with a view to identifying contextual specifics, gaps, and the conditions necessary for contextualizing participation in general education in the Republic of Moldova.
4. Development and experimental validation of *the contextualized pedagogical model of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education*.
5. Clarification of the conditions and implementation mechanisms for the contextualized pedagogical model of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education.

Research hypothesis. Implementing a contextualized pedagogical model of student participation in democratic decision-making processes—grounded in values, principles, and clear operational conditions, and supported by teacher competency development—leads to increased authentic student participation in democratic decision-making within general education institutions.

Summary of the research methodology. To achieve the research objectives, both theoretical and empirical methods were employed. *Theoretical methods* included document analysis, scientific analysis and synthesis, generalization, systematization, deduction, abstraction, and theoretical modeling. *Empirical methods* included the pedagogical experiment, interviews, observation, surveys, and the processing and analysis of experimental data.

Scientific novelty and originality of the research reside in: establishing the conceptual basis for authentic student participation in democratic decision-making processes from pedagogical and contextual perspectives; establishing the mechanism for contextualizing participation models to the specific characteristics of general education in the Republic of Moldova; developing the contextualized pedagogical model, which integrates the foundations, values, principles, pedagogical and institutional conditions, professional competencies, and participation benchmarks into a unified system; and operationalizing the model through a participation framework and a construct for developing teachers' competencies, validated in practice within the scope of the research conducted.

The scientific problem solved. The scientific problem addressed in this research consists in the theoretical and methodological substantiation of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education through the development and validation of a contextualized pedagogical model based on a system of authentic values and principles,

accompanied by implementation standards and a teacher competency development program. This approach enabled the conceptual clarification and operationalization of student participation in school life, thereby providing a theoretical and methodological foundation for authentic student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education.

Theoretical significance of the research. The theoretical significance of the research lies in the advancement of the conceptual and methodological framework of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education. This contribution is achieved through the clarification and differentiation of the concept of *participation* in relation to related concepts such as *involvement*, *consultation*, and *co-decision*, as well as through the systematization of the psychological-pedagogical and sociological foundations of student participation in educational settings.

The theoretical contribution is further reflected in the axiological substantiation of student participation through the identification of core values and principles that support authentic student participation in school life, as well as in the development of an integrative conceptual framework for student participation in democratic decision-making processes.

Moreover, the study contributes to theory through the development of a contextualized pedagogical model of student participation in democratic decision-making processes. The model systematically integrates values, principles, pedagogical conditions, and student participation standards, thus providing a solid conceptual basis for further research in the fields of education for democratic citizenship and participatory management within educational institutions.

Through these contributions, the research offers a comprehensive theoretical and praxiological systematization of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education in the Republic of Moldova, providing a conceptual, methodological, and practical framework for the authentic participation of students in democratic decision-making processes.

Practical significance of the research. The practical significance of the study is reflected in the development of: facilitating conditions for student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education; student participation standards for democratic decision-making processes in general education; a framework of specific teacher competencies in the field of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education; and a professional development program aimed to strengthening teachers' competencies for fostering student participation in general education settings.

THESIS CONTENT

The **Introduction** outlines the relevance and significance of the research problem, identifies the research contradictions and the research problem, formulates the aim and objectives of the study, and presents its scientific novelty. It also substantiates the theoretical significance and practical value of the research, explains the validation and dissemination of the research findings, and provides an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter1. Theoretical Foundations of Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes in General Education conceptualizes the notion of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education; analyzes the principal theoretical models of student participation; substantiates the formative value of participation for students' personal development; and identifies the strategic directions for promoting student participation in democratic decision-making processes as reflected in European and national policy frameworks.

The theoretical analysis leads to the conclusion that student participation in democratic decision-making processes constitutes a complex and multidimensional phenomenon grounded not only in legal and axiological perspectives but also in pedagogical and psychosocial foundations. Within general education institutions, the decision-making process may be structured into several logical stages: problem identification, information collection and analysis, consultation with relevant stakeholders, formulation of alternative courses of action, deliberation on possible solutions, decision-making, implementation, monitoring of outcomes, and the provision of feedback. Such a structure enables student involvement at various stages of the process, including *identifying issues that concern them, expressing opinions, proposing solutions, participating in implementation, and evaluating the impact of decisions on school life.*

The analysis demonstrates that the *democratic character of school decision-making constitutes a central dimension of educational management* and reflects the degree of genuine participation of educational stakeholders in shaping the institutional, curricular, and relational environment of the school. *The democratic nature of school decision-making* is manifested through a set of fundamental principles that ensure *the authentic participation of educational actors*:

- *The principle of decision-making transparency* implies free access to relevant information concerning the subject of the decision, the procedures for its adoption, and the outcomes of its implementation. Transparency creates the necessary conditions for the informed and responsible student participation, preventing consultation from becoming a merely formal exercise with no real impact.
- *The principle of collective deliberation* entails the existence of institutional spaces in which students' views can be expressed, discussed, and incorporated into the decision-making process. Within democratic pedagogy, deliberation is understood as a process of negotiating

meanings and interests through which educational stakeholders contribute to the formulation of collective solutions [22, p. 87]. In this context, students' participation in deliberative processes represents an important formative experience for the development of critical thinking and social responsibility.

- *The principle of stakeholder representativeness* implies the participation of diverse groups of students regardless of their social status, academic performance, or cultural background. The scholarly literature indicates that participation restricted to high-achieving students or informal classroom leaders may distort decision-making processes and reduce their legitimacy [25, p. 10].
- *The principle of institutional mechanisms* enabling real influence over adopted decisions ensures that students are provided with genuine opportunities to affect decision-making outcomes, rather than merely expressing advisory opinions.
- *The principle of shared responsibility* implies the collective assumption of consequences arising from adopted decisions. Within the educational context, shared responsibility contributes to the development of a sense of belonging to the school community and strengthens a participatory organizational culture.
- *The principle of institutional feedback* enables students to understand how their opinions have been taken into account. The absence of feedback reduces trust in the institution and diminishes motivation for participation. Research on student participation indicates that decision-making processes in which students receive information about the outcomes of consultation contribute to the development of a sense of personal efficacy and to the consolidation of participatory culture [23, p. 37].

The application of these principles creates the necessary conditions for authentic student participation and prevents the transformation of consultation into a merely formal exercise with no real impact on decision-making processes.

Within this framework, *the democratic decision-making process in general education institutions* is defined as a deliberative and participatory process through which members of the school community contribute to the formulation, adoption, and implementation of decisions that influence the organization of school life, curriculum development, and the configuration of the educational climate, under conditions of transparency, representativeness, shared responsibility, and genuine student influence over decision outcomes. Thus, the democratization of school decision-making represents not only a condition of effective institutional governance but also an important mechanism for developing students' democratic citizenship competencies.

The conceptual distinctions between *involvement, consultation, participation, and co-decision* (Table 1.1) have enabled the clarification of distinct levels of student engagement in school life and

have highlighted that authentic participation entails not only the expression of opinions but also real influence over decision-making processes.

Table 1.1. Conceptual clarifications

(Source: own elaboration)

Term	Defining characteristics	Level of student influence
Implication	Engagement in school or extracurricular activities without guaranteed influence over institutional decisions. Participation is mainly executive and passive in nature.	Low level of influence
Consultation	Students' opinions are solicited on relevant issues, while final decisions remain the responsibility of adults. Opinion expression occurs within a formal process, without decision-making authority.	Limited influence
Participation	Active involvement of students in school decision-making and school life within a framework that requires responsibility and allows real influence over outcomes. This involves not only expressing opinions but also contributing effectively to decision-making.	Moderate to high influence
Co-decision	Effective sharing of decision-making responsibility between students and school decision-makers. This implies a formalized process in which students may have veto power or substantial real influence over outcomes.	High level of influence

In this context, *student participation* is defined as a continuous and gradual process through which students are involved in decision-making processes that concern them, depending on their age, level of maturity, and institutional context, within a framework that ensures the free expression of opinions, authentic listening, real influence on decisions, and the assumption of responsibility for their outcomes. This definition integrates the child rights dimension, the formative dimension of participation, and the democratic dimension of school governance.

The comparative analysis of *models and theories of student participation* has highlighted the multidimensional nature of this concept, simultaneously grounded in psychological, sociological, pedagogical, and democratic perspectives. Cognitive and sociocultural development theories explain participation as a progressive process of developing students' autonomy and social competencies, while civic and educational participation models emphasize the direct relationship between participation, power distribution, and the democratization of school governance. Contributions from contemporary authors in democratic pedagogy highlight the shift from formal participation to authentic participation, characterized by dialogue, co-responsibility, and real influence on educational decisions. Overall, these theoretical perspectives confirm that student participation constitutes not only a fundamental educational right but also an important formative mechanism for developing civic competencies and strengthening the democratic culture of the school institution, while also providing the conceptual framework necessary for grounding a pedagogical model of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education.

The analysis of the *formative dimension* of participation has shown that student participation plays a major formative role, as it contributes simultaneously to the development of autonomy, self-esteem, socio-emotional competencies, critical thinking, and civic competencies. It supports the transformation of the pedagogical relationship, improves the school climate, and provides students with concrete experiences of responsibility-taking and democratic influence. At the same time, the benefits of participation do not arise automatically from the mere existence of participatory structures but depend on the quality of the pedagogical and institutional framework within which it is implemented. This finding supports the need to develop a contextualized pedagogical model capable of transforming student participation from a formal practice into an authentic formative experience.

The analysis of participation models has revealed their convergence towards the idea that authentic participation presupposes an institutional framework open to dialogue, access to information, real influence over decisions, and shared responsibility between students and adults.

Furthermore, *the analysis of the European and national framework* has confirmed the existence of substantial normative support for promoting student participation in democratic decision-making processes. International literature, as well as national provisions, reveal a clear consensus: student participation in schools represents both a fundamental right and a pedagogical necessity. Authentic student involvement contributes to democratic learning, strengthens protective factors, and fosters more inclusive and responsive educational institutions. However, a significant gap has been identified between normative provisions and actual educational practice, caused by the lack of operational pedagogical mechanisms, implementation standards, and tools for monitoring student participation in general education.

Overall, it is concluded that although *student participation is supported by legal and theoretical frameworks*, it remains insufficiently implemented in practice, being often limited to consultative or formal forms. The absence of a pedagogical model capable of ensuring the transition from declarative to authentic participation represents a major gap in the educational field, thereby justifying the need for the development of a grounded pedagogical model.

Chapter 2, *The Contextualized Pedagogical Model of Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes in General Education*, substantiates the axiological framework of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education; the principles governing student participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education; and synthesizes the conditions for student participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education.

From an axiological perspective, the analysis of the *National Curriculum Framework (NCF)* has enabled the identification of values that support student participation in democratic decision-

making processes, structured into four categories: *personal values, social values, national values, and universal human values*.

For ensuring the scientific rigor and epistemological relevance of the research design, the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)*, developed by the Council of Europe (2018), was analyzed. This framework provides a systemic conceptualization of democratic competence, structured around four fundamental dimensions: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. The relevance of applying this framework to the analysis of student participation lies in the fact that values are placed at the core of democratic competence, serving as the guiding foundation for all other dimensions.

The RFCDC identifies three categories of core values for democratic culture: *valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity; and valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality, and the rule of law*. These values are directly linked to student participation in decision-making processes, as they legitimize students' right to be involved in decision-making, support respect for diversity of opinions, and underpin the deliberative principles of democratic processes.

It was further established that both the RFCDC and the *National Curriculum Framework (NCF)* operate within an axiological paradigm centered on the formation of the democratic citizen. The RFCDC structures democratic competence around the following core values: *human dignity and human rights; cultural diversity; democracy; justice; fairness; equality; and the rule of law*. These values are considered guiding principles of democratic action, without which competencies cannot be oriented toward democratic engagement. Similarly, the NCF promotes a comparable value system: *dignity, freedom, responsibility, integrity, democracy, fairness, tolerance, and civic engagement*. There is thus a clear axiological alignment between the two frameworks—the NCF is both compatible and coherent with the European paradigm of democratic competences.

The comparative analysis enabled the identification of shared values between the RFCDC and the NCF:

- (a) *fundamental democratic values*: human dignity; human rights; freedom; democracy; rule of law—explicitly present in the RFCDC and reflected in the NCF through dignity, freedom, and democracy;
- (b) *values of equity and social justice*: fairness; equality; justice—explicitly present in the NCF through fairness and equality (including gender equality);
- (c) *values related to otherness and diversity*: respect for diversity; tolerance; intercultural dialogue—reflected in the NCF through tolerance and cultural diversity;
- (d) *values of civic participation*: responsibility; civic spirit; democratic participation—reflected in the NCF through responsibility and civic engagement;

(e) *values of moral integrity*: respect; integrity; responsibility—all explicitly present in the NCF through integrity and responsibility.

Through a convergent analysis, an axiological core specific to student participation in democratic school processes was identified:

1. *Student dignity (central value)* legitimizes the student as a subject of decision-making, not merely as a beneficiary. It is observed that the RFCDC includes the valorization of human dignity, while the NCF refers explicitly to dignity.
2. *Freedom of expression and choice* enables the articulation of opinions and initiative. The RFCDC includes freedom and rights related to the valorization of human dignity, while the NCF explicitly refers to freedom.
1. *Responsibility* transforms participation into co-decision and accountability. The RFCDC emphasizes civic responsibility, while the NCF highlights responsibility.
2. *Democracy* defines participation as a deliberative and collective process. The RFCDC refers to democracy and equal participation, while the NCF explicitly includes democracy.
3. *Fairness and equality* ensure equal access to participation. The RFCDC includes equality and fairness, while the NCF emphasizes fairness.
4. *Respect and tolerance* support democratic dialogue and pluralism of opinions. The RFCDC emphasizes respect for diversity, while the NCF highlights tolerance.
5. *Integrity* ensures the authenticity of participation. The RFCDC stresses value coherence, while the NCF explicitly includes integrity.
6. *Civic activism/civic spirit* transforms participation into action and genuine engagement. The RFCDC emphasizes active participation, while the NCF highlights civic activism.

These values not only legitimize student participation but also condition its authenticity, transforming it from a formal exercise into a genuine mechanism of co-decision and democratic competence development. Collectively, these values constitute the axiological foundation of the pedagogical model, as they support the transition from formal participation to authentic participation in school life.

The analysis of *educational principles* enshrined in the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova highlights that student participation in democratic decision-making processes does not represent an ancillary element of school organization, but rather a structural dimension of democratic educational governance. Principles such as equity, quality, relevance, learner-centered education, respect for the right to opinion, transparency, and educational partnership constitute the normative framework that legitimizes and supports the involvement of students as active actors in school life.

It has been analytically demonstrated that the relationship between values and principles is one of structural interdependence: values constitute the axiological foundation that orients the meaning and purpose of action, while principles represent the normative and operational translation of these values into concrete rules and directions for action.

The specific principles of student participation in democratic decision-making processes are derived from fundamental participatory values and constitute normative benchmarks that guide the pedagogical organization of authentic participation within educational institutions, ensuring the transition from formal participation to authentic student engagement in decision-making processes. These principles are as follows:

- *The principle of respect for student dignity:* student participation in decision-making processes presupposes the recognition of students as rights-holders and the legitimacy of their involvement in decisions concerning school life. Students are treated as partners in the educational process, not merely as recipients of decisions.

- *The principle of authentic listening:* student participation entails not only the expression of opinions but also their integration into deliberative processes and into decisions adopted at the institutional level. Students' opinions are taken into account and may influence the final decision.

- *The principle of shared responsibility:* student participation involves the assumption of responsibility for jointly adopted decisions, based on a transparent deliberative process between students and teachers. Students are involved not only in expressing opinions but also in the implementation of decisions.

- *The principle of mutual trust:* authentic participation takes place within an institutional climate based on cooperation, mutual respect, and openness between students and teachers. Teachers create a safe environment for the expression of opinions and the assumption of initiatives.

- *The principle of decision-making autonomy:* student participation presupposes the possibility for students to influence decisions and initiate actions within the school governance process. Students are provided with real spaces for initiative and co-decision.

- *The principle of equity in participation:* student participation in democratic decision-making processes requires ensuring equal and equitable access for all students to participation mechanisms, regardless of social status, gender, academic performance, cultural background, or other individual characteristics. This principle implies the elimination of barriers to participation and the creation of conditions that enable the authentic expression of all voices. Equity does not refer merely to formal equality but involves adapting the educational context so that each student has real opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes and to influence decisions that concern them.

- *The principle of integrity of the decision-making process:* student participation in democratic decision-making processes entails adherence to ethical standards and a transparent

framework in which decisions are made fairly, responsibly, and consistently. This principle implies coherence between promoted values and institutional practices, the avoidance of formalism or simulated participation, and ensuring that students' opinions are genuinely taken into account. The integrity of the decision-making process strengthens students' trust in the school institution and confers legitimacy on participation, transforming it into an authentic and responsible endeavor.

By correlating these principles with theoretical models of participation, an integrated vision of student participation has been outlined, understood as a pedagogical, democratic, and social mechanism that contributes both to improving the quality of institutional decision-making and to the development of civic competencies, responsibility, and a democratic culture within the school community. Thus, these principles establish the conceptual and normative framework necessary for the implementation of a pedagogical model of student participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education.

At the operational level, *the basic conditions that support student involvement in democratic decision-making processes* have also been identified, grouped into axiological, pedagogical, institutional, and professional dimensions. It has been demonstrated that student participation becomes functional only in the presence of an explicit regulatory framework, an institutional culture based on trust, dialogue, and mutual respect, legitimate and functional participatory structures, adequate resources, and a teaching staff prepared to facilitate authentic participatory processes. In this context, it has been argued that the absence of these conditions transforms participation into an occasional exercise, dependent on adult will and lacking real formative impact.

An important outcome of this chapter is the development of *Standards for Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes in General Education*, structured into key domains: management and democratic governance; institutional capacity and professional development; curriculum and educational process; monitoring; evaluation; and continuous improvement. These standards serve as a reference framework for the strategic development of the school institution, for planning and evaluating student participation, for operationalizing institutional policy, and for designing training programs for school leaders and teachers.

Based on the consolidated analysis of theoretical and normative foundations, and grounded in the substantiation of the system of values, principles, and conditions of student participation in democratic decision-making processes, a *Contextualized Pedagogical Model of Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes in General Education* has been developed.

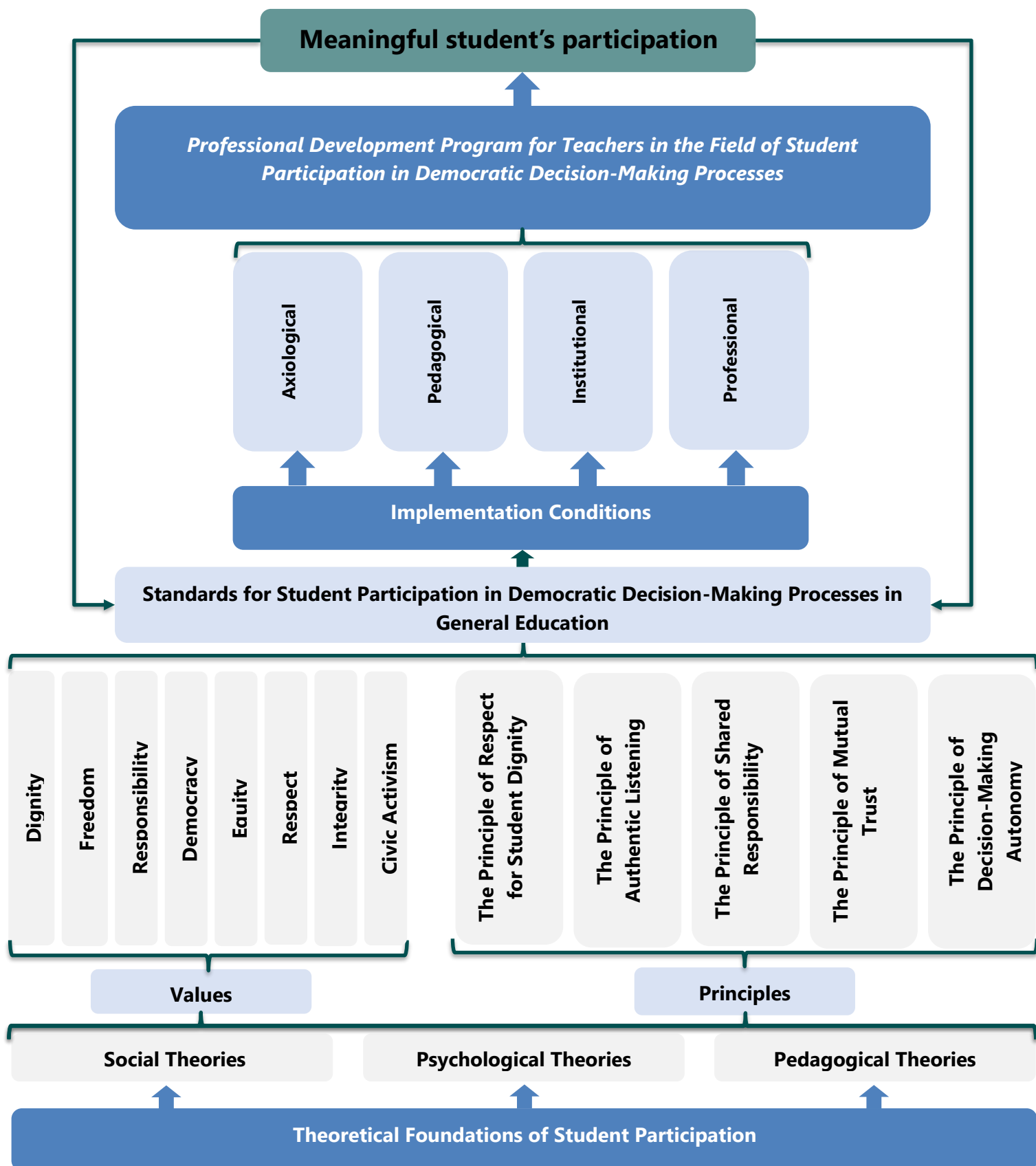


Fig. 1.1. The Contextualized Model of Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes in General Education

The contextualized pedagogical model of student participation in democratic processes represents an integrated system, grounded in axiological foundations and operationally structured,

which ensures the transition from formal participation to authentic participation. This transition is achieved through the systemic and coherent alignment of values and principles, taking into account the implementation conditions within the national educational practice, and adhering to a clearly defined system of standards.

Chapter 3 presents *the experimental research design in the field of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education*.

The methodological dimension of the *Contextualized Pedagogical Model of Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes in General Education* is represented by the *Professional Development Program for Teachers in the Field of Authentic Student Participation in Institutional Decision-Making Processes*. The program aims at creating and elucidating meaningful situations of student participation in decision-making processes—considered a defining element of teachers’ competence in the field of student participation in democratic processes within educational institutions.

In this context, the pedagogical experiment pursued, as its main objective, the validation of the *Teacher Professional Development Program in the Field of Authentic Student Participation in Institutional Decision-Making Processes*, as an integral component of the pedagogical model.

In accordance with the aim of the research, the following **objectives** of the pedagogical experiment were established:

1. determining the opinions/perceptions of educational actors (teachers, managers, students, parents) regarding student participation in democratic decision-making processes within educational institutions;
2. determining the initial level of development of teachers’ competencies in the field of student participation in democratic decision-making processes within school settings (diagnostic phase of the experiment);
3. developing teachers’ competencies in the curricular context regarding student participation in democratic decision-making processes within schools (*formative stage, in accordance with the Model*);
4. establishing the post-training level of teachers’ competencies in the field of student participation in democratic decision-making processes (control/post-intervention stage);
5. determining students’ opinions/perceptions regarding participation in democratic decision-making processes within educational institutions (post-experimental stage).

The pedagogical experiment comprised three phases: the diagnostic phase, the formative phase, and the control phase. The experiment was designed and implemented based on a quasi-experimental design, in accordance with recommendations from international literature on educational research.

It is worth noting that the pedagogical experiment was a **natural** experiment, involving research activities conducted within the real-life educational environment; **specific**, it was implemented during four-month continuous professional development training stages; from a temporal perspective, it represents a **short-term longitudinal experiment**; from the sampling technique perspective, it follows **an intrasubject experimental design**, involving the tracking of the same participants across all stages of the pedagogical experiment and the analysis of their developmental trajectories.

The pedagogical experiment was systematically organized and conducted by the researcher in three educational institutions in Călărași District: “Vasile Alecsandri” Theoretical High School (Public Institution) in the town of Călărași; “Mihai Eminescu” Theoretical High School (Public Institution) in the village of Sipoteni; and “Mihail Sadoveanu” Theoretical High School (Public Institution) in the town of Călărași.

The diagnostic stage aimed to *determine the opinions/perceptions of educational actors (teachers, managers, students, parents) regarding student participation in democratic decision-making processes within the educational institution*. At this stage, 879 participants were involved: 102 teachers from five educational institutions, 361 students, and 416 parents or guardians. Data collection was carried out using separate questionnaires for each category of participants. Thus, the results regarding students’ perceptions of their participation in school life are presented in Fig. 1.2.

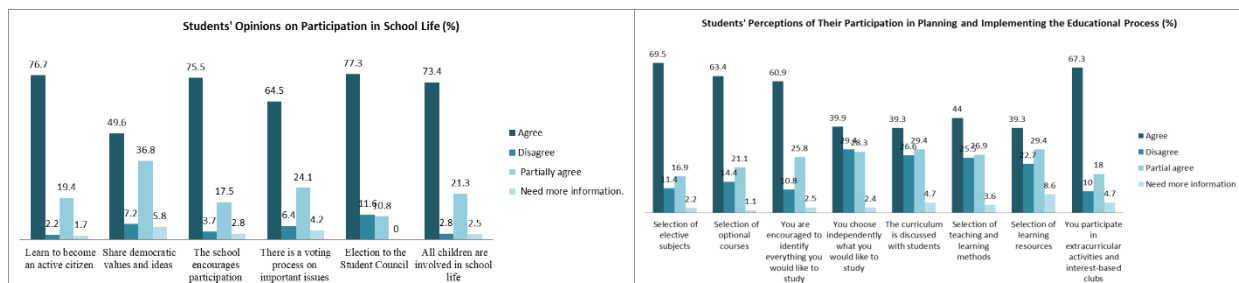


Fig. 1.2. Students’ Perceptions of Their Participation in School Life

Teachers’ perceptions regarding student participation in decision-making processes and school life are presented in Figure 1.3. The results indicate a predominantly positive assessment of the level of student involvement.

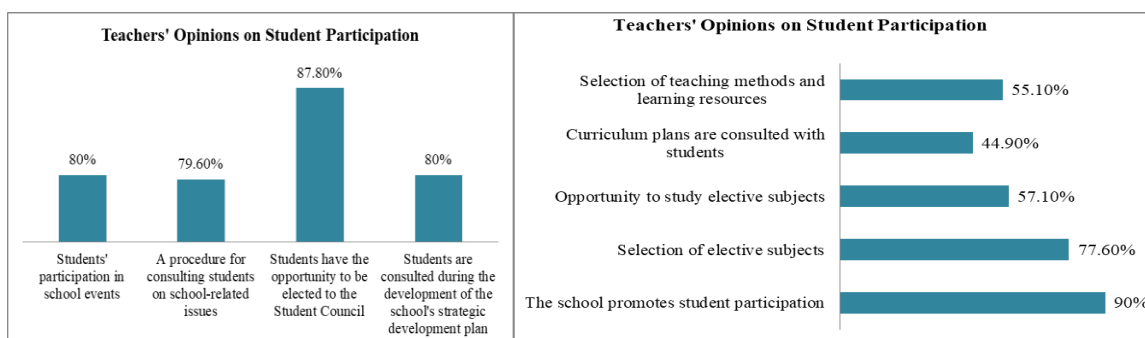


Fig. 1.3. Teachers’ Perceptions of Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes

The objective of the diagnostic experiment was to determine the initial level of specific competencies of teachers in the field of student participation in democratic decision-making processes (ascertaining stage). During this stage, 126 teachers were involved and participated in a questionnaire-based assessment focused on evaluating their competencies in relation to student participation in school life and activities.

The evaluation criteria, indicators, and descriptors are presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2. Reference Framework for Assessing the Initial Level of Competence in the Field of Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes in General Education

Evaluation Objectives	Evaluation indicators <i>Participants of the experiment:</i>	Evaluations descriptors
<i>Competence in understanding and appreciating the concept of children's participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education</i>	1. Define the concept of "participation," demonstrating an appreciation of its theoretical foundations. 2. Explain the role of participation in students' personal and educational development. 3. Explain the benefits of students' participation in decision-making processes within general education.	1.Depth of Response 2.Logical Structure
<i>Competence in the analysis and critical reflection on children's participation in decision-making processes within general education.</i>	2. Identify institutional and cultural barriers to students' participation in democratic decision-making processes. 3. Conduct a SWOT analysis based on the standards of children's participation in decision-making processes;	3.Consistency 4.Coherence of the Actions Presented in the Response
<i>Competence in the practical application of the principles of children's participation in decision-making processes</i>	4. Proposes appropriate strategies and methods for children's participation in decision-making processes at school. 5.Recommend innovative ways of providing students with opportunities for decision-making and initiative.	5.Relevance of the Response
<i>Competence in the evaluation and monitoring of students' participation in decision-making processes</i>	6. Evaluate the level of students' involvement in curricular and extracurricular activities, as well as in decision-making processes. 7. Formulate recommendations for improving students' participation in decision-making processes.	6.Originality of Ideas

The quality of the responses was assessed using the following ratings: **very high, medium, and below average**. The evaluation levels in percentages were defined as follows: a response that is correct, logical, consistent, relevant, and original – **100%**; a response of medium quality, with some inaccuracies, less logical and consistent, and of limited relevance and originality – **50%**; and a response below average in terms of correctness, logic, consistency, relevance, and originality – **25%**.

By analyzing the responses provided by the participants involved in the experiment, the distribution across levels was carried out according to the indicators, through the application of the evaluation percentages. The results showed the following quality levels: **Level I (high); Level II (medium); Level III (below average)**.

Table 1.3 presents the summary results of the diagnostic experiment.

Table 1.3. Summary Results of the Diagnostic Phase of the Experiment

Competence	Level of Formation (diagnostic phase)		
	N I (high)	N II (medium)	N III (Below medium level)
<i>Competence in understanding and appreciating the concept of children's participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education</i>	39%	15%	46%
<i>Competence in the analysis and critical reflection on children's participation in decision-making processes within general education.</i>	27%	46%	27%
<i>Competence in the practical application of the principles of children's participation in decision-making processes</i>	19%	46%	35%
<i>Competence in the evaluation and monitoring of students' participation in decision-making processes</i>	19%	39%	42%

Based on the synthesized results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a) A proportion of the teachers (approximately one quarter of the respondents) demonstrate a well-developed understanding and application of the concept of students' participation in decision-making processes. These teachers use appropriate professional terminology, establish connections with different dimensions (personal, educational, and social), and propose concrete working strategies such as collaborative projects, the Students' Council, debates, workshops, and participatory assessment methods. Thus, they can be considered key resources within the school, capable of providing a model of good practice in the field of children's democratic participation.
- b) Approximately half of the respondents are positioned at a satisfactory level, demonstrating a partial understanding of the importance of students' participation. Their responses are general and insufficiently nuanced, focusing on notions such as "active involvement," "consultation of students' opinions," or "communication," without detailing clear mechanisms of participation. In practical terms, their proposals are limited to extracurricular activities or general discussions, without the use of systematic tools and strategies for the democratization of school life. The responses of several participants in the experiment indicate uncertainty regarding various aspects of the competence to involve students in institutional decision-making processes; many answers show that respondents have limited knowledge of the field and do not fully address the requirements specified in the questionnaire. Some respondents manage to provide appropriate answers based on the meaning of the concepts under discussion, which reflects their general cognitive abilities that facilitate the identification of suitable responses, sometimes unconsciously.

At the same time, superficiality is observed in responses to more complex tasks; cognitive dissonance among participants is evident; and in some cases, respondents do not demonstrate

responsibility towards the answers provided. Therefore, the results suggest that this issue should be addressed within the process of teachers' professional training. The relevance of continuous professional development for teachers in the field of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education is thus clearly justified.

c) A significant group (approximately one quarter of the respondents) shows major gaps in understanding the concept of "participation" and reflects a superficial and formal approach. Their responses are vague and simplified ("involvement," "communication," "ability to decide"), and in practice they rely on external motivational means (grades, diplomas, gifts), which do not correspond to the standards of democratic participation. These teachers demonstrate a lack of both theoretical and practical coherence, which limits their capacity to meaningfully involve students in school life. Accordingly, this category of teachers requires additional training in order to move from general perceptions to operational competencies in this field.

It is evident that teachers' behaviour and attitudes directly shape a participatory organizational culture. Acknowledging this decisive influence, and based on its theoretical grounding in relevant conceptual frameworks, the findings of a diagnostic assessment of the current situation within the context of educational policies and practices, as well as the conclusions of the exploratory experiment, *the Programme for the Development of Teachers' Competence in the Field of Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes* was developed, aiming at enhancing teachers' competence in promoting student participation in decision-making processes.

The Programme for the Development of Teachers' Competence in the Field of Student Participation provided the foundation for the *Action Framework*, ensuring coherence between the theoretical and applied dimensions through the systematic translation of principles into concrete activities. The Action Framework outlines the logic of developing teachers' competence in student participation in democratic decision-making processes by specifying content units, operational objectives for each unit, training tasks, as well as the methods, techniques, and resources required for their implementation.

The formative approach was implemented in compliance with the following methodological principles: *analysis of participants' training needs*, integration and fulfilment of these needs within training activities; creation and maintenance of a *respectful climate* between the trainer and participants, as well as among all participants; consideration of participants' prior experience; substantiation and assurance of the specific *applicability* of the content; involvement of participants in solving relevant problems; guidance of participants to *act and reflect* on outcomes; incorporation of critical thinking and use of multiple perspectives; viewing *learning as a collaborative effort* between the trainer and participants; and ensuring a basis for *self-development* and lifelong learning (through independent research projects).

In this regard, each participant identified a problem within their professional development context, formulated objectives for professional self-development, and independently investigated the identified problem. The results of the individual research were presented in the form of a project, which was defended by each teacher during a follow-up session.

For the control phase of the pedagogical experiment, **the objective** was to determine the level of development of teachers' competence in student participation in democratic decision-making processes within the school (post-training stage), as a result of the implemented *training programme*, using the same evaluation framework applied in the diagnostic stage, which *allowed for a comparative analysis of the evolution of the indicators*.

A comparative analysis of the data over time (pre- and post-training) regarding the sample of 126 teachers demonstrates a significant positive impact of the training program. The number of teachers falling into High Level I increased from 33 (26.0%) at the pre-training stage to 49 (39%) at the post-training stage. At Medium Level II, the number of respondents also saw an increase, rising from 46 (37%) to 58 (46%). Conversely, a substantial reduction was observed at Below-Medium Level III—dropping from 47 (37%) to just 19 (15%) teachers—thereby confirming the enhanced effectiveness of skills related to facilitating student participation in democratic decision-making processes.

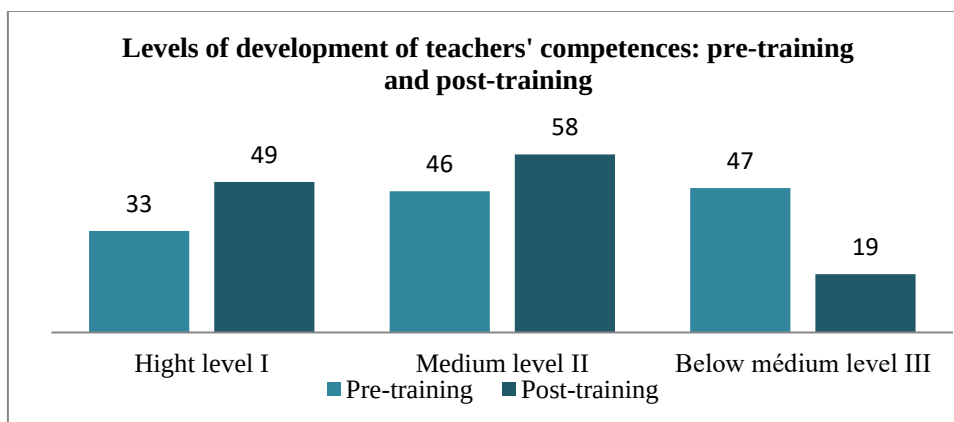


Fig.1.4. Levels of Development of Teachers' Competences: Pre-Training and Post-Training

To determine the formative value and impact of the teacher training program—based on the framework for developing specific teacher competencies regarding student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education—we conducted a post-training experimental study involving students from three educational institutions in the Călărași district.

The objective was to determine students' opinions/perceptions regarding student participation in democratic decision-making processes within the educational institution, following the implementation of the teacher training programme. At this stage, 109 students from grades V to XII participated, of whom 45% were girls and 55% were boys.

The data confirm that the teacher training programme demonstrates:

- *Positive impact on students' civic development.* The data indicate a significant increase in students' perceptions of learning active citizenship and encouragement to participate in school life (from approximately 76% to 88%), confirming that teacher training directly influenced how students perceive the school's role in fostering their democratic engagement.
- *Strengthening of democratic values and practices.* The increase in the percentages for statements related to sharing democratic ideas (49.6% → 72%) and collective involvement in decision-making (64.3% → 77.7%) demonstrates a more effective integration of participation and inclusion principles into school life. Întărirea valorilor și a practicilor democratice.
- *Enhanced sense of equity and belonging.* Students reported improved perceptions of equal opportunities to be elected to the Student Council (77.3% → 82.3%) and a stronger perception of joint efforts by the school, teachers, and parents to involve children (73.4% → 83.4%). This suggests that the programme strengthened a collaborative and participatory institutional culture.
- *Increased student autonomy in curricular choices.* The proportion of students who feel encouraged to identify what they wish to study increased noticeably (by approximately ten percentage points). The most significant improvement was recorded for the item "You are encouraged to identify everything you would like to study" (60.9% → 85.8%), indicating a substantial shift in teachers' guidance and educational support practices.
- *Persistence of certain gaps in genuine student autonomy.* Despite the progress achieved, student involvement in selecting elective subjects and choosing learning methods remains limited. This suggests that student autonomy is still largely perceived within predefined options, requiring further targeted interventions.

Overall, the programme had a clear and substantial formative impact on students' perceptions of active citizenship, participation, and equity. However, student involvement in curricular decision-making and genuine autonomy in the learning process remain key challenges that should be addressed in future stages of programme development. Post-experimental questionnaires addressed to caregivers and parents were not administered due to time constraints, and this component was not included as an objective of the proposed experiment.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The references to the valorization of the problem stated in the title, its theoretical and methodological complexity, the engagement of appropriate benchmarks for experimental validation, the provision of authentic and relevant theoretical and methodological frameworks for *student participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education*, as well as the internal and external logic of the investigations, have led us to the following conclusions:

1. It has been analytically demonstrated that student participation in democratic decision-making processes is a complex, multidimensional concept grounded in legal, axiological, pedagogical, and psychosocial frameworks. The recognition of student participation as a fundamental right has been confirmed as an axiom, and the direct link between participation, personality development, civic competence formation, and the consolidation of a democratic culture within educational institutions has been highlighted.
2. The clarification of conceptual distinctions between *involvement*, *consultation*, *participation*, and *co-decision* has enabled the identification of distinct levels of student engagement in school life and has shown that authentic participation involves not only the expression of opinions but also real influence on decision-making processes.
3. Based on the theoretical study, the democratic decision-making process in general education institutions has been defined as a deliberative and participatory process through which members of the school community contribute to the formulation, adoption, and implementation of decisions that influence school organisation, curriculum development, and the shaping of the educational climate, under conditions of transparency, representativeness, shared responsibility, and genuine student influence over decision outcomes.
4. The examination of the formative value of participation has demonstrated that it is a key factor in the development of students' autonomy, responsibility, social competences, self-esteem, and civic identity. At the same time, the analysis has revealed that the formative effects of participation are not inherent to participation itself, but depend on the quality of the teaching staff, institutional culture, and teachers' competence in facilitating authentic participatory processes.
5. The results of the theoretical and methodological analysis have shown that authentic student participation cannot be reduced to formal consultation mechanisms, but requires a coherent system of values, principles, conditions, and implementation standards.
6. From an axiological perspective, the core values underpinning student participation in democratic decision-making processes have been substantiated: student dignity as a rights-bearing subject; recognition and authentic listening to students' voices; shared responsibility; trust as the foundation of democratic cooperation; and student autonomy in expressing and assuming decisions. These values constitute the axiological foundation of the developed pedagogical model.
7. From a normative perspective, it has been demonstrated that student participation in democratic decision-making processes represents a structural dimension of democratic

educational governance, grounded in principles such as equity, quality, relevance, learner-centred education, respect for the right to voice opinions, transparency, and educational partnership.

8. From an operational perspective, the basic conditions supporting student involvement in democratic decision-making processes have been identified, grouped into axiological, pedagogical, institutional, and professional dimensions.
9. The development of *Standards for Student Participation in Democratic Decision-Making Processes in General Education* constitutes a valuable reference framework for the strategic development of schools, for planning and evaluating student participation, for operationalising institutional policy in this field, and for designing training programmes for school leaders and teachers.
10. *The contextualised pedagogical model of student participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education* represents an integrated system, axiologically grounded and operationally structured, which ensures the transition from formal participation to authentic participation through the coherent alignment of values, principles, conditions, and implementation standards in educational practice.
11. The pedagogical experiment had as its main criterion *the development of teachers' competence in the field of student participation in democratic decision-making processes*. The results obtained in the post-training phase demonstrated the effectiveness of the continuous training programme, confirming that it met teachers' professional needs and achieved the intended training objectives. Teachers showed a deeper understanding of the concept of "participation", valued its benefits, and began to create more favourable contexts for student participation. At the same time, the research highlighted that student participation in curricular decision-making and genuine autonomy in the learning process remain important challenges that require further and expanded formative and institutional efforts.

Based on the results obtained within the research, a set of relevant recommendations is outlined for the development and improvement of existing practices:

1) Recommendations for the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova

1. The integration of the topic of student participation into initial and continuous teacher training programmes, as well as into school leadership training programmes, with an emphasis on developing competencies in facilitating participatory processes and managing democratic dialogue within the educational environment.
2. The support of initiatives aimed at developing a participatory culture in schools through national programmes, educational projects, and partnerships with international organisations and civil society organisations that promote democratic education.

2) Recommendations for general education institutions

1. The institutionalisation of student participation in school management through the integration of participation objectives into the institution's strategic documents, the strengthening of democratic structures for student representation and consultation, and the

development of an educational climate based on dialogue, transparency, mutual respect, and educational partnership.

2. The strengthening of participation mechanisms and student involvement monitoring systems through the diversification of consultation and feedback methods, the use of accessible participatory tools, and the systematic evaluation of the level of student engagement, with a view to continuously improving decision-making processes and participatory practices.

3) Recommendations for school managers

1. The promotion of a democratic organizational culture and a participatory institutional framework through the recognition of students as partners in the educational process, the establishment of transparent procedures for consultation, deliberation, and co-decision, as well as the development of a continuous dialogue between students, teachers, and school leadership.
2. The strengthening of institutional capacity for implementing student participation by developing teachers' competencies in democratic participation, ensuring transparency in decision-making processes, and systematically capitalizing on students' opinions and proposals through feedback and communication mechanisms.

4) Recommendations for teachers

1. The use of participatory pedagogical approaches in the educational process through the integration of interactive teaching–learning strategies, the involvement of students in assessing and reflecting on their own learning, and the creation of a safe educational environment based on dialogue, mutual respect, and the free expression of opinions.
2. The development of students' civic and social competences through strengthening educational partnerships and cross-sectoral collaboration, promoting students' active involvement in curricular and extracurricular activities, as well as cooperation between educational institutions, families, and social and health services to support authentic participation in decision-making processes.

The implementation of these recommendations will contribute to the development of a participatory educational culture, in which students are recognized as partners in the educational process and as actors in the democratic governance of the school.

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ANNOTATION

Semeniuc Natalia. Contextualizing student participation in democratic decision-making processes in mainstream education. Doctoral thesis in educational sciences, Chişinău, 2026.

Thesis structure: Introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 156 titles, 143 pages of main text, 19 figures, 12 tables. The achieved results are published in 11 scientific papers.

Keywords: participation, involvement, co-decision, democratic decision-making process, participation structures, values of participation, principles of participation, contextualized pedagogical model.

The aim of the study: to provide the theoretical and methodological substantiation, development, and operationalization of the Contextualized Pedagogical Model for student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education, and to praxiologically verify the functionality of its components through the development of teacher competencies and the examination of shifts in student participation indicators.

Research objectives: conceptualizing the concept of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes through a comparative analysis of theoretical models; elucidating the concept of democratic school decision-making and identifying forms of students' participation in general education; substantiating the formative value of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes from the perspective of students' personality development; analyzing the national and international normative framework and educational practices regarding students' participation in democratic decision-making processes; developing and experimentally validating the contextualized pedagogical model of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education; clarifying the conditions and mechanisms for the implementation of the contextualized pedagogical model of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education.

The scientific novelty and originality lie in: providing a pedagogical and contextual foundation for the concept of *authentic student participation* in democratic decision-making processes; substantiating a mechanism for contextualizing participation models to the specific characteristics of general education in the Republic of Moldova; developing the *Contextualized Pedagogical Model*, which integrates into a coherent system the foundations, values, principles, pedagogical and institutional conditions, professional competencies, and quality benchmarks of student participation; and operationalizing the model through a *participation framework* and a *teacher competency development construct*, both of which were empirically validated in the context of the conducted research.

The addressed scientific problem consists in the theoretical-methodological and operational substantiation of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education through the development and validation of a contextualized pedagogical model based on a system of authentic values and principles, accompanied by implementation standards and a teacher competency development program. This approach enabled the conceptual clarification and operationalization of students' participation in school life, ensuring a theoretical and methodological foundation for authentic student participation in democratic decision-making processes within general education.

Theoretical significance: 1) the development of the conceptual and methodological framework of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education by clarifying and delimiting the concept of participation in relation to related concepts (involvement, consultation, co-decision), as well as by systematizing the psychological-pedagogical, sociological, and axiological foundations of students' participation in the educational environment; 2) the axiological and principled substantiation of students' participation through the identification of core values and principles that support authentic student participation in school life, as well as through the development of an integrative conceptual framework of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes; 3) the development of the pedagogical model of students' participation in democratic decision-making processes, which systemically integrates the values, principles, pedagogical conditions, and standards of student participation.

Applied value is demonstrated by: 1) the identification of favorable conditions for students' involvement in democratic decision-making processes in general education; 2) the development of *Standards of Student Participation* in democratic decision-making processes in general education; 3) the system of specific competencies of teachers in promoting students' participation in democratic decision-making processes in general education; 4) the professional development program aimed at strengthening teachers' competencies in the field of student participation in general education.

Implementation of scientific results: The theoretical-praxeological results of the research were implemented through training sessions conducted with teachers, international and national conferences, scientific-methodological seminars, scientific publications in national specialty journals, and through the publication of a practical guide on the establishment of Advisory Boards of Children as a participation platform in the social field.

ADNOTARE

Semeniuc Natalia. Contextualizarea participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice în învățământul general. Teză de doctor în științe ale educației, Chișinău, 2026.

Structura tezei: Introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 156 de titluri, 139 pagini de text de bază, 19 figuri, 12 tabele. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 11 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: participare, implicare, co-decizie, proces decizional democratic, structuri de participare, valorile participării, principiile participării, condițiile participării, model pedagogic al participării elevilor.

Scopul lucrării: fundamentarea teoretico-metodologică, elaborarea și operaționalizarea Modelului pedagogic contextualizat al participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice din învățământul general și în verificarea praxiologică a funcționalității componentelor sale, prin dezvoltarea competențelor cadrelor didactice și examinarea modificărilor asociate indicatorilor participării elevilor.

Obiectivele cercetării: esențializarea conceptului de *participare* a elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice prin analiza comparativă a modelelor teoretice; elucidarea conceptului de *proces decizional democratic* școlar și identificarea formelor de participare a elevilor în învățământul general; argumentarea valorii formative a participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice din perspectiva dezvoltării personalității elevilor; analiza cadrului normativ național și internațional și a practicilor educaționale privind participarea elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice; elaborarea și validarea experimentală a *Modelului pedagogic contextualizat al participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice din învățământul general*; elucidarea condițiilor de implementare a *Modelului pedagogic contextualizat al participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice din învățământul general*.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică rezidă în: fundamentarea conceptului de participare autentică a elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice din perspectivă pedagogică și contextuală; fundamentarea mecanismului de contextualizare a modelelor participării la particularitățile învățământului general din Republica Moldova; elaborarea Modelului pedagogic contextualizat, care articulează într-un sistem unitar fundamentele, valorile, principiile, condițiile pedagogice și instituționale, competențele profesionale și reperele de calitate ale participării; precum și operaționalizarea modelului printr-un referențial al participării și un construct de dezvoltare a competențelor cadrelor didactice, verificate praxiologic în condițiile cercetării realizate.

Problema științifică soluționată constă în fundamentarea teoretico-metodologică și operațională a participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice din învățământul general, prin elaborarea și validarea modelului pedagogic contextualizat, bazat pe un sistem de valori și principii autentice, însoțit de standarde de implementare și de un program de formare a competențelor cadrelor didactice, fapt care a permis clarificarea conceptuală și operaționalizarea participării elevilor în viața instituției școlare, asigurând baza teoretico-metodologică pentru participarea autentică a elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice din învățământul general.

Semnificația teoretică: 1) dezvoltarea cadrului conceptual și metodologic al participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice din învățământul general, prin clarificarea și delimitarea conceptului de participare în raport cu conceptele conexe (implicare, consultare, co-decizie), precum și prin sistematizarea fundamentelor psihopedagogice, sociologice și axiologice ale participării elevilor în mediul educațional; 2) fundamentarea axiologică și principală a participării elevilor, prin identificarea valorilor nucleu și a principiilor care susțin participarea autentică a elevilor în viața școlii, precum și elaborarea cadrului conceptual integrator al participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice; 3) elaborarea modelului pedagogic contextualizat al participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice, care integrează sistemic valorile, principiile, condițiile pedagogice și standardele participării elevilor.

Valoarea aplicativă este demonstrată de: 1) condițiile propice pentru implicarea elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice în învățământul general; 2) standardele participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice în învățământul general; 3) sistemul de competențe specifice ale cadrelor didactice în promovarea participării elevilor în procesele decizionale democratice în învățământul general; 4) programul de dezvoltare a competențelor cadrelor didactice în domeniul participării elevilor în învățământul general.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice: Rezultatele teoretico-praxiologice ale cercetării au fost implementate în cadrul instruirilor desfășurate cu cadrele didactice, în cadrul conferințelor internaționale și naționale, prin intermediul seminarelor științifico-metodologice, publicațiilor științifice în revistele naționale de specialitate, precum și prin publicarea unui ghid practic privind constituirea Consiliilor Consultative ale Copiilor ca platformă de participare.

SEMENIUC NATALIA

**CONTEXTUALISATION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC
DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN GENERAL EDUCATION**

SPECIALITY: 531.01 – GENERAL THEORY OF EDUCATION

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