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Technocapitalism and corporate pervasiveness in educational technology governance: Partnerships, limits, and rearrangements of the public

Tecnocapitalismo e expansão corporativa na governança das tecnologias educacionais: parcerias, limites e rearranjos do público

Tecnocapitalismo y expansión corporativa en la gobernanza de las tecnologías educativas: asociaciones, límites y reconfiguraciones de lo público

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Abstract: This study examines how corporate actors have become increasingly embedded in the governance of educational technology policies within Brazilian state public education systems and interrogates the limits and displacements that this dynamic imposes on so-called public-private partnerships. While digital education policies are often framed through discourses of innovation, collaboration, and technical cooperation, educational technology companies, digital platforms, and private consultancies have progressively become structuring agents in the implementation of educational policy. Grounded in the concept of technocapitalism, this article understands digital education as a strategic frontier for the reconfiguration of the public sphere through market-oriented logics. The study draws on interviews with representatives from 23 state departments of education and on the analysis of their respective Digital Education and Pedagogical Innovation Plans, combining content analysis with a critical-discursive approach to examine how corporate participation is legitimized and normalized within institutional discourses. The analysis highlights how corporate actors become positioned as essential mediators of digital education policy, influencing governance structures, technical expertise, and the boundaries between public and private responsibilities. The article argues that these arrangements exceed conventional understandings of public-private partnerships and reflect broader technocapitalist transformations in contemporary education governance.

Keywords: Technocapitalism; Digital education; Educational technology; Public-private partnerships; Education policy.

Resumo: Este estudo examina como atores corporativos têm se tornado cada vez mais incorporados à governança das políticas de tecnologia educacional nas redes públicas estaduais de ensino no Brasil e problematiza os limites e deslocamentos que essa dinâmica impõe às chamadas parcerias público-privadas. Embora as políticas de educação digital sejam frequentemente enquadradas por discursos de inovação, colaboração e cooperação técnica, empresas de tecnologia educacional, plataformas digitais e consultorias privadas têm paulatinamente se tornado agentes estruturantes na implementação das políticas educacionais. Fundamentado no conceito de tecnocapitalismo, este artigo compreende a educação digital como uma fronteira estratégica para a reconfiguração da esfera pública por meio de lógicas orientadas pelo mercado. O estudo baseia-se em entrevistas com representantes de 23 secretarias estaduais de educação e na análise de seus respectivos Planos de Educação Digital e Inovação Pedagógica, combinando análise de conteúdo com uma abordagem crítico-discursiva para examinar como a participação corporativa é legitimada e normalizada nos discursos institucionais. A análise evidencia como atores corporativos passam a ser posicionados como mediadores essenciais das políticas de educação digital, influenciando estruturas de governança, conhecimentos técnicos especializados e os limites entre responsabilidades públicas e privadas. O artigo argumenta que esses arranjos ultrapassam as compreensões convencionais de parcerias público-privadas e refletem transformações tecnocapitalistas mais amplas na governança educacional contemporânea.



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Palavras-chave: Tecnocapitalismo; Educação digital; Tecnologia educacional; Parcerias público-privadas; Políticas educacionais.

Resumen: Este estudio examina cómo los actores corporativos se han incorporado cada vez más a la gobernanza de las políticas de tecnología educativa en los sistemas públicos estatales de educación de Brasil e interroga los límites y desplazamientos que esta dinámica impone a las llamadas asociaciones público-privadas. Aunque las políticas de educación digital suelen estar enmarcadas por discursos de innovación, colaboración y cooperación técnica, las empresas de tecnología educativa, las plataformas digitales y las consultoras privadas se han convertido progresivamente en agentes estructurantes de la implementación de las políticas educativas. Basado en el concepto de tecnocapitalismo, este artículo comprende la educación digital como una frontera estratégica para la reconfiguración de la esfera pública mediante lógicas orientadas al mercado. El estudio se apoya en entrevistas con representantes de 23 secretarías estatales de educación y en el análisis de sus respectivos Planes de Educación Digital e Innovación Pedagógica, combinando análisis de contenido con un enfoque crítico-discursivo para examinar cómo la participación corporativa es legitimada y normalizada en los discursos institucionales. El análisis muestra cómo los actores corporativos pasan a ser posicionados como mediadores esenciales de las políticas de educación digital, influyendo en las estructuras de gobernanza, los conocimientos técnicos especializados y los límites entre las responsabilidades públicas y privadas. El artículo sostiene que estos arreglos exceden las comprensiones convencionales de las asociaciones público-privadas y reflejan transformaciones tecnocapitalistas más amplias en la gobernanza educativa contemporánea.

Palabras clave: Tecnocapitalismo; Educación digital; Tecnología educativa; Asociaciones público-privadas; Políticas educativas.

Introduction

Across contemporary educational policy agendas, digital education has increasingly been positioned not merely as a pedagogical initiative, but as a strategic pathway for educational modernization and reform. In Brazil, recent national policies such as the National Digital Education Policy (Lei n. 14.533, 2023), the National Strategy for Connected Schools (Decreto n. 11.713, 2023), and the Computing component of the National Common Core Curriculum (Ministério da Educação, 2022) have accelerated efforts to integrate digital technologies, computational thinking, connectivity, and digital competencies into K–12 public education systems. While these initiatives are frequently framed through discourses of innovation, modernization, and educational

transformation, their implementation has also intensified the presence of external actors within public education governance.

Throughout Brazilian state education systems, digital education implementation has increasingly relied on collaborations involving educational technology companies, philanthropic organizations, digital platforms, consultancies, universities, and third-sector actors (Avelar, 2025). These arrangements are commonly presented as forms of partnership, technical cooperation, or institutional support intended to strengthen state capacity, expand connectivity, improve teacher training, and facilitate curriculum implementation. Within institutional discourse, external actors are often represented as partners helping public systems respond to the demands of digital transformation.

However, beyond the rhetoric of partnership, the growing incorporation of external technological actors raises broader questions concerning the transformation of public educational governance itself (Landri, 2018). As state education systems increasingly depend on private platforms, digital infrastructures, monitoring systems, consultancy services, and externally produced expertise, corporate participation begins to exceed supplementary or episodic forms of support. Instead, external actors become progressively embedded within the operational functioning of public education, participating in the organization of pedagogical practices, curriculum enactment, teacher qualification, data management, and decision-making processes (Ferreira, 2025).

In this context, the integration of technological infrastructures and platforms into public education should not be understood solely as a technical or pedagogical process, but also as a political and institutional one. The expansion of digital infrastructures within public education systems simultaneously reorganizes the boundaries between public and private responsibilities, reshapes forms of expertise and authority, and redefines how educational governance itself is operationalized. Under neoliberal and technocapitalist conditions, digital education becomes a strategic frontier through which technological

ecosystems, platform logics, and market-oriented forms of governance become increasingly intertwined with the organization of public education systems (Decuyper et al., 2021; Grimaldi et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, this study investigates how the expanding presence of corporate actors within digital education implementation contributes to broader neoliberal rearrangements of the public sphere. More specifically, the study asks: How does the growing corporate entanglement in the implementation of digital education policies reconfigure the public within Brazilian state education systems? In addressing this question, the article examines how corporate participation reorganizes the boundaries, responsibilities, authorities, and operational capacities historically associated with public educational governance. The analysis draws on interviews conducted with representatives from 23 Brazilian state departments of education and on the analysis of their respective Digital Education and Pedagogical Innovation Plans.

Technocapitalism, marketization, and public-private partnerships

Technocapitalism refers to a configuration of capitalism in which technological innovation, knowledge production, and informational infrastructures become central mechanisms of economic accumulation and social organization (Suárez-Villa, 2009). Unlike earlier industrial capitalist formations centered primarily on material production, technocapitalism operates through the continuous commodification of knowledge, technological systems, and data. In this regime, technological development becomes deeply intertwined with market expansion, governance processes, and institutional restructuring, positioning digital infrastructures not merely as tools, but as strategic assets capable of shaping social relations and organizational practices. Education occupies a particularly significant position within these transformations since education systems increasingly function as spaces for platform expansion, data generation, technological depen-

dency, and the circulation of digital products and services (Adrião et al., 2026). As a result, digital education becomes inseparable from broader processes of commercialization, infrastructural integration, and governance mediated through corporate technological ecosystems.

Technocapitalism and educational technologies

The growing centrality of digital technologies within education systems cannot be understood solely through pedagogical or technological lenses. Over time, digitalization has increasingly become intertwined with broader economic, political, and infrastructural transformations associated with technocapitalism. Rather than the simple incorporation of technological tools into educational settings, contemporary digital education reflects the expansion of sociotechnical systems structured through platforms, data extraction, algorithmic governance, and market-oriented forms of mediation (Kerssens & van Dijck, 2022). Within this context, corporate and platform-based arrangements progressively influence how educational systems are organized, governed, monitored, and imagined. Under these conditions, digital platforms operate not only as technical environments, but as infrastructures capable of structuring institutional practices, producing dependency relationships, and reorganizing forms of authority and decision-making (Landri, 2018; Srnicek, 2017; Williamson & Komljenovic, 2023).

Within educational contexts, this transformation has been accompanied by the expansion of market-oriented rationalities associated with efficiency, optimization, scalability, innovation, and performance (Ortegón et al., 2024). Discourses surrounding digital transformation frequently frame technological integration as a necessary response to educational inefficiency, lack of modernization, or institutional obsolescence. Educational technologies become positioned as solutions capable of optimizing learning, improving management, expanding monitoring capacities, and accelerating policy implementation through scalable technological infrastructures (Heinsfeld

& Marone, 2023).

These 'transformations' are not politically neutral. Digital infrastructures function as governing architectures that shape what becomes visible, measurable, and actionable within education systems (Decuyper et al., 2021). Governance is therefore enacted through the infrastructures, platforms, standards, and data systems that mediate educational practices (Curran et al., 2024). Under these conditions, it becomes ever more dependent upon externally owned technological ecosystems and private infrastructural arrangements.

Marketization beyond privatization

The growing incorporation of external actors into public education systems reflects broader processes of marketization that exceed traditional understandings of privatization. Rather than referring exclusively to the transfer of public services into private ownership, marketization involves the gradual incorporation of market-oriented rationalities, managerial practices, governance models, and commercial infrastructures into the functioning of public institutions (Ball & Grimaldi, 2021). In education, these processes frequently unfold through more diffuse and less visible mechanisms, including consultancy arrangements, performance management systems, digital platforms, data infrastructures, teacher training programs, and policy partnerships involving corporate and philanthropic actors (Grimaldi et al., 2025). Within this logic, the State is transformed from a direct provider of public services into a coordinator, regulator, evaluator, and market-maker responsible for facilitating the participation of private actors within public systems.

Educational governance gradually operates through networks involving governments, corporations, foundations, intermediaries, and platform providers, producing hybrid arrangements in which public and private responsibilities become entangled (Candido, 2018). As a result, corporate participation expands beyond the provision of products or services and becomes embedded within the operational and pedagogical functioning of

education systems themselves. Corporate actors are recurrently framed as sources of expertise capable of helping public systems respond to the demands of digital transformation (Avelar, 2025; Saura, 2025; Williamson & Komljenovic, 2023). In this sense, marketization does not operate solely through economic privatization, but through the growing authority of external actors in defining educational problems, solutions, and implementation strategies. Expertise, data systems, and technological infrastructures become central mechanisms through which education is managed and optimized.

Methodology

The investigation combines content analysis (Bardin, 2011) with a critical-discursive approach informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2003) to examine how corporate actors become embedded in the implementation of digital education policies within Brazilian state education systems. The analysis investigates the legitimization of corporate participation, the normalization of dependency relationships, and how the boundaries between public and private responsibilities are negotiated within state education systems.

The study draws on two complementary sources of data: structured interviews with state representatives and official state departments of education policy documents. Data were collected between 2024 and 2025 as part of a broader national initiative coordinated by the Brazilian Ministry of Education in partnership with the Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul. The corpus consists of structured interviews conducted with 114 representatives from 23 Brazilian state departments of education, including the Federal District. In addition, the study analyzes the Digital Education and Pedagogical Innovation Plans produced by each participating state. These documents establish state-level strategies for the implementation of digital education policies and provide insight into how relationships with corporate actors are framed within institutional planning and implementation processes.

The analysis focused on identifying recurring patterns through which corporate actors were positioned within public educational governance. Particular attention was given to utterances related to infrastructural dependency, the outsourcing of pedagogical and technical expertise, platform-centered governance arrangements, data integration practices, and the normalization of private-sector participation in educational decision-making processes. The study also examined how notions such as innovation, efficiency, modernization, and technological necessity were mobilized to legitimize these arrangements. To protect institutional anonymity, participating states are identified through regional alphanumeric codes throughout the analysis. States from the Southeast region are identified as SE-1, SE-2, and so forth; Southern states as S-1, S-2; Northeastern states as NE-1, NE-2; Northern states as N-1, N-2; and Center-West states as CW-1, CW-2.

Domains of corporate mediation and the reconfiguration of governance

The analysis indicates that the implementation of digital education within Brazilian state education systems increasingly operates through dense

networks of corporate and corporate-affiliated mediation, external expertise, platform ecosystems, and hybrid governance arrangements. Rather than functioning merely as complementary or auxiliary actors, educational technology companies, philanthropic organizations, consultancies, and intermediary institutions progressively emerge as structuring agents within the operationalization of digital education policies.

Across the corpus, external participation in digital education policy implementation becomes positioned not as exceptional, but as necessary for its execution, management, and expansion.

As detailed in Table 1, external actors participate across multiple and overlapping operational areas of digital education implementation, including teacher training, curriculum support, digital infrastructure, monitoring systems, learning platforms, consultancy services, and governance support. These forms of participation are not isolated from one another. The same organizations frequently operate simultaneously across pedagogical, infrastructural, and managerial dimensions, contributing to deeper forms of institutional integration between public education systems and private technological ecosystems.

TABLE 1 - DOMAINS OF CORPORATE OPERATION IN DIGITAL EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS BRAZILIAN STATE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Domains of Corporate Mediation	Description	Number of States (n=23)	Example Actors (not comprehensive)
Teacher training and professional development	External actors providing workshops, certifications, digital competency pathways, or pedagogical training	21	Fundação Lemann, Fundação Telefônica Vivo, Google, Fundação Itaú Unibanco, Instituto Natura, Instituto Ânima
Digital platforms and learning environments	Provision of learning management systems (LMSs), digital learning platforms, classroom systems, or curriculum platforms	15	Moodle, Google, Khan Academy, Matific, Dreamshaper
Curriculum design and implementation support	Participation in curriculum sequencing, BNCC Computação implementation, or curricular materials	11	Alura, Instituto Reúna, Fundação Telefônica Vivo
Infrastructure and connectivity	Connectivity planning, cloud systems, Chromebook ecosystems, infrastructure support	10	Google, MegaEdu

Domains of Corporate Mediation	Description	Number of States (n=23)	Example Actors (not comprehensive)
Monitoring, analytics, and data systems	Dashboards, BI systems, student tracking, learning analytics, monitoring tools	7	Microsoft, Plural, FGV, Khan Academy
Consultancy and strategic advisory	Strategic consulting, implementation planning, governance support	6	Fundação Telefônica Vivo, Sincroniza, Instituto Natura
Digital citizenship and online safety	Internet safety, media literacy, digital citizenship initiatives	8	SaferNet, Instituto Palavra Aberta, Internet Segura
Robotics, AI, and emerging technologies	Robotics curricula, AI training, maker education	7	Positivo, Fundação Telefônica Vivo
Curriculum materials and pedagogical content	Provision of pedagogical resources integrated into curriculum enactment	9	Fundação Telefônica Vivo, Instituto Reúna

The concentration of external actors is particularly visible in systems such as SE-2, NE-2, and CW-1, where organizations simultaneously participate in curriculum implementation, teacher training, monitoring systems, platform ecosystems, connectivity planning, pedagogical support, and governance-related initiatives. Across these systems, actors such as Fundação Telefônica Vivo, Google, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Alura, and Microsoft operate across overlapping operational domains, indicating how digital education implementation increasingly depends upon interconnected technological and institutional ecosystems rather than isolated collaborative arrangements. These configurations suggest that corporate participation in digital education implementation is neither episodic nor restricted to narrowly defined operational functions. Instead, external actors progressively become embedded within the infrastructures, expertise networks, implementation processes, and governance dynamics through which digital education policies are operationalized.

The following sections examine three interrelated dynamics emerging from the implementation processes described across interviews and policy documents: (1) the construction of dependency through corporate infrastructures and technological mediation; (2) the privatization of expertise and technical authority; and (3) the growing platformization of educational governance. The excerpts presented throughout the analysis are illustrative rather than exhaustive and are inten-

ded to highlight recurring justificatory discourses, governance rationalities, and implementation logics identified across the corpus. Together, these dimensions illustrate how digital education implementation functions as a strategic entry point for the expansion of corporate mediation, platform dependency, and external governance rationalities within public education systems, contributing to broader rearrangements of the public in contemporary educational governance.

Dependency through corporate mediation

Across the dataset, digital education implementation emerges as increasingly dependent on external technological ecosystems. Rather than occupying peripheral or supplementary roles, corporate actors are recurrently positioned as necessary mediators of the operational, pedagogical, and infrastructural conditions through which digital education becomes possible. Institutional discourse consistently mobilizes the language of *modernization*, *support*, *innovation*, *strengthening*, and *integration* to frame corporate participation as both beneficial and necessary. External actors are rarely described as corporate and corporate-affiliated organizations operating within public systems; instead, they are recurrently represented as strategic collaborators helping education systems respond to the demands of digital transformation. This discursive framing performs important ideological work by naturalizing the incorporation of private technological infrastruc-

tures into public education while simultaneously obscuring the dependencies embedded within these arrangements.

This movement becomes particularly visible in the way states describe external support for infrastructure and technological implementation. In NE-1, while MegaEdu is described as a "technical consultant" responsible for connectivity diagnosis, infrastructure planning, and continuous internet quality monitoring, Fundação Telefônica Vivo is framed as "supporting the *strengthening of digital competencies* and pedagogical *modernization* through initiatives aligned with the Computing component of the National Common Core Curriculum". Together, these arrangements are described as forming a "solid and integrated foundation" capable of positioning the state as a reference in connected and innovative education. The expression "solid and integrated foundation" is especially significant because it constructs the articulation between public institutions and external technological actors as stable, coherent, and institutionally desirable. The metaphor of infrastructural solidity contributes to the normalization of corporate participation as central to educational modernization rather than as a contingent political arrangement. A similar logic appears in SE-2, where Fundação Telefônica Vivo is described as offering "specialized consultancy" for the definition of "educational solutions," while organizations such as Alura, Khan Academy, Matific, and Dreamshaper become integrated into curriculum implementation, teacher training, monitoring practices, and pedagogical support structures. Noticeably, these platforms are not framed as supplementary educational resources. Instead, they are described as legitimate and operationally necessary components of digital education implementation itself.

The analysis also indicates how technological infrastructures progressively become intertwined with curriculum enactment and pedagogical organization. In S-1, partnerships are explicitly described as a "central guideline" for digital education implementation. In N-6, Canva for Education is represented as an "essential platform"

for the development of digital communication and content creation skills. These lexical choices construct external technological systems as indispensable infrastructures for contemporary education. Within this framing, technological mediation becomes associated with efficiency, adequacy, and institutional advancement, while the absence of these systems implicitly signals educational insufficiency or technological lag.

The recurrent mobilization of terms such as "support," "innovation," "integration," "strengthening," and "modernization" contributes to the depoliticization of infrastructural dependency by framing external mediation as technical necessity rather than as a restructuring of governance capacity within public education systems. Questions concerning long-term dependency, infrastructural control, concentration of technological authority, or the privatization of implementation capacity remain largely absent from institutional discourse. Instead, corporate mediation becomes stabilized as a pragmatic and inevitable response to the demands of digital education implementation.

Privatization of expertise and authority

Alongside infrastructural dependency, the analysis indicates a parallel process: the growing privatization of pedagogical and technical authority within digital education implementation. Across multiple states, corporate actors, third-sector organizations, and external institutions are not merely positioned as service providers, but as legitimate producers of expertise capable of guiding curriculum development, teacher training, implementation strategies, and educational innovation. State departments recurrently frame external actors as holders of specialized knowledge necessary for the successful implementation of digital education, thereby contributing to the gradual externalization of pedagogical authority from public institutions toward external technological ecosystems.

This movement becomes visible in the recurring use of consultancy and advisory arrangements. In SE-2, Fundação Telefônica Vivo is described as offering "specialized consultancy

for the definition of *technological strategies* and *educational solutions* aimed at digital education," while simultaneously supporting innovation and expanding access to technologies across the state system, framed as a mechanism for "strengthening socioeducational development," "improving the quality of learning," and "preparing students for the challenges of the digital era." These lexical choices position the organization as a legitimate authority capable of defining pedagogical implementation priorities and technological directions for public education. Within this discursive framing, external actors become associated with educational advancement and modernization rather than with market expansion or governance restructuring.

The displacement of pedagogical authority becomes even more explicit in S-1, where Alura is described as supporting the "development of the *scope and sequencing of the curricular components* of Technology, Innovation, and Programming," while simultaneously providing teacher training, workshops, educational content, and technological integration support. Importantly, the state further states that partnerships are necessary to "leverage resources, *expertise*, and technological solutions," reinforcing the perception that external knowledge is indispensable for digital education implementation. The articulation between "expertise," "solutions," and "innovation" contributes to the legitimization of private technological actors as authoritative participants in curriculum organization and pedagogical implementation, seen as indispensable sources of institutional capacity.

In N-6, partners are described as organizations that "share the *commitment* to promoting a more *innovative, equitable, and connected* public education," with Google being described as contributing to the "modernization of *pedagogical practices*". Similarly, in CW-1, partnerships with organizations such as MegaEdu are framed as mechanisms capable of "facilitating the offer of *quality* digital education" and expanding opportunities for the public education network.

This discourse contributes to the construction of external actors as epistemic authorities

capable not only of supporting implementation, but of defining curricular directions, pedagogical priorities, and the competencies considered necessary for educational modernization. Within this framing, expertise increasingly appears as something located outside the state department and therefore requiring incorporation through external technical mediation.

Teacher training constitutes another central dimension of this process. Across the corpus, external organizations are recurrently described as responsible for offering certifications, workshops, and digital competency development. In NE-8, Fundação Telefônica Vivo is described as offering three "learning pathways" focused on digital culture, computational thinking, and artificial intelligence while simultaneously supporting the restructuring of the Digital Education curriculum itself. The articulation between curriculum restructuring and externally provided training pathways illustrates how pedagogical authority becomes progressively intertwined with corporate expertise and technological ecosystems.

A similar movement appears in CW-4, where the state emphasizes maintaining its partnership with Fundação Telefônica Vivo for the provision of "*learning pathways* from the Connected Schools catalog" directed toward teachers and pedagogical coordinators. In this context, the company does not merely offer training opportunities; it contributes to defining what counts as necessary teacher knowledge, legitimate digital competency, and appropriate pedagogical updating within digital education implementation. The growing dependence on externally produced training structures contributes to the gradual redistribution of pedagogical authority away from public institutions and toward corporate technological ecosystems.

The recurrent mobilization of terms such as "innovation," "qualification," "specialized consultancy," "effective use," and "modernization" contributes to the normalization of external expertise as a necessary condition for educational transformation. External actors are repeatedly framed as essential for preparing education systems for

the “digital era,” improving educational quality, and supporting technological implementation processes. Within this logic, public institutions are implicitly positioned as lacking sufficient internal expertise to operationalize digital education autonomously. The growing authority of corporate and corporate-affiliated actors therefore becomes normalized as a rational and pragmatic response to the perceived complexities of technological implementation.

These discourses contribute to the depoliticization of governance restructuring. By framing external expertise as technical necessity rather than political choice, the implications of relocating pedagogical authority toward corporate and external actors become obscured. Questions concerning curricular autonomy, public capacity, democratic participation, and long-term dependence become displaced by managerial discourses centered on efficiency, innovation, modernization, and technological adequacy. Thus, the privatization of expertise operates through the normalization of external authority within public educational governance.

Platform-mediated governance

Lastly, the analysis also suggests that governance processes themselves become increasingly mediated through digital platforms, monitoring systems, and externally managed technological infrastructures. In this context, platformization extends beyond the adoption of educational technologies; it reorganizes how educational systems coordinate implementation, monitor pedagogical practices, manage connectivity, and operationalize digital education policy. Across the dataset, discourse recurrently frames these systems through the language of monitoring, management, quality, efficiency, integration, and optimization, constructing platform-mediated governance as both rational and necessary for contemporary education systems.

Several states describe governance arrangements deeply intertwined with external technological systems and platform ecosystems. In NE-4, MegaEdu is described as supporting the

state by “identifying equipment needs” and “monitoring the speed of connectivity contracted by schools using PIEC resources,” while GetEdu is responsible for “preparing virtual environments” and enabling access to these environments for the school community. The recurrent emphasis on “monitoring,” “identifying needs,” and “preparing environments” contributes to the construction of governance as increasingly dependent upon external technological infrastructures capable of organizing visibility, operational coordination, and implementation management.

Likewise, N-4 explicitly describes partnerships focused on “*monitoring* the speed of connectivity contracted by schools,” as well as on the “*monitoring and evaluation* of the effectiveness, equity and quality of technological infrastructure and pedagogical and curricular aspects.” The lexical articulation between “effectiveness,” “quality,” “monitoring,” and “evaluation” frames educational governance through managerial and data-oriented rationalities. Governance processes become translated into measurable, monitorable, and administratively actionable categories mediated through technological systems and external infrastructures. Platformization also appears through the growing centrality of externally managed digital learning environments within implementation processes. In SE-2, organizations such as Khan Academy, Matific, Dreamshaper, and Alura are described as platforms integrated into curriculum implementation, teacher support, learning activities, and pedagogical follow-up.

These arrangements contribute to the naturalization of datafied and platform-mediated governance within public education systems. Institutional discourse recurrently frames monitoring systems, technological platforms, and digital management tools as mechanisms for improving educational quality, strengthening implementation, expanding access, and modernizing administration. This discourse contributes to the construction of platform governance as a neutral and technical response to implementation challenges. Worth noting, governance functions themselves become gradually displa-

ced toward platform-mediated environments. Monitoring educational processes, coordinating implementation, managing digital infrastructure, and organizing pedagogical follow-up are no longer structured exclusively through internal state mechanisms, but through sociotechnical arrangements involving external organizations, digital platforms, and private technological systems. Governance therefore becomes partially delegated to infrastructures and monitoring mechanisms that are externally operationalized and increasingly embedded within the functioning of public education systems.

These dynamics reflect broader technocapitalist transformations in educational governance. Institutional discourse repeatedly frames platform-mediated governance as necessary for improving educational quality, ensuring implementation effectiveness, and supporting modernization efforts. Under these conditions, public educational governance increasingly operates through infrastructures that do not merely support educational processes, but actively redefine how education becomes governable, visible, and administratively actionable. The repeated articulation between technological integration and notions of quality, innovation, and modernization contributes to the normalization of external infrastructural mediation as an ordinary condition of public educational governance. Within this logic, digital transformation is positioned less as a political or institutional choice and more as a necessary pathway toward educational improvement.

Rearrangements of the public under technocapitalist conditions

The analysis developed throughout this study suggests that the implementation of digital education increasingly operates as a strategic site through which broader transformations in public educational governance become normalized, operationalized, and legitimized. Rather than understanding these processes exclusively through the language of partnerships or technological modernization, the study points toward deeper rearrangements involving authority, expertise,

operational capacity, and infrastructural dependency within public education systems.

Importantly, these transformations do not emerge solely through formal privatization or the direct transfer of public responsibilities to private actors. Instead, they unfold through more diffuse and normalized forms of integration in which external technological ecosystems progressively become embedded within the everyday functioning of public education systems. The implementation of digital education increasingly depends upon infrastructures, platforms, consultancy arrangements, training ecosystems, and governance mechanisms that remain externally managed while simultaneously becoming operationally indispensable for educational systems. Under these conditions, the public is not displaced but reorganized through hybrid sociotechnical arrangements that redistribute authority and implementation capacity across public and private actors.

The analysis also indicates that these transformations are sustained through discourses of innovation, modernization, support, efficiency, and technological necessity, framing external technological participation as pragmatic, beneficial, and aligned with public educational interests, contributing to the depoliticization of governance restructuring processes. Questions concerning dependency, infrastructural concentration, pedagogical autonomy, or the long-term implications of external technological mediation remain largely absent from institutional discourses. Instead, corporate participation becomes stabilized as a rational and unavoidable response to the demands of digital transformation.

Normalization of corporate presence

One of the most significant constructs emerging from the analysis is the extent to which corporate participation becomes normalized within institutional discourse. Across policy documents and interviews, external actors are rarely framed as politically contentious, economically interested, or as potential sources of dependency. Instead, their presence is recurrently articulated

as inherently aligned with public educational interests. This normalization operates through the systematic erasure of asymmetries between public systems and external actors. Partnerships are consistently represented as cooperative and mutually beneficial arrangements oriented towards educational improvement, digital inclusion, and future preparedness. This logic is reinforced through the recurrent use of terms such as "support," "partnership," "cooperation," "integration," "innovation," and "strengthening." These lexical constructions position external actors as naturally aligned with public educational goals, thereby obscuring the institutional asymmetries and dependencies embedded within these arrangements (Campos & Damasceno, 2020).

The repeated articulation between digital transformation and notions of urgency, modernization, connectivity, and future readiness contributes to the naturalization of corporate mediation within public education systems (Lima, 2025; Pizolati, 2025). Technological integration is rarely represented as a political choice among multiple educational possibilities. Instead, digitalization is recurrently framed as necessary, inevitable, and inherently desirable, a point widely discussed in the literature (Lima & Ferreira, 2025). Expressions associated with "innovation," "modernization," "quality," and "digital transformation" contribute to the normalization of particular governance arrangements in which external technological participation becomes positioned as a prerequisite for educational adequacy and institutional advancement. Within this logic, questioning external technological mediation becomes implicitly associated with inefficiency, technological delay, or resistance to modernization.

These discourses also contribute to the depoliticization of governance restructuring itself. Corporate participation is recurrently framed as technical cooperation rather than as a redistribution of authority, expertise, and operational capacity within public education systems. Institutional discourse largely silences questions concerning dependency, infrastructural concentration, private influence over curriculum and

teacher training, or the long-term implications of relying upon externally managed technological ecosystems. This silencing reflects broader neoliberal and technocapitalist rationalities that reposition corporate mediation as an ordinary and legitimate component of public educational governance (Saura, 2025). The normalization of corporate presence contributes to the gradual restructuring of the public sphere by legitimizing the incorporation of corporate and corporate-affiliated actors into domains historically associated with state responsibility, including curriculum development, teacher training, pedagogical monitoring, connectivity planning, and governance infrastructures. In doing so, institutional discourse helps stabilize hybrid governance arrangements in which public education systems become increasingly dependent upon externally managed technological ecosystems.

Reconfiguring the public through implementation

Rather than signaling the disappearance of the State, these dynamics point toward its reconfiguration under neoliberal and technocapitalist conditions. Public educational governance increasingly operates through distributed arrangements involving corporations, philanthropic organizations, consultancy actors, platform providers, monitoring systems, and technological infrastructures that mediate the functioning of educational systems. This process reflects broader historical neoliberal transformations in governance identified within the literature (Ball & Grimaldi, 2021), in which the State is not necessarily reduced, but reorganized through networks of heterogeneous actors and infrastructures. Within digital education implementation, this redistribution becomes visible through the growing dependence of education systems on external platforms, training ecosystems, technological infrastructures, monitoring tools, and consultancy arrangements (Avelar, 2025; Oliveira & Avelar, 2025; Tarlau & Moeller, 2019). Public systems increasingly rely upon externally managed ecosystems not necessarily because of

formal privatization, but because implementation itself becomes progressively structured through technological arrangements that remain outside direct public control. Thus, as these systems become integrated into everyday implementation processes, responsibilities historically associated with public institutions become progressively shared, delegated, or externally mediated.

Additionally, the analysis indicates that corporate and corporate-affiliated actors increasingly participate in defining what counts as innovation, digital competency, effective implementation, modernization, and educational quality. Expertise becomes progressively externalized, with technological actors occupying positions of pedagogical and technical legitimacy within implementation processes. Under these conditions, governance operates through infrastructures, platforms, training ecosystems, and implementation mechanisms that shape how education becomes operationalized in practice.

These transformations raise broader questions concerning democratic governance within public education systems. As educational implementation becomes increasingly mediated through externally managed infrastructures and platform ecosystems, questions emerge concerning public capacity, pedagogical autonomy, transparency, accountability, and long-term institutional dependency (van Dijck et al., 2018). The issue is therefore not simply whether digital technologies improve educational processes, but how the governance arrangements embedded within implementation processes reshape who defines priorities, who holds authority, and whose interests become operationally intrinsic within public education systems. Accordingly, the implementation of digital education should not be understood solely as a pedagogical or technological agenda. Rather, it functions as a political and institutional process through which the operational structures, governance dynamics, and meanings historically associated with the public are progressively reorganized under technocapitalist conditions.

Final Remarks

This article examined how corporate participation becomes legitimized, normalized, and operationalized within digital education implementation, and how these processes contribute to the reorganization of public educational governance in Brazilian public education. Drawing on interviews with representatives from 23 state education systems and the analysis of their Digital Education and Pedagogical Innovation Plans, the study argued that corporate participation in state public education systems progressively become embedded within the infrastructures, expertise networks, governance arrangements, and implementation processes through which digital education is operationalized within public education systems.

The analysis indicated that these arrangements are characterized not only by the expansion of corporate participation, but by broader transformations in the operational conditions through which public educational governance functions. Across the corpus, institutional discourse recurrently frames external actors as necessary mediators of modernization, innovation, connectivity, quality, and technological transformation. Through the language of collaboration, support, expertise, and efficiency, corporate participation becomes stabilized as a legitimate and desirable component of digital education implementation. In this process, dependencies on private infrastructures, externally produced expertise, and platform-mediated governance systems are recurrently reframed as pragmatic and inevitable responses to the demands of digital transformation.

The study identified three interconnected dynamics shaping these transformations. First, digital education implementation increasingly depends upon external technological ecosystems responsible for infrastructure provision, connectivity planning, curriculum implementation, and pedagogical mediation. Second, pedagogical and technical authority becomes progressively externalized toward corporations, foundations, consultancy actors, and platform providers po-

sitioned as legitimate holders of the expertise necessary for educational modernization. Third, governance itself becomes increasingly mediated through monitoring systems, digital platforms, connectivity management tools, virtual learning environments, and implementation infrastructures that reorganize how educational systems become governable, visible, and administratively actionable. As a result, corporate participation is normalized and technological integration framed as neutral, necessary, and inherently beneficial while simultaneously obscuring the asymmetries and dependencies embedded within these arrangements.

This study contributes to critical discussions surrounding technocapitalism, marketization, and educational governance by underscoring how digital education implementation operates as a strategic site for the reorganization of the public. Rather than understanding marketization exclusively through privatization or state withdrawal, the analysis suggests that neoliberal transformations unfold through infrastructural integration, delegated expertise, platform dependency, and the normalization of external technological mediation within public education systems. The central issue is not simply whether external actors participate in public education, but how their participation reorganizes the operational, infrastructural, and epistemic conditions through which digital education becomes implementable.

Further research could examine how these governance arrangements are experienced, negotiated, and contested within everyday educational practice, particularly by teachers and school administrators. Additional studies may also investigate how platform dependency, externally mediated expertise, and datafied governance infrastructures influence pedagogical autonomy, curriculum enactment, and decision-making processes within schools over time. Moreover, comparative analyses across regional, national, and international contexts could contribute to understanding how technocapitalist rationalities become localized within distinct educational systems and implementation environments.

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