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Y DESARROLLO**

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La inclusión como acogida

Inclusion as a welcome

Inclusão como bemvinda

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Inclusion has become one of the defining topics of discussion and study in the 21st century, centered around two key challenges: first, the concept of diversity and difference; second, society's responsibility in achieving true inclusion. However, both of these challenges cannot be addressed without adopting an ethical stance—that is, questioning our perception of those who differ from us in physical, social, cultural, ideological, and political aspects, as well as in their way of life. The existence of diversity compels us to navigate the unknown, challenging us to engage with perspectives beyond our own. This uncertainty in the face of difference and diversity can provoke fear and rejection, ultimately fostering systems of exclusion. Yet ethics, which extends beyond a mere set of rules, calls for a position of responsibility toward those before us. Ethics must transcend our instinctive rejection, fear, and uncertainty regarding differences, so that we do not infringe upon or diminish the dignity and humanity of others. Dignity and humanity belong to every person, regardless of our individual ideas and beliefs.

For this reason, we must recognize that inclusion, particularly in education, is a process that demands both responsibility and commitment. It calls on us to educate, guide, and support individuals in their development as whole human beings. But what is inclusion? To answer this, we must return to the fundamental purpose of education. Before it became focused on the acquisition of knowledge and specialized skills, its primary aim was to support children and young people in learning how to belong and actively participate in their communities and society. In other words, inclusion is not merely placing a child or young person with physical, cognitive, ideological, religious, or social differences into a classroom. True inclusion means creating conditions that foster both belonging and participation.

Education as a space for belonging and participation becomes possible when we recognize and embrace the plurality and diversity of every individual within the human and social fabric. That is, education faces the challenge of moving beyond the pedagogical practice of standardization and homogenization, which took hold

“ Inclusion, particularly in education, is a process that demands both responsibility and commitment. It calls on us to educate, guide, and support individuals in their development as whole human beings. ”

during the era of mass education in the consolidation of modern nations and societies. This approach sidelined education as a process of individualized embrace and personal guidance.

In this context, inclusive education, which emerges from the recognition of diversity and individual distinctions as values and sources of enrichment, paves the way for a pedagogy and didactics of embrace, fostering a sense of belonging and equal participation for all. Inclusion, at its core, is about creating an educational environment that embraces all learners, ensuring access to learning and training spaces where they can fully develop.

Within this framework, the ethics of inclusion as an educational principle moves beyond normalization and instead embraces diversity and the varying capacities of individuals—including what is traditionally labeled as disability—acknowledging that each person, according to their unique characteristics, can grow and thrive. For this reason, any labeling that undermines the dignity and potential of learners and citizens who differ in their abilities or educational needs must be discarded. An example of this shift is the move away from the term “abnormality” toward an understanding of different ways of existing and being in the world—recognizing disability not as a deficiency but as part of the broad spectrum of diverse physical, cognitive, and social ways of learning and developing.

Inclusive education, as a model of embrace, faces the challenge of identifying strategies and tools to address

diverse educational, didactic, and pedagogical needs. Achieving this requires that states and institutions first implement awareness and motivation programs for public officials and educators, fostering openness to the respect and recognition of diversity. Second, the budget should include allocations for investment in infrastructure adaptations, procurement of materials, and educational technology, among other essential resources to equip and organize inclusive spaces that are properly designed to foster pedagogical embrace for all, ensuring a sense of belonging and participation.

Inclusion as Embrace is an ongoing process being built through the efforts of many educators and civil society groups, making it a path still in development. It is crucial to recognize that the creation of an inclusive society cannot be achieved individually. It requires collective participation, the exchange and systematization of experiences, and insights that allow us to view local conditions and needs from new perspectives. In this issue, the authors rigorously examine findings, interpretations, and perspectives that serve as valuable guidance for understanding inclusion as both a social issue and a public policy. The invitation is to explore each of the works on inclusion, which result from dedicated research efforts aimed at improving spaces for participation and equality. These contributions are compiled in Vol. 11. No. 2 (2024) of *Inclusión y Desarrollo Journal*.

Nanocompuestos de cannabis de liberación controlada: una opción terapéutica y transicional

Controlled-Release Cannabis Nanocomposites: A Therapeutic and Transitional Option

Nanocompósitos de cannabis de liberação controlada: uma opção terapêutica e transitória

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RESUMEN

Esta propuesta tiene por objeto el desarrollo de compositos a partir de cannabinoides (CBD) inmovilizados sobre carbones, como instrumento futuro para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos y/o la apertura de nuevas líneas económicas en Colombia contribuyendo a modelos de paz. Para esto, se obtuvo carbón activo a partir de la pirólisis de semillas y se funcionalizó con grupos amina (CAN). Los materiales obtenidos se caracterizaron fisicoquímicamente. La carga de CBD se realizó sobre los carbones y se evaluó la liberación a condiciones fisiológicas simuladas, a pH 2.1 (gástrico) y pH 7.4 (intestinal). Los materiales desorbidos se pusieron en contacto con aflatoxinas durante 15 minutos a 37°C en medio intestinal para evaluar el efecto dual de los carbones. La molécula de CBD tuvo una mayor afinidad por los materiales CAN, lo cual se atribuye a interacciones π deslocalizados-catión. Las liberaciones de CBD fueron cercanas al 90% en el medio gástrico, y alcanzaron el 100% en intestino. La remoción de aflatoxinas (AFLAB1) con CAN fue del 100% a partir de concentraciones de 426 $\mu\text{g/L}$. Los carbones permitieron la liberación controlada de CBD y la remoción subsecuente de aflatoxinas convirtiéndose en alternativas de valor terapéutico, mientras contribuye a la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos.

Palabras clave: cannabinoides, carbones, aflatoxinas, liberación.

ABSTRACT

This proposal aims to develop composites from cannabinoids (CBD) immobilized on activated carbons, as a future instrument for the substitution of illicit crops and/or the opening of new economic lines in Colombia, contributing to models of peace. For this, active carbon was obtained from the pyrolysis of seeds and was functionalized with amine groups (CAN). The materials obtained were characterized physicochemically. CBD loading was carried out on the coarbons and the release was evaluated under simulated physiological conditions, at pH 2.1 (gastric) and pH 7.4 (intestinal). The desorbed materials were put in contact with aflatoxins for 15 minutes at 37°C in intestinal medium to evaluate the dual effect of the carbons. The CBD molecule had a higher affinity for CAN materials, which is attributed to delocalized π -cation interactions. CBD releases were close to 90% in the gastric medium and reached 100% in the intestine. The removal of aflatoxins with CAN was 100% from concentrations of 426 $\mu\text{g/L}$. Carbons allowed the controlled release of CBD and the subsequent removal of aflatoxins, becoming alternatives of therapeutic value, while contributing to the substitution of illicit crops.

Keywords: cannabinoid, carbons, aflatoxins, release.

RESUMO

Esta proposta visa desenvolver compósitos a partir de canabinóides (CBD) imobilizados em carvões, como um futuro instrumento para a substituição de culturas ilícitas e/ou a abertura de novas linhas econômicas na Colômbia, contribuindo para modelos de paz. Para isso, o carbono ativo foi obtido a partir da pirólise de sementes e foi funcionalizado com grupos amina (CAN). Os materiais obtidos foram caracterizados físico-quimicamente. A carga de CBD foi realizada nas brasas e a liberação foi avaliada em condições fisiológicas simuladas, em pH 2,1 (gástrico) e pH 7,4 (intestinal). Os materiais dessorvidos foram colocados em contato com aflatoxinas por 15 minutos a 37°C em meio intestinal para avaliar o duplo efeito dos carbones. A molécula de CBD tinha maior afinidade com materiais CAN, o que é atribuído a interações deslocalizadas de cátions π . As liberações de CBD foram próximas de 90% no meio gástrico e atingiram 100% no intestino. A remoção de aflatoxinas com CAN foi de 100% a partir de concentrações de 426 $\mu\text{g/L}$. O carvão permitiu a liberação controlada de CBD e a posterior remoção de aflatoxinas, tornando-se alternativas de valor terapêutico, ao mesmo tempo que contribuiu para a substituição de culturas ilícitas.

Palavra-chave: canabinóides, carbones, aflatoxinas, liberação.

Literature Review

Cannabis is the most widely consumed psychoactive substance in the world, and its psychoactive properties, linked to certain cannabinoids such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), have been associated with high dependency rates. Cannabis and its derivatives are currently classified under Schedule I of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and are subject to regulation regarding their use, possession, sale, consumption, and production (JIFE 2019). Between 1975 and 1985, large amounts of U.S. dollars flowed into Colombia due to the operations of criminal organizations engaged in the illicit cultivation and export of processed cannabis (marijuana), an activity that had been ongoing since the late 1960s, primarily in the departments of La Guajira, Cesar, and Magdalena. This was a business controlled by clans and families (drug traffickers) who exploited impoverished farmers, generating significant profits for the former.

To date, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin remain the most trafficked psychotropic substances worldwide. Drug trafficking has significantly impacted Colombia's political, social, and economic landscape, serving as a major financial pillar for paramilitary groups, guerrilla factions, and organized crime. Although cannabis cultivation has been criminalized and subject to legal prosecution, from a pharmacological standpoint, this plant species is unique in its diverse array of phytochemical compounds, which have demonstrated clinical benefits in managing symptoms related to general pain, as well as chronic and neuropathic pain in patients with advanced-stage cancer. As a result, cannabis offers additional therapeutic tools to healthcare professionals (Salazar Londoño 2021).

Today, the medical use of cannabinoids is legal in our country, and globally, many have been approved for pharmaceutical applications, including dronabinol, nabilone, nabiximols, and cannabidiol (CBD). In Colombia, for example, the number of potential patients for medicinal cannabis use may be around one million, with projected revenues of approximately USD 480 million by 2032 (Ramírez 2019). This is a conservative estimate of the potential demand in Colombia, based on pathologies for which cannabis could be used for therapeutic purposes through master formulations, consumer products, and chemically synthesized medicines.

This measure considers the scientific evidence on cannabinoid effects compiled by the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in 2017. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to consider a medicinal cannabis program for Colombia. Canada and Israel, for example, have 400,000 and 30,000 patients, respectively, enrolled in medicinal cannabis-based treatments, along with the most extensive portfolio of CBD-based products. Currently, Colombia accounts for 0.22% of global medicinal cannabis consumption; (PwC 2000) however, this figure could increase to 0.28% by 2030 through value-driven initiatives. For instance, it is crucial to introduce innovative, high-quality products and services into the market, supported by a mature ecosystem fostering close collaboration between academia, the state, and communities.

Following the approval of Law 1787 of 2016, which established the regulatory framework for access to cannabis for medical and scientific purposes, and its subsequent regulation through Decree 613 of 2017. Beyond significant potential demand for health applications, Colombia also offers favorable conditions for production, including lower production costs—particularly in inputs and labor—optimal light conditions (12 hours per day), robust productive infrastructure, an available skilled workforce, and a well-established agricultural sector, reinforced by the country's strong floriculture tradition. Additionally, historical expertise in cannabis cultivation and vast areas of rural land dedicated to this purpose further support its production potential.

Moreover, medicinal cannabis products available in the country—across cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and food sectors—face significant technical limitations. Because cannabinoids are lipophilic molecules, they exhibit strong

adhesion to products, impeding the migration of these bioactive compounds to biological tissues, which results in bioavailability levels of less than 20% (Nakano et al. 2019). Nanotechnology presents a wide range of possibilities, as its nanoscale properties allow for the precise control and adjustment of surface characteristics.

In a pioneering review conducted by Chandrakala, Aruna, y Angajala (2022), the advancements and solutions offered by nanocarriers to enhance cannabinoid dosage, reduce side effects, and provide alternative transport mechanisms for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases were compiled. The authors presented various nanoplateforms capable of delivering these compounds to their target sites within the Central Nervous System, highlighting lipid nanoparticles, nanocapsules, dendrimers, nanogels, liposomes, and polymeric nanoparticles as potential candidates for future developments (Begines et al. 2020). The present proposal focuses on the development of intelligent activated carbon nano-intermediates for CBD immobilization, aiming to enhance bioavailability and facilitate the selective release of molecules in target tissues, with the subsequent removal of aflatoxins. This proposal is framed within the development of high-value scientific cannabis-derived products as a future instrument for the substitution of illicit crops and/or the establishment of new economic sectors in Colombia.

Methodology

Initially, carbon was obtained through the pyrolysis of pre-activated seeds. For activation, the seeds were mixed in a 1:2 ratio with a supersaturated potassium hydroxide solution under infrared illumination for 24 hours, following the method suggested by Elmouwahidi et al (2012). Subsequently, the mixture was pyrolyzed at 800°C in an inert nitrogen atmosphere, and once the carbon was obtained, surface modifications were applied to incorporate amino groups with basic characteristics. The unmodified and amine-functionalized materials were labeled CA and CAN, respectively. The materials were then characterized: morphology was analyzed using scanning electron microscopy (SEM) with a LEO GEMINI-1530 microscope (Carl Zeiss, Germany) (Saleh et al. 2022). At the textural level, analyses were conducted via nitrogen (N₂) adsorption at -196°C, using a Quadrasorb SI analyzer (Quantachrome, USA). The samples were pre-degassed at 100°C for 24 hours. The Brunauer-Emmett-Teller (BET) equation was applied to the nitrogen adsorption isotherms to determine the specific surface area (SBET), while the Dubinin-Radushkevich equation was used to calculate the micropore volume (V_{mic}), corresponding to spaces between 0.5 and 2 nm.

Similarly, the Barrett-Joyner-Halenda (BJH) method was applied to calculate the mesopore volume (V_{meso}), corresponding to spaces ranging from 6.5 to 50 nm. Mercury porosimetry was performed using an AutoPore IV 9510 (Micromeritics, USA) at pressures of up to 60,000 psi to determine the macropore volume (V_{macro}), corresponding to spaces between 50 and 10,000 nm. The total pore volume (TV) was considered the sum of V_{micro}, V_{meso}, and V_{macro} (S. Wang, Shivanna, and Yang 2022). The chemical characterization of the materials was performed by measuring the acidity of the carbons through the isoelectric point (IP), following the methodology previously described by Pérez-Cadenas et al (Pérez-Cadenas, Maldonado-Hódar y Moreno-Castilla 2003).

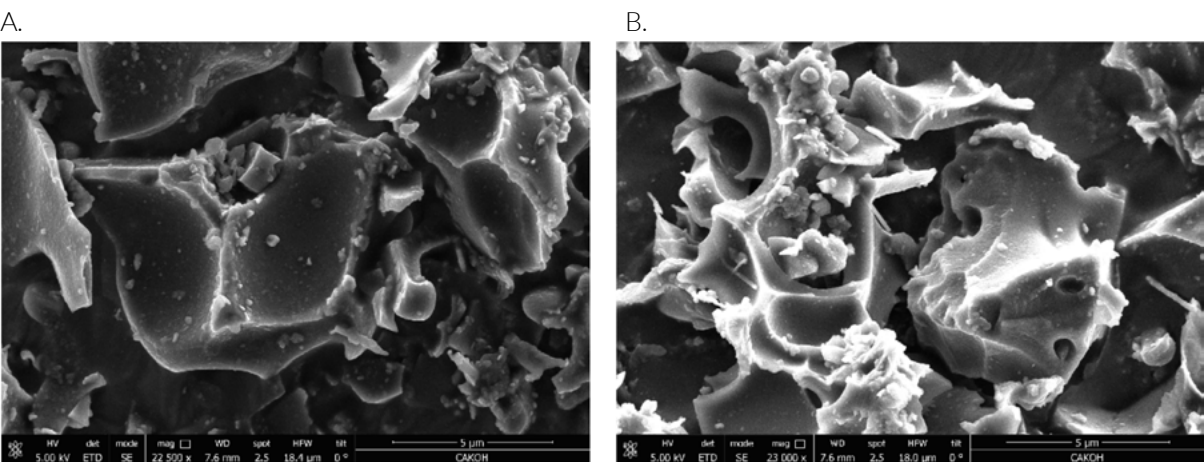
CBD loading onto the materials was conducted using batch adsorption experiments at different CBD concentrations (10–1000 mg/L) with a fixed amount of carbon (100 mg), maintaining a carbon-to-CBD solution ratio of 1:10. The adsorption curves were adjusted to the Solid-Liquid Equilibrium (SLE) model to interpret the interaction between carbon and CBD (Giraldo et al. 2017). In vitro desorption tests were carried out by measuring release kinetics under simulated physiological conditions of gastric pH = 2.1 and intestinal pH = 7.4 at 37°C for 400 minutes. The physiological media were rigorously prepared using saline, organic, and inorganic solutions (Yilmaz et al. 2020). For aflatoxin removal under intestinal conditions, the desorbed materials were exposed to commercial aflatoxin (AFLA) for 15 minutes at 37°C and pH = 7.4 (S.-Y. Wang et al. 2023). CBD quantification was performed using a previously established calibration curve at 255 nm in a Genesys 20 Thermo Scientific ultraviolet spectrophotometer (Massachusetts, United States), while aflatoxin quantification was conducted using a high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) system with a pre-established calibration curve (Keskin y Eyupoglu 2023). Resultados y discusión

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of Activated Carbons

The morphology of CA and CAN is shown in Figure 1. The carbons exhibited three-dimensional networks with irregular primary particles on a micro- and nanometric scale, with free interparticle spaces at the nanometric level, forming the porous region where CBD and AFLAB1 molecules are retained.

Figure 1. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) images of activated carbon (CA) and nitrogen-functionalized activated carbon (CAN).



Note: Prepared by the authors.

Table 1 presents the textural and chemical properties of the obtained carbons. Both materials exhibited high surface areas, reaching up to 600 m² of free space per gram of carbon.

Table 1. Textural properties and isoelectric point of activated carbon (CA) and nitrogen-functionalized activated carbon (CAN).

Material	S _{BET}	V _{micro}	V _{meso}	V _{macro}	V _T	PI
	m ² /g	cm ³ /g	cm ³ /g	cm ³ /g	cm ³ /g	
CA	683	0.24	0.91	0.03	1.18	9.0
CAN	608	0.23	0.66	0.03	0.92	7.7

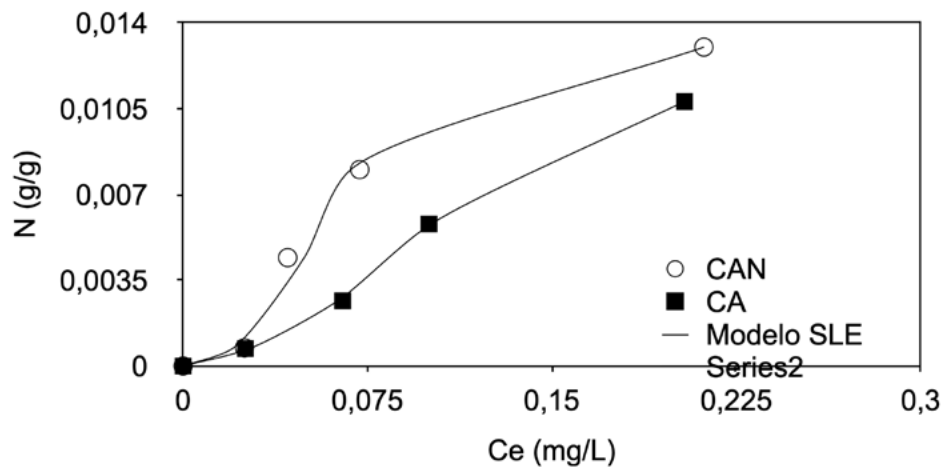
Note: Prepared by the authors.

The CA surface area decreased with surface modification, as nitrogen heteroatoms, introduced to alter the material's chemistry, were deposited in the pores through physisorption, reducing the available free area. The nitrogen atoms and their derivative structures were primarily accommodated in the micro- and mesopores due to their smaller size (0.5 to 50 nm). This explains why CAN exhibited lower V_{micro} and V_{meso} values but retained the same V_{macro} as CA. Finally, the PI values were also included in Table 1. The CA material was neutral, but the addition of nitrogen atoms altered its surface chemistry, making it a basic electrophilic material according to Lewis theory (Bursten 2004). The basic modification aims to enhance interactions between the carbon and the highly nucleophilic CBD and AFLAB1 molecules.

CBD Adsorption on Activated Carbon

The adsorption isotherms of CBD on CA and CAN materials are presented in Figure 2. For the analysis of the adsorption isotherms, the experimental data were adjusted to the Solid-Liquid Equilibrium (SLE) (Montoya et al. 2014) model, which provides insights into the affinity between the adsorbent (carbons) and the adsorbate (CBD molecules) through parameter H, as well as the degree of self-association of the adsorbate on the adsorbent surface (parameter K).

Figure 2. CBD adsorption isotherms at 25°C in an aqueous solution at pH 7.4 on activated carbon (CA) and nitrogen-functionalized activated carbon (CAN), obtained from chemical activation and seed pyrolysis.



Note: Prepared by the authors, obtained from chemical activation and seed pyrolysis.

The parameters obtained from the SLE model for each material are presented in Table 2. It can be observed that the adsorption isotherms exhibit a good fit to the SLE model, with a root mean square error (RMSE%) of <1%. The Qmax parameter followed the order CAN>CA, indicating that the functionalized CAN material had a higher affinity for CBD. Additionally, the values of the K parameter suggest a greater self-association of CBD molecules in the presence of CA materials.

Table 2. Parameters obtained for the Solid-Liquid Equilibrium (SLE) model from the adsorption isotherms of cannabidiol (CBD) on activated carbons CA and CAN.

	H (mg/g)	K (g/g)	Qmax (g/g)	RMSE (%)
CA	55.4	817.4	0.012	0.123
CAN	52.4	461.5	0.014	0.396

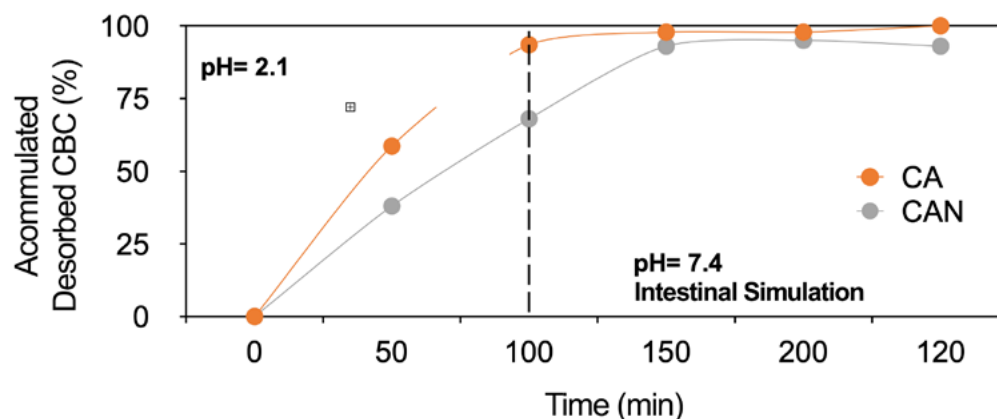
Note: The H parameter is inversely related to adsorption affinity, the K parameter to the self-association of the adsorbate on the adsorbent surface, and Qmax represents the maximum adsorbed quantity. Prepared by the authors

To explain the higher adsorption of CBD on CAN, it is important to note that the adsorption experiments were conducted at pH 7.0, while the isoelectric points of CA and CAN were 7.7 and 9.0, respectively (Table 1). At pH 7.0, CA and CAN were negatively and positively charged, respectively. Specifically, the positively charged CAN materials experience stronger attractions with CBD, which is characterized as an anionic molecule (Nelson et al. 2020) with a high electron density, resulting in physisorption through cation- π electron interactions (Zhao and Zhu 2020).

CBD Desorption Kinetics from Activated Carbons

The desorption kinetics of CBD under simulated physiological conditions are shown in Figure 3. The results indicated that the strongest complexes, such as CBD on CAN, initially exhibited a lower tendency to desorb due to strong electrostatic cation- π electron interactions. However, over time (400 min) and under physiological conditions, both carbons desorbed up to 100% of the loaded CBD.

Figure 3. Desorption kinetics of cannabidiol (CBD) from activated carbons CA and CAN functionalized with nitrogen groups under simulated physiological conditions.



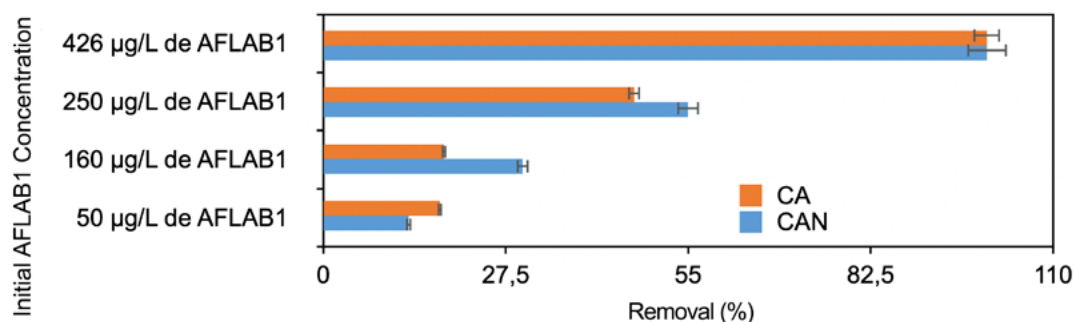
Note: Prepared by the authors

On the other hand, the desorption process was more efficient under gastric conditions due to the excess hydrogen ions in this medium, which altered all structures, making them cationic and causing electrostatic repulsion between the materials and CBD, leading to its release (Fritz et al. 2021). According to the latest recommendations from the Food Standards Agency (FSA), adults should consume CBD in food products at a dosage of 10 mg per day (Maldonado 2023). Therefore, the use of at least 0.7 to 0.8 grams of CA and CAN would provide the recommended dose. This is advantageous considering that evidence suggests oral administration of pure CBD is highly inefficient due to the molecule's lipophilicity, which results in slow, erratic, and variable absorption among individuals (Fu et al. 2022). Its oral bioavailability ranges between 5% and 10%, and the maximum plasma concentration for a 20 mg dose in men and a 15 mg dose in women is 14.5 ng/mL and 9.4 ng/mL, respectively (Perucca and Bialer 2020). These pioneering findings emphasize the need for careful formulation of CBD-based complexes to enhance solubility, bioavailability, and therapeutic effects, as well as the development of high-value formulations that could compete with the current supply of cannabis-derived products in the medium term.

Elimination of Aflatoxin B1 (AFLAB1) with Activated Carbon

Aflatoxin B1 (AFLAB1) is a toxic secondary metabolite produced by fungi (Kumar et al. 2021). When humidity and temperature conditions are favorable, fungi proliferate and form colonies capable of generating high concentrations of AFLAB1. Cereals, nuts, and fruits are primary sites for fungal growth and subsequent AFLAB1 production (Awuchi et al. 2020). Moreover, given their thermostability and resistance, these toxins persist throughout food processing, ultimately entering the human food chain (Chandra 2021). Exposure to high levels of AFLAB1 can cause acute necrosis, cirrhosis, and liver cancer. In the long term, these compounds exhibit carcinogenic, mutagenic, teratogenic, estrogenic, immunotoxic, nephrotoxic, and neurotoxic properties. Several strategies have been developed to mitigate the negative effects caused by toxin consumption, such as the use of adsorbents (Ma et al. 2021). The present study demonstrated the additional capacity of carbons to act as AFLAB1 binders in the intestine after CBD desorption. Specifically, the evaluated materials achieved aflatoxin removal rates ranging from 13% to 100% within just 15 minutes after the test began, as shown in Figure 4.

Figura 3. Eliminación de aflatoxina B1 (AFLAB1)



Note: Elimination of aflatoxin B1 (AFLAB1) using CA and CAN functionalized activated carbons after 15 minutes of testing at initial AFLA concentrations ranging from 0.05 mg/L to 0.426 mg/L in a pH 7.4 buffer. Prepared by the authors.

The adsorption efficiencies followed the order CAN>CA for most of the AFLAB1 concentrations evaluated. It might be assumed that adsorption is always conditioned by the porous space of the materials, meaning that materials such as CAN, with a smaller micropore space, would exhibit the lowest elimination capacity. However, CAN demonstrated a greater affinity for AFLAB1 despite having an area 11% smaller than its CA analog (Table 1). This same trend was observed during CBD adsorption. This phenomenon could be explained by considering that, although microporous space is reduced when nitrogen is introduced to the surface, this reduction is offset by an increased affinity of the nitrogen groups for CBD and AFLAB1 molecules, both of which are electron-rich anionic structures. The strong affinity between CAN and AFLAB1 compared to unmodified CA is attributed to hydrogen bonding between the electrons of AFLAB1's aromatic rings and the electropositive hydrogens covalently bonded to the nitrogen atom on the CAN surface (Alkorta, Elguero y Frontera 2020). The findings of this study are promising, as the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the absence of AFLAB1 in living organisms due to its carcinogenic, mutagenic, and teratogenic effects. Aflatoxin removal is often limited by the inability of conventional adsorbent-based methods to eliminate AFLAB1 concentrations in the µg/L range. However, in this study, complete removal was achieved in less than 20 minutes using only 10 mg of carbon.

Conclusions

Throughout this study, carbonaceous materials were successfully developed from agro-industrial waste with tailored chemistry to enhance cannabinoid loading and release under simulated physiological conditions, followed by aflatoxin removal. The results were highly promising, revealing delivery capacities of up to 14 mg of CBD per gram of carbon over 400 minutes through the gastrointestinal tract. Additionally, the same material demonstrated the ability to remove up to 100% of aflatoxin at a concentration of 426 µg/L. The nitrogen group modifications proposed for the carbon material proved beneficial in enhancing CBD immobilization, ensuring gradual release under physiological conditions, and ultimately facilitating AFLAB1 removal through irreversible chemical interactions. Finally, this type of study represents a valuable alternative, as it contributes to the transition from illicit crop cultivation to cultivation for phytotherapeutic purposes.

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Origin

This article is the result of the research project “Cannabis Nanocomposites for Controlled Release and Incorporation in Food Supplements,” a study focused on the replacement of illicit crops, the promotion of science for peace in Colombia, and the inclusion of women in science. The project has a one-year implementation period and is still ongoing.

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Availability of Data and Materials

Data and material availability is overseen by Professor Karol Zapata Acosta, who can be contacted at kzapata@unal.edu.co.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Tejeduría del sombrero: una tradición ancestral en el municipio de Aguadas, Caldas

Hat Weaving: An Ancestral Tradition in the Municipality of Aguadas, Caldas

Tecelagem de chapéus: tradição ancestral no município de Aguadas, Caldas

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RESUMEN

ABSTRACT

RESUMO

El sombrero Aguadeño se ha convertido en un símbolo de representatividad del municipio de Aguadas a nivel regional y nacional, este encarna la labor de las artesanas que encuentran en dicho oficio una forma de sustento, que se ha convertido en un elemento de salvaguarda de la cultura local, puesto que involucra el sentido arriero de la región cafetera. La tejeduría se ha visto permeada por la preocupación constante de una pérdida de relevo generacional que busca la manera de nuevas formas de creación artesanal. Por medio de entrevistas se busca reconocer el sentido de los aguadeños, tanto hacedores como espectadores, su sentido cultural, las expectativas de valor monetario y las necesidades de los artesanos. El ejercicio de investigación posee como objetivo identificar estrategias de protección y preservación de la tejeduría del sombrero Aguadeño como un oficio que configura la idiosincrasia y cultura del pueblo. Se utiliza un enfoque cualitativo, puesto que la recolección de datos no sigue procedimientos estandarizados y su análisis no es estadístico, hay mayor interés en lo subjetivo, la investigación sobre el tejido del sombrero en Aguadas se basa en las emociones, sensaciones, anécdotas y vivencias, las vías para recolectar datos han sido la observación, entrevistas, discusiones grupales e investigación documental.

Palabras clave: tejeduría; relevo generacional; artesanía; sombrero; patrimonio.

The Aguadeño hat has become a symbol of representativeness of the municipality of Aguadas at a regional and national level, it embodies the work of artisans who find in this trade a form of sustenance, but this has also become an element of safeguarding the local culture, since it involves the muleteer sense of the coffee region. Weaving has been permeated by the constant concern of a loss of generational renewal, but which also seeks the way of new forms of artisanal creation. Through interviews, we seek to recognize the meaning of the people of Aguadeños, both makers and spectators, their cultural sense, expectations of monetary value and the needs of artisans. The objective of the research exercise is to identify strategies for the protection and preservation of the weaving of the Aguadeño hat as a craft that shapes the idiosyncrasy and culture of the people. There is a qualitative approach, since the data collection does not follow standardized procedures and its analysis is not statistical, there is greater interest in the subjective, the research on the weaving of the hat in Aguadas, is based on emotions, sensations, anecdotes and experiences, the ways to collect data have been observation, interviews, group discussions and documentary research.

Keywords: weaving; generational change; craft; hat; heritage.

O chapéu Aguadeño tornou-se um símbolo de representatividade do município de Aguadas a nível regional e nacional, incorpora o trabalho dos artesãos que encontram neste ofício uma forma de sustento, mas este tornou-se também um elemento de salvaguarda da cultura local, uma vez que envolve o sentido de tropeiro da região cafeeira. A tecelagem tem sido permeada pela preocupação constante de uma perda de renovação geracional, mas que também busca o caminho de novas formas de criação artesanal. Através de entrevistas, buscamos reconhecer o significado do povo de Aguadeños, tanto fazedores quanto espectadores, seu senso cultural, expectativas de valor monetário e as necessidades dos artesãos. O objetivo da pesquisa é identificar estratégias para a proteção e preservação da tecelagem do chapéu Aguadeño como um ofício que molda a idiosincrasia e a cultura do povo. Há uma abordagem qualitativa, uma vez que a coleta de dados não segue procedimentos padronizados e sua análise não é estatística, há maior interesse no subjetivo, a pesquisa sobre a tecelagem do chapéu em Aguadas, é baseada em emoções, sensações, anedotas e experiências, as formas de coleta de dados têm sido observação, entrevistas, discussões em grupo e pesquisa documental.

Palavra-chave: tecelagem; mudança geracional; arte; chapéu; herança.

Literature Review

Aguadas, is a municipality located in the far north of the department of Caldas. According to reports from the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) (2018), it has a population of 22,823 inhabitants, distributed between the urban center and 68 rural villages. With a total area of 482.7 km², Aguadas is classified as one of the country's 17 Heritage Towns. Its historic center, designated a National Monument in 1982, the National Pasillo Festival, declared a Cultural Heritage of the Nation in 2005, and the Aguadeño hat, which has held a Designation of Origin since 2012, make this town a cultural hub enriched by wisdom, deeply rooted muleteer customs and traditions, and an intangible heritage that remains vibrant in its streets and in the daily lives of its residents.

One of the cultural elements that has brought the greatest renown to the municipality is the production of its most iconic handicraft, which is nationally recognized: hat weaving. This tradition has been an integral part of the lives of the people of Aguadas for decades. In 2022, according to data provided by the Municipal Mayor's Office of Aguadas in a document characterizing Aguadeño hat weavers for the "Somos Artesanos" (We Are Artisans) project, approximately 513 women engage in this artisanal craft as a means of supporting their families. However, this number may be significantly higher, as the municipality includes remote villages that were not accounted for in the census.

One of the most pressing challenges currently affecting this artisanal craft is the decline in generational continuity. The majority of artisans are over 50 years old, while children, teenagers, and young adults show little interest in carrying on the tradition. As one of the 12 artisanal products with a Designation of Origin, according to the Superintendence of Industry and Commerce, the Aguadeño hat holds significant cultural and economic importance for both the department and the country. For this reason, sustainability strategies are essential to ensure the survival of this local craft.

There are not enough texts on the weaving of the Aguadeño hat and its impact on the lives of local inhabitants. The foundation of this investigation is based on the following documents: Valencia Quintero, (2020). Weaving Tradition, Creating Identity, Building History, which systematizes an experience centered on the weaving of Aguadeño hats and their contribution to the identity of a territory. For this purpose, the Cooperativa Artesanal de Aguadas is taken as a reference, highlighting its role in preserving ancestral knowledge and safeguarding the municipality's traditions.

Artesanías de Colombia. (2013). Characterization of the Production Process of Hat-Making in Iraca, Municipality of Aguadas, Caldas. Characterization of the municipality and the population engaged in the craft of hat-making and its production. Soto, (2021). Factors Influencing the Loss of Generational Continuity in the Production of the Aguadeño Hat by the Weavers of Aguadas, Caldas. This study identifies the causes contributing to the decline in generational continuity in the craft of weaving the Aguadeño hat—an emblematic symbol of Aguadas, Caldas—and proposes strategies aimed at safeguarding this cultural heritage.

“ Weaving has been permeated by the constant concern of a loss of generational renewal, but which also seeks the way of new forms of artisanal creation. ”

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach, as data collection does not follow standardized procedures, and its analysis is non-statistical. Greater emphasis is placed on subjective aspects. The research on hat weaving in Aguadas is grounded in the emotions, sensations, anecdotes, and lived experiences of the artisans and admirers of the Aguadeño hat. The data collection methods used include observation, interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary research.

Participants

Artisans, children of artisans, Aguadas residents who purchase the handicrafts, hat traders, the education sector, and the cultural sector have all participated in interviews to assess their perceptions of the hat, its cultural significance, the loss of generational continuity, and sustainability strategies.

Techniques

The research techniques employed included observation, participant observation as the daughter of an artisan with a genuine interest, narrative analysis—focusing on how individuals recount their stories to reveal how they attribute meaning to their experiences and situations—and a literature review.

Phases of Fieldwork

Fieldwork began with a review of texts such as: Monograph on Aguadas by cultural manager Aníbal Valencia Ospina, Tourist Inventory of Aguadas, Caldas, and The Aguadeño Hat: A Symbol of Identity by Carlos Ariel Salazar Cardona. Subsequently, discussions were held with artisans, merchants, children of artisans, cultural managers, and educators in the municipality. It was also essential to understand how Aguadas residents perceive their local craftsmanship, guiding the development of cultural strategies to promote the hat.

Results

The weaving of the Aguadeño hat is one of the most representative cultural elements of the region. It serves as both a cultural symbol and a source of livelihood for many families. However, there is growing concern over the loss of generational continuity in the craft, compounded by limited modernization strategies for securing raw materials and the low financial value currently associated with it. Despite concerns about its decline, the Aguadeño hat has exhibited remarkable adaptability over time. For this reason, the research initiative has introduced a series of cultural, structural, and economic contributions to support the sustainable development of the municipality's artisanal craftsmanship.

Culture plays a crucial role in the sustainability of the Aguadeño hat. Festivals and cultural events serve as vital platforms for its promotion, visibility, and commercialization. However, it is necessary to move beyond mere promotion and focus on the professionalization of artisans so that weaving is recognized and developed as a viable business opportunity. To achieve this, it is essential to strengthen the artisans' skills through certification in occupational competencies, validating their ancestral knowledge. This can be achieved by offering workshops and courses on both traditional and contemporary weaving techniques to younger generations, ensuring that training programs also foster the creation of innovative designs and products using Iraca.

In the search for strategies to revitalize and promote the Aguadeño hat, strengthening the cultivation of the Iraca palm is essential. Therefore, strategies must be implemented to encourage planting through technical support, utilizing mechanisms provided by UMATA—the entity responsible for local rural development—along with bank credit programs and training initiatives for growers. These efforts should focus on developing new techniques for the cultivation, processing, and storage of the palm, thereby improving its quality and yield.

“ hat weaving has been an ongoing process in the lives of aguadeños for decades. ”

Beyond its cultural significance, the Aguadeño hat plays a crucial role in driving tourism in the region. It is necessary to design tourist routes that include visits to weavers' workshops, hands-on experiences where visitors can learn to weave with Iraca palm and immerse themselves in the local culture, as well as guided tours of Iraca palm plantations and artisanal sales points. Promoting fair and responsible trade of artisanal products is essential, along with strengthening collaboration between the local government, weavers' associations, the private sector, and educational institutions. The Designation of Origin must also be valued and protected to safeguard the authenticity and quality of the Aguadeño hat.

In this regard, establishing a weaving school is one of the key strategies for preserving the craft. This institution would provide spaces for younger generations to learn the art of weaving. Additionally, it should serve as a research hub to explore new applications of the Iraca palm across different sectors such as fashion, interior design, and industry. It must also document traditional weaving techniques for the Aguadeño hat and other forms of Iraca palm weaving. The weaving school should integrate educational programs within schools and communities to raise awareness about weaving as a cultural heritage. This includes student social service projects centered on learning the craft, as well as the preservation of traditions through discussion forums and pedagogical spaces with master artisans and hat traders.

Raising awareness about fair compensation is crucial for safeguarding this tradition. To this end, relevant entities must standardize fair pricing and promote ethical trade practices that ensure weavers receive appropriate payment for their work. Additionally, artisans should be encouraged to participate in national and international fairs, digital platforms, and specialized stores. Promotional strategies must also be developed to position the Aguadeño hat and Iraca weaving as unique, high-quality products. Furthermore, supporting the creation and strengthening of weavers' associations will enhance their management and commercial capabilities. Finally, the role of weavers as guardians of tradition should be recognized and celebrated, granting them the social recognition they rightfully deserve.

The future of craftsmanship is a shared responsibility among various stakeholders. It requires a collective effort from the people of Aguadas. Therefore, the implementation of sustainability strategies, training, fair trade practices, innovation, and cooperation is essential to safeguarding the municipality's cultural identity. From a cultural management perspective, it is crucial to support the establishment of artisan cooperatives and the development of cultural projects centered around weaving and the lives of artisans. For this reason, the research process must present safeguarding proposals to entities such as the municipal administration, merchants, and educational institutions.

Discussion

In Aguadas, the craft of weaving Iraca is primarily carried out by women. For them, weaving is a complementary activity rather than a full-time occupation, as most are homemakers whose primary responsibility is their household. When they have spare time, they dedicate themselves to weaving. Currently, due to the low income generated from selling their products, many artisans have stopped weaving, opting instead to take advantage of harvest seasons for crops such as coffee, blackberries, and avocados. Which provide a higher income. Most artisans state that the sale of hats has allowed them to finance their children's education. In Aguadas, weavers are not mass producers, as this is neither their purpose nor their essence. They regard weaving as a supplementary trade, preserving a tradition while prioritizing their household responsibilities.

According to accounts collected at the municipality's tourist information center, as of 1950, more than 7,000 people engaged in hat weaving. However, during activities carried out by the Municipal Mayor's Office (2020–2024), fewer than 600 individuals were identified as continuing this artisanal practice. This decline underscores the need to investigate the challenges faced by artisans, the historical evolution of the Aguadeño hat, and the

measures being taken to improve conditions for those who dedicate themselves to this craft. It is also necessary to determine how generational continuity in the practice of craftsmanship will be ensured within the municipality.

The loss of generational continuity is an issue that must be addressed by local and regional entities. The Aguadeño hat represents the cultural identity of Aguadas and provides recognition in various settings. Its preservation must remain a constant concern for both artisans and those who appreciate this craft. Additionally, fair trade practices, artisans' quality of life, and recognition of the challenges associated with the hat must be prioritized. Sustainable strategies must be developed, from the cultivation of Iraca palm to the establishment of artisan schools. It is also essential to create spaces that allow for a deeper understanding of the perspectives of artisans, collectors, merchants, Iraca growers, the general community, and cultural managers.

Conclusions

Currently, there is a lack of comprehensive reference data on hat weaving in the municipality. For this reason, it is necessary to develop an updated document that highlights the contributions of weaving to both culture and tourism. This research is driven by a desire to deepen the understanding of one of the most significant cultural emblems of the region. Additionally, from a cultural management perspective, contributions can be made to ensure its sustainability and inspire new generations. The scope of this study seeks to capture the perceptions of all stakeholders involved in the production and sale of the hat, both within and beyond the municipality.

According to local merchants, the hat market is valued at 3.5 billion Colombian pesos, with approximately 60,000 units sold annually. This market remains active and continues to provide artisans with a means of sustaining their families. However, further sustainability strategies must be implemented, as younger generations do not perceive the hat industry as a viable business opportunity.

The Aguadeño hat holds such strong cultural significance and sense of identity that it has a dedicated space at the Casa de la Cultura "Francisco Giraldo," which houses the National Hat Museum. This collection includes more than 300 hats from different regions of Colombia, 20 international pieces, and exhibition rooms showcasing the craft. The museum also provides insight into the cultivation of the Iraca palm, a breakdown of the hat's components, the world's largest Aguadeño hat, historical accounts, artisan profiles, festivals, and other key aspects of its cultural relevance. This institution highlights the profound cultural value of the Aguadeño hat, emphasizing how it remains an integral part of daily life for the people of Aguadas and a source of curiosity for tourists visiting the region. According to reports from the municipality's tourist information center, tour guide Luis Fernando Arias states: "The municipality receives approximately 30,000 tourists per year, 80% of whom express interest in learning about the hat," indicating that the hat serves as a key driver of tourism.

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Origin

This research project was undertaken as a degree requirement for the Specialization in Cultural Management, and its current status within the document reflects the conclusion of the investigation.

Conflict of Interest

Personal considerations apply, as my mother is a local artisan, and the decline of hat weaving has had a direct and meaningful impact on the development of this research.

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Representaciones sociales sobre la organización social del cuidado de personas con discapacidad. Apuntes desde San Pedro de los Milagros, Antioquia

Social Representations Around Social Organization of Care for People with Disabilities. Notes From San Pedro de los Milagros, Antioquia

Representações sociais sobre a organização social do cuidado de pessoas com deficiência. Observações de San Pedro de los Milagros, Antioquia

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RESUMEN

El artículo surge de la investigación titulada “Organización social del cuidado de las personas con discapacidad en condición de dependencia en el Municipio de San Pedro de Los Milagros”, realizada entre agosto de 2023 y junio 2024 en la Fundación Universitaria Católica del Norte. Esta investigación buscó comprender la configuración de la organización social del cuidado en las familias de las personas con discapacidad en condición de dependencia, definiendo la organización social del cuidado como aquella interrelación entre Estado, familia, comunidad y mercado, en la provisión, producción y distribución de servicios de cuidado. Se realizó una investigación cualitativa bajo un modelo etnográfico. Se presentan hallazgos concentrados en un objetivo específico de la investigación: comprender las representaciones sociales en torno al cuidado, presentes en los actores de cuidado de las personas con discapacidad en condición de dependencia. Se definen las representaciones sociales como aquellas estructuras de pensamiento compartidas, instituidas e instituyentes de la realidad social, por los agentes en un campo social específico (Bourdieu y Wacquant, 1995). Las representaciones sociales encontradas se asocian a tres ideas emergentes: la vinculación del cuidado a la construcción de saberes específicos, a experiencias de soledad e incertidumbre y al autocuidado como recurso estratégico.

Palabras clave: cuidado; discapacidad; dependencia; representaciones sociales.

ABSTRACT

The article arises from the research project entitled “Social organization of care for people with disabilities in a situation of dependency in the Municipality of San Pedro de Los Milagros”, carried out between August 2023 and July 2024 at the Universidad Católica del Norte. The aim was to understand the configuration of the social organization of care in the families of people with disabilities in a situation of dependency, defining the social organization of care as the interrelationship between the State, family, community and market in the provision, production and distribution of care services. Qualitative research was carried out under an ethnographic model. The findings are presented, focused on a specific research objective: understanding the social representations of care present in the care actors of people with disabilities in a situation of dependency. Social representations are defined as those shared, instituted and instituting structures of thought of social reality, by the agents in a specific social field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1995). The social representations found are associated with three emerging ideas: the link between care and the construction of specific knowledge, experiences of loneliness and uncertainty, and self-care as a strategic resource.

Keywords: care; disability, dependency, social representations.

RESUMO

O artigo surge do projeto de pesquisa intitulado “Organização social do cuidado de pessoas com deficiência em situação de dependência no Município de San Pedro de Los Milagros”, realizado entre agosto de 2023 e julho de 2024 na Universidade Católica do Norte. O objetivo era compreender a configuração da organização social do cuidado nas famílias de pessoas com deficiência em situação de dependência, definindo a organização social do cuidado como a inter-relação entre Estado, família, comunidade e mercado na provisão, produção e distribuição de serviços de cuidado. Foi realizada uma pesquisa qualitativa sob um modelo etnográfico. Os resultados são apresentados, focados em um objetivo específico da pesquisa: compreensão das representações sociais do cuidado presentes nos atores cuidadores de pessoas com deficiência em situação de dependência. As representações sociais são definidas como aquelas estruturas de pensamento compartilhadas, instituídas e instituintes da realidade social, pelos agentes em um campo social específico (Bourdieu e Wacquant, 1995). As representações sociais encontradas estão associadas a três ideias emergentes: a vinculação do cuidado à construção de saberes específicos, experiências de solidão e incerteza e o autocuidado como recurso estratégico.

Palavras-chave: cuidado; deficiência; dependência; representações sociais.

Literature Review

The notions surrounding disability as a social and health phenomenon at both the international and national levels have undergone significant transformations in the current century. One of the most significant global milestones is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has been in force since 2008. This regulatory framework led to the enactment of Law No. 1618 of 2013 in Colombia, which “establishes provisions to guarantee the full exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities,” recognizing them as subjects of rights.

In the country, according to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), “as of August 2020, a total of 1,319,049 persons with disabilities had been identified and recorded in the official registry of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. This figure represents 2.6% of the total national population” (2020, p. 4). Of this population, 50.1% are men and 48.9% are women. It is noteworthy that 70.3% of persons with disabilities are enrolled in the subsidized health system, a factor that was also evident and relevant during the research process, as it highlighted the barriers this population faces in accessing healthcare services.

Similarly, “34.62% of persons with disabilities (617,779) receive assistance from others to perform their basic daily activities” (DANE, 2020, p. 5). Those providing support in these everyday tasks are primarily women, who account for more than 55% of the caregivers recognized by DANE. Meanwhile, “of the 1,487,354 households that include at least one person with disabilities, 38.3% are classified under socioeconomic stratum one (1) and 34.7% under stratum two (2)” (DANE, 2020, p. 5). This data underscores the feminization of care work, which is largely carried out within domestic settings.

The Colombian government has formulated policies and programs to address the needs of persons with disabilities. However, most of these initiatives focus on physical, biological, and emotional aspects, overlooking a fundamental issue: the guarantee of care. Moreover, there is a lack of public programs addressing this population in rural areas, a gap that is also reflected in the scarcity of academic studies that consider the category of the social organization of care in relation to disability in rural contexts.

For this research, a theoretical review was conducted, structured along two main lines: identifying specific studies on care, its production, and its distribution; and studies focused on disability as a social and health phenomenon. Both reviews prioritized Latin American studies from the last 10 years. The category of the social organization of care has been analyzed from two central theoretical perspectives. On one hand, Latin American theories of care conceptualize it as a core component of the health-disease process in populations. On the other hand, social policy research has framed care as a fundamental factor in maintaining and ensuring well-being in Latin American societies.

The incorporation of gender perspectives into Latin American theories on health has made it possible to complement the classic health-illness-care triad with the central notion of this project: the category of care (Domínguez Mon, 2017; Batthyány, Genta, and Perrotta, 2017; Hernández, 2022). Among other aspects, care is understood as a fundamental axis in the provision of assistance for non-communicable and long-term health conditions, illnesses, or ailments. It is also recognized as a key tool for safeguarding life amid epidemiological transformations that increasingly lead to chronicity.

Latin American theories on care have also examined who assumes responsibility for care work and how its burden is distributed. Consequently, the backbone of this academic field is the category of the sexual division of labor (Batthyány, 2015; Domínguez Mon, 2017; Arango Gaviria et al., 2018, among others). This framework helps to explain how the feminization of care and its relegation to the domestic sphere align with the fundamental logic of the modern patriarchal structure, which systematically organizes care dynamics across all aspects of life (Puyana, Hernández, and Gutiérrez, 2020).

In line with this, Mendes, Domínguez, and Schwarz (2011), along with Lenguita (2020), argue that the feminization of care and its confinement to the domestic sphere reflect a patriarchal structure. This structure devalues and obscures women's labor within the home, attributing it to a supposed natural vocation, self-sacrifice, or familial love.

From the perspective of social policy, various scholars have contributed to the concept of the social organization of care, which positions care as a central element in the notion of well-being. It also prompts an inquiry into the interrelations among the state, the market, the family, and the community in the production and distribution of care work. This concept, explored by Pautassi (2016), Ceminari and Stolkiner (2018), and Pautassi, Arcidiácono, and Straschnoy (2014), among others, enables the recognition of care networks—comprising those who require care, those who provide it, institutional actors, recognized rights, and market participation. Furthermore, it advances the discussion of care distribution beyond the binary of men and women, extending it to the division between the public and domestic spheres.

This is why Pautassi (2016) proposes conceptualizing care as a set of practices that sustain and nurture individuals—practices that are as diverse as they are essential to human existence. Care tasks range from self-care to direct care for others, incorporating the creation of conditions that facilitate caregiving: purchasing food, paying for services, doing laundry; and the management of care: organizing schedules, coordinating transportation, and ensuring access to educational and healthcare institutions, among others.

Similarly, regarding disability studies, two predominant paradigms were identified: the rehabilitative paradigm and the personal autonomy paradigm. Each paradigm promotes theoretical and intervention models that approach the category from different perspectives (Aritizábal, 2021). For this research project, we adopted the social model of disability (Ávila, Nuñez, and Colchado, 2021), which aligns with paradigms that emphasize the personal autonomy of persons with disabilities while challenging the biomedical perspective that assumes the need to rehabilitate or minimize disability to conform to biomedical norms of normality (Bonilla, 2020; Victoria Maldonado, 2013). Academic literature within this theoretical framework allows for an examination of how society facilitates or obstructs the daily lives and social organization of care for persons with disabilities, with particular focus on contextual barriers—economic, environmental, social, and cultural.

Methodology

A qualitative research approach was employed, utilizing an ethnographic method. More specifically, a microethnographic study (Morse, 1994) was designed, prioritizing the selection of participants based on shared characteristics that distinguish them from other groups within a specific context. A total of eight in-depth interviews (Marradi, Archenti, and Piovani, 2007) were conducted with persons with disabilities in conditions of dependency and their caregivers, residing in both rural and urban areas of the municipality. Additionally, the Zarit Burden Interview was applied to assess caregiver burden levels, and an in-depth interview was conducted with the professional overseeing the municipality's disability program. Participant recruitment was facilitated through the municipality's disability program. Ethical considerations were guided by Colombia's professional code of ethics for Social Work, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Fieldwork was conducted between October and November 2023. For data analysis and processing, the constant comparative method (Glasser and Strauss, 1967) was used, employing a categorical analysis matrix that organized information into predefined and emerging categories derived from the transcription of interviews.

Analytical Results

The analysis led to the identification of three emerging ideas related to the social representations that shape the social organization of care for persons with disabilities in a condition of dependency within the territory. First, care for persons with disabilities is recognized as a skill acquired through daily practice and the development of habits and customs that ultimately result in the acquisition of specialized knowledge.

In this regard, caregiving for persons with disabilities in a condition of dependency disrupts daily life, initially presenting as a challenge. It primarily confronts women in the household with unfamiliar tasks, both in the direct

provision of care and in the creation of enabling conditions for caregiving, as well as in resource management. Over time, these tasks lead to the accumulation of a form of capital and practical knowledge in those who perform them. This acquired expertise, integrated into daily routines, transforms primary caregivers into specialists in their role.

This first representation allows for three convergent analyses. First, recognizing the establishment of a continuous caregiving routine enables an understanding of intra-household care as a fundamental component of long-term healthcare processes, particularly in cases of disability involving a high degree of daily dependency. The essential nature of permanent care in these specific health situations requires not only the constant dedication of individuals to ensuring the well-being of persons with disabilities but also the formation of a caregiver who, through firsthand experience, emerges as a knowledgeable and skilled individual capable of managing the everyday challenges of caregiving. From this social representation, caregiving can be interpreted as a process that shapes a distinct type of individual: the woman who successfully navigates the challenges and obstacles associated with managing and providing care and, through the accumulation of knowledge, becomes an expert in strategies for meeting the needs of care recipients.

Secondly, this way of representing care and the caregiver makes it possible to understand the fulfillment of the needs of persons with disabilities as an invisible system of guarantees, a system that, according to testimonies, is sustained by practices rooted in specific knowledge. That is, intra-household care, particularly that provided to persons with disabilities, is not experienced as a spontaneous, simple, or accessible practice but rather as a complex system of routines and dynamics that can only be accessed through experience and the acquisition of knowledge. Although this knowledge emerges from daily practice rather than a specialized or academic process, it nonetheless constructs a distinct expertise. This expertise is acquired through the accumulation of practical capital, which in itself gains intrinsic value.

This leads to the third key analytical point: recognizing this way of representing care allows for an understanding that there is a clear distinction between those who can assume responsibility for meeting the needs of persons with disabilities and those who cannot. Thus, the notion is reinforced that some individuals are recognized as capable caregivers, while others, despite contributing sporadically or even regularly to sustaining daily life, remain in a secondary role due to their lack of the knowledge acquired through continuous caregiving practice.

This understanding justifies why adult women in the household take on the primary responsibility for care, while other household members or non-cohabiting relatives with the same degree of kinship and responsibility—typically parents, siblings, and/or grandparents—distance themselves, at least discursively, from the central management of caregiving. Even when these individuals perform certain daily caregiving tasks, their lack of specific knowledge and practical capital places them outside the primary circle of responsibility.

In this sense, care can be understood not only as a practice shaped by gender norms and the sexual division of labor (Ceminari & Stolkiner, 2018), but also as a social space that, due to its demand for complex knowledge, reinforces and perpetuates these norms. It differentiates not only between those who provide care and those who do not, but more significantly, between those who know how to provide care and those who do not.

The implementation of this social representation results in the differentiation between full responsibility for the person with a disability and the more or less sporadic assistance provided in everyday life. Even among relatives with the same degree of kinship, a construction of meaning takes place in which certain members of the household become primary caregivers out of obligation, while others contribute from a secondary position, addressing needs only occasionally. In this sense, this conceptualization of care also establishes different degrees of relevance among actors within the social organization of care.

Interestingly, this differentiation does not only operate through the division between female caregivers and male assistants but also through the distinction of which spaces are deemed valid for caregiving and which are not. The analytical process revealed that the social representation associating care with knowledge accumulated through daily experience fosters the perception, among families of persons with disabilities, that the home is the most suitable, optimal, and reliable space for providing care—often at the expense of other organizations or institutions, including healthcare facilities.

It is assumed that professional healthcare settings, despite their technical expertise, are inadequate to meet the needs of individuals requiring care because they lack familiarity with their routines, habits, ways of communicating, and methods of seeking assistance. While these institutions may possess specialized technical knowledge, they are perceived as lacking the intimate, non-professionalized, yet highly specialized knowledge that has historically positioned the domestic sphere—particularly female caregiving—as the most appropriate environment for sustaining life.

Thus, even though the social organization of care may at times extend beyond the home, as individuals may require more or less frequent interactions with healthcare institutions, the representation of care as knowledge shaped by everyday experience reinforces the idea of the home as the optimal, and in many cases, the only legitimate space for meeting caregiving needs. It also reinforces the notion that familiarity with the person being cared for is the primary criterion for distributing caregiving responsibilities. Additionally, a second social representation was identified, which frames the experience of caregiving for persons with disabilities as one of constant uncertainty, generating feelings of loneliness and fear of the future among those who assume caregiving responsibilities. Given the impossibility of distributing caregiving tasks equally among different actors, those who take on most of the daily responsibilities construct social imaginaries in which caregiving becomes an impossible task without their presence and intervention. In other words, they perceive themselves as indispensable agents for sustaining the lives of persons with a disability condition.

This does not necessarily mean that those who assume caregiving roles are the only essential actors or that others are incapable of performing these tasks. Rather, it is interpreted as an exercise in self-perception that leads to persistent feelings of anguish, fear, and anxiety about the medium- and long-term future. From this perspective, caregivers express that these tasks represent a fully obligatory responsibility—duties they cannot omit, postpone, or, even less, delegate. This social representation implies that if delegating caregiving tasks is already difficult within the family unit, the possibility of sharing responsibilities with other actors in the state, community, or market sectors seems entirely unfeasible.

It is important to highlight that positioning themselves as indispensable caregivers results in profound exhaustion in the lives of these women. In addition to the physical burden of performing a constant, unpaid, and inescapable role, there is a significant mental and emotional toll stemming from the lack of time and prioritization of other aspects of life, whether family-related, personal, or social. This situation presents a major challenge regarding the need to learn how to live with uncertainty. Some of the interviewees have been performing caregiving duties for 10 to 20 years without finding strategies for delegation, coordination, or support from other actors. As a result, they not only experience a lack of time, energy, and opportunity for other activities—especially self-care—but also live with a persistent fear of falling ill, aging, or dying, and the implications this would have for the future of persons in a disability condition. This was evident in the following testimony from one of the participants:

“Because of the illness I have, sometimes I feel exhausted. Diabetes makes you very tired, whether you want to or not. You feel drained. The exhaustion from the daily routine, the illness, and the constant dedication to them—it all adds up, and sometimes you just feel like running away, but you don’t even know where to go.” (personal communication, November 10, 2023).

Thus, the caregiving of persons with a disability condition becomes the central focus of daily life, perceived as an obligation that generates anxiety and fear about the possibility of failing in a context of total dependency. This was further corroborated by the application of the Zarit Burden Interview, which revealed high levels of emotional exhaustion among caregivers and a significant risk of burnout.

Finally, especially among primary caregivers, a third social representation is consolidated, positioning self-care as an instrument for caring for others, in this case, persons with disabilities. The ability to maintain a healthy life, build supportive social relationships, and access physical and mental healthcare is transformed into a means for optimal caregiving, abandoning any possibility of being interpreted and experienced as an end in itself. It is notable that testimonies clearly reflect the notion that, in order to care for persons with disabilities, it is essential to ensure various practices that support one’s own health. At least at the discursive level, activities such as attending medical check-ups, resting at appropriate times, and maintaining a healthy diet are perceived as fundamental requirements for sustaining caregiving responsibilities. For example, one of the participants stated.

“I work a lot on that part, I really like doing things for myself, to feel good, because it is very important to give him the best of me” (personal communication, November 10, 2023).

In the background, additional needs related to maintaining social relationships, mental health care, spirituality, and leisure emerge. However, none of these activities, routines, or self-care practices are acknowledged as intrinsically valuable for personal well-being. Instead, they are framed as essential conditions for fulfilling the central role of domestic life: caregiving for persons with disabilities. Thus, self-care is conceptualized as a strategic resource for interpersonal caregiving. It is also important to note that this dynamic extends beyond the primary caregiver and involves other family members. For instance, when the person with a disability has siblings and/or nieces and nephews—whether older or younger—they also become strategic caregivers, occasionally altering their childhood experiences.

Discussion

The social representations developed in the previous section can be examined and expanded upon through engagement with various theoretical perspectives. First, we align with the constructivist theory of social representations, which posits that individuals, in this case, caregivers, produce socially shared meanings through which they construct their lived world (Araya, 2002).

Additionally, we concur with Wolfgang and Hayes (2011) that these representations are not solely confined to language, ideas conveyed through discourse, or the meanings attributed to words based on time and cultural context. Social representations serve to construct and reproduce socially shared images, such as the collective perception embedded in common sense that assigns caregiving responsibilities for family members with disabilities to the women of the household.

Another point of agreement with Wolfgang and Hayes (2011) pertains to their assertion that the analyzed representations in this study lead female caregivers to develop habits, behaviors, and perspectives on caregiving that distinguish them from other social groups. In this regard, the notion of shared representation is relevant and coherent, as it aligns with the authors' perspective that such representations function as decision-making criteria, guiding everyday actions and shaping interactions with other social actors.

This understanding supports, in accordance with Araya (2002) and Wolfgang and Hayes (2011), the multiple roles that social representations play in social reproduction. First, they provide a framework for understanding the world and its relationships, as seen in the way caregiving for persons with disabilities is symbolized as a practice rooted in complex, specialized knowledge exclusive to a specific social group—female caregivers within the home. Second, they serve a valuation function, classifying different actors as either capable or incapable of meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. Finally, they influence action, as caregiving becomes a daily practice shaped by shared representations, leading to experiences of uncertainty and distress among caregivers.

Latin American theories of care provide valuable insights that further expand this analysis. The recognition of caregiving as a permanent routine, sustained by specialized and complex knowledge that ensures the fulfillment of daily needs, aligns closely with the contributions of Domínguez Mon (2017). According to this author, intra-domestic caregiving constitutes a fundamental link in long-term healthcare processes, particularly in cases of high-dependency disabilities that affect daily life.

Additionally, the analysis of shared social representations within this specific form of social organization of care facilitates a dialogue with the contributions of Batthyány, Genta, and Perrotta (2017). The authors agree with the notion of care as a fundamental link in healthcare processes and assert that domestic care is structured “as a true invisible system of healthcare” (p. 188), a system that, as presented, is based on practices sustained by specific knowledge and capital. Intra-domestic care, particularly that provided to individuals with disabilities, is experienced as a systematic and regular occupation, one that distinguishes between trained and untrained caregivers. Although all caregivers faced this responsibility as a challenge, they successfully consolidated resources linked to expertise, challenging the notion that anyone can provide care, much like the professional healthcare field.

The emerging findings facilitate dialogue with various academic perspectives that reinforce the connection between caregiving responsibilities and health, illness, and caregivers' well-being, particularly in terms of mental health. In this regard, based on the exhaustion and persistent distress inherent in the daily caregiving duties within this population, agreement is found with Ortiz Viveros et al. (2015), Basile and López (2021), and Aguirre (2024) regarding the emotional toll this caregiving structure and distribution impose on adult women. Everyday experiences of overburden, stress, sadness, and isolation define the daily reality of caregiving.

Finally, Therborn's contributions (2010 and 2013) are brought into consideration, particularly in the recognition of self-care as a strategic resource primarily oriented toward the care of others. By assigning a secondary, subsidiary, and instrumental role to the practices that sustain the well-being of caregivers, the author's concept of existential inequalities becomes relevant: in this context, it is understood how the continued feminization and domestic confinement of the social organization of care for individuals with disabilities place caregivers in a position of inequality in terms of recognition and value.

Conclusions

The research made it possible to recognize that the social organization of care for individuals with disabilities in the region brings together various family, territorial, and community actors who consolidate more or less coordinated practices essential to sustaining life. However, the social representations constructed around the organization of care reinforce its perception—at least discursively—as a domestic responsibility, where the family is emphasized as the primary social setting and adult women as the principal guarantors of the daily care of individuals with disabilities in the municipality.

In this regard, socially shared notions are built around care that strengthen its feminization and familial association: its connection to specific knowledge acquired through practice, the formation of ideas tied to the indispensable role of female caregivers as the primary responsible figures, and the instrumentalization of any self-care practices, which relegates them to a position of existential inequality within the domestic sphere.

For these reasons, it is crucial to mobilize material, cultural, and educational efforts to actively engage other actors in the social organization of care. These include the State, as the guarantor of rights at the national, departmental, and municipal levels, the organized community, and other relevant family and/or territorial actors.

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Formación de competencias y cultura para la paz en la educación superior en Colombia

Training of Competencies and Culture for Peace in Higher Education in Colombia

Formação de competências e cultura para a paz no ensino superior na Colômbia

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RESUMEN

La cultura de violencia que se está gestando en la sociedad colombiana, cuestiona a la educación y su apuesta misional para aportar en la consolidación de la paz. Esta situación motivó la investigación al considerar que el profesional debe tener la formación de otras competencias en su perfil de egreso, que aporte a esta necesidad colectiva nacional. El estudio se enmarcó en un paradigma cualitativo con enfoque hermenéutico para comprender la acción educativa en relación con la paz y respondió la pregunta medular de la indagación: ¿La educación superior en Colombia está enfocada en formar competencias y cultura para la paz?, a través del análisis documental; luego se presentan los resultados junto con la discusión y se concluye que la educación superior requiere una reestructuración de fondo para responder con pertinencia a la construcción de una nueva sociedad caracterizada por la cultura de la paz.

Palabras clave: formación integral, competencias, cultura de paz y educación superior.

ABSTRACT

The culture of violence that is developing in Colombian society questions education and its missionary commitment to contribute to the consolidation of peace. This situation motivated the investigation, considering that the professional must have the training of other skills in his graduation profile, which contributes to this national collective need. The study was framed in a qualitative paradigm with a hermeneutic approach to understand educational action in relation to peace and answered the core question of the investigation: Is higher education in Colombia focused on forming competencies and culture for peace?, through of documentary analysis; The results were then presented along with the discussion and it was concluded that higher education requires a fundamental restructuring to respond relevantly to the construction of a new society characterized by the culture of peace.

Keywords: comprehensive training, skills, culture of peace and higher education.

RESUMO

A cultura de violência que se desenvolve na sociedade colombiana questiona a educação e o seu compromisso missionário em contribuir para a consolidação da paz. Essa situação motivou a investigação, considerando que o profissional deve ter a formação de outras competências no seu perfil de graduação, o que contribui para essa necessidade coletiva nacional. O estudo foi enquadrado num paradigma qualitativo com abordagem hermenêutica para compreender a ação educativa em relação à paz e respondeu à questão central da investigação: O ensino superior na Colômbia está focado na formação de competências e cultura para a paz?, através da análise documental; Os resultados foram então apresentados juntamente com a discussão e concluiu-se que o ensino superior necessita de uma reestruturação fundamental para responder de forma relevante à construção de uma nova sociedade caracterizada pela cultura da paz.

Palavras-chave: formação abrangente, competências, cultura de paz e ensino superior

Introduction

This research stems from a longstanding obligation of education to Colombian society. In this regard, one of the principles of higher education established in Law 30 of 1992 is to focus on the “development of human potential in a comprehensive manner.” Article 4 states that it is a cultural public service that, “without prejudice to the specific aims of each field of knowledge, will foster in learners a reflective spirit, oriented toward the achievement of personal autonomy, within a framework of freedom of thought and ideological pluralism” (p. 1). Education for a culture of peace is not explicitly referenced in this administrative act, nor is there a clear motivation for integrating these competencies. However, by emphasizing comprehensive training, the law establishes a normative mandate for competencies and the culture of peace to be addressed by the national education system. This serves as a contribution to Colombian society, which is increasingly affected by violence, intimidation, and violations at various levels, undermining social coexistence.

Reaffirming the objective of higher education to provide comprehensive training for professionals represents a crucial opportunity to strengthen national unity and address the country’s diverse challenges (Congress of Colombia, 1992). Accordingly, higher education, in line with the principle of university autonomy, can develop the Peace Education in accordance with educational models and create spaces for peacebuilding through academic activities such as reflection, research, learning, and dialogue (Presidency of the Republic, 2015).

Under the Colombian legal framework, higher education institutions are expected to contribute to peacebuilding efforts. However, there are no specific guidelines to direct this mandate. According to national legislation, education for peace is contingent on each university’s educational programs and models, meaning it does not occupy a prominent position in the higher education curriculum. The competencies that predominate in higher education are based on the Tuning Latin America project (2004-2007), classified into learning models, social values, the international technological context, and interpersonal skills. Education for these purposes must go beyond the constitutional framework that recognizes peace as a value, a duty, and a right of Colombians, to acknowledge peace as a fundamental right of every human being. (Delgado Zárate, 2020).

Given this social issue, which is rooted in the increasing violence in Colombia, this research highlights the importance of ensuring that higher education graduates incorporate both theoretical and practical foundations into their professional profiles. This enables them to become *citizens with the competencies and a culture of peace*, contributing to the consolidation of Colombian constitutional law, which is inherently linked to their ethical and collaborative engagement in society. In line with this perspective, this article presents the theoretical developments that engage with the perspectives of the research participants, which ultimately led to the study’s findings and conclusions. The objective is to issue a collective call for higher education in Colombia to complement specialized knowledge with the development of additional competencies that foster peaceful coexistence.

Theoretical Framework

Knowledge validated by other researchers and experts in the field provides a solid foundation that strengthens the rigor of this study, as the existing epistemological frameworks already possess established developments and relevance, which, when engaged in dialogue with other perspectives, further enrich the research approach. Accordingly, the key topics addressed in this study are: i. Comprehensive Education ii. Educational Competencies iii. The Culture of Peace.

Comprehensive Education

Throughout history, education has been recognized as a fundamental tool for shaping and building a desired societal model. One of the fundamental responsibilities of professionals is to contribute to societal transformation and the improvement of human living conditions (Nova, 2015). Beyond providing strong technical competencies, higher education must also foster the development of ethically responsible citizens committed to peacebuilding, upholding human rights, and defending the core values of democracy (UNESCO, 2009).

Comprehensive education is essential for strengthening the competencies required by Colombian professionals to initiate and reinforce the culture of peace. In this regard, comprehensive education must acknowledge that, as Morin (1999) states, the human being is: “physical, biological, psychological, cultural, social, and historical” (p. 2). Comprehensive education must go beyond a solely cognitive approach to become a way of life characterized by respect, care for life, dignity, and the rights of every human being. In other words, the objective of comprehensive education is to place the student at the center and support their development in all dimensions, enabling them to achieve personal fulfillment. This aligns with the statement by Marcela Orduz (2020), who asserts that “Comprehensive education addresses human actions both individually and as a multidimensional and pluridimensional being, taking into account all their specificities.” In this regard, she considers comprehensive education to be systematic, sequential, and emotional, designed to meet the needs of individuals and their context (p. 17).

Educational Competencies

This research has focused on complexity as the epistemological foundation of competencies. This perspective recognizes that competencies form an evolving and imperfect model, requiring critical thinking and analysis to be effectively understood and applied in comprehensive human education. According to Tobón (2013), competencies are defined as: “Comprehensive actions for identifying, interpreting, arguing, and solving problems within a given context, developing and applying different forms of knowledge in an integrated manner (knowing how to be, knowing how to coexist, knowing how to do, and knowing how to learn), with competence, continuous improvement, and ethical principles” (p. 93).

The goal of competency development within comprehensive education is to achieve personal self-realization through an ethically grounded life project. Knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are essential elements for contributing to societal transformation. In summary, this research is based on a systemic and multidimensional epistemology of the competencies required for individuals to become promoters of peace and active contributors to building a culture of peace.

The Culture of Peace

Research on peace has strengthened the epistemological foundations of peace studies, aiming to reduce direct, systemic, structural, or symbolic violence. It seeks to understand the origins of conflicts to develop pathways for peaceful resolution by analyzing changes in human behavior in relation to oneself and others (Jiménez, 2007). The objective of peace research is to provide epistemological insights that help individuals become more humane and fulfilled. In this regard, it is relevant to orient higher education towards the construction of a culture of peace, which, as defined by Tuvilla (2004), encompasses the values, traditions, behaviors, and lifestyles that foster a

constructive and creative way of relating to one another. This perspective embraces a holistic yet evolving vision of peace, striving for human harmony.

A culture of peace is centered on promoting, respecting, safeguarding, and upholding life, dignity, and all human rights; rejecting all forms of violence; and adhering to the core principles of peacebuilding: freedom, tolerance, solidarity, truth, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, equity, inclusion, social cohesion, the establishment of social justice, and the reinforcement of mutual understanding among all human beings.

Methodological Framework

This research follows a qualitative paradigm, which Marín Gallego (2019) defines as an inductive-deductive process with a systemic perspective for analyzing the dynamics and complexity of reality. The objective of this research is to comprehend reality within diverse contexts. It is characterized by a humanistic approach that does not reduce human beings to quantifiable data but rather focuses on their holistic nature. Within this paradigm, all contexts, situations, and individuals are considered worthy of investigation.

The epistemological stance of this study is framed within the hermeneutic approach, which is understood as the science of interpretation. This approach facilitates the comprehension, interpretation, and understanding of the meaning behind human actions in relation to oneself, others, and various social contexts. Research conducted under this approach prioritizes describing and understanding the uniqueness and particularities of phenomena. In this sense, the descriptions formulated by the researcher are distinguished by their contextualization (Hernández, 2023).

State of the Art

To identify relevant documents and collect data, the Scopus research tool was used. To initiate the search, two keywords were entered: "Competence" and "higher education," yielding 8,658 documents. To refine the results in accordance with the research, a third category, "culture of peace," was added, reducing the number to two documents. (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Competence" AND "higher education") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("culture of peace")). According to the state of the art, there is a scarcity of academic production related to competencies development for the culture of peace in higher education. Strictly speaking, as of today, no documents specifically addressing competencies for peace in higher education have been identified. TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Competences for peace" AND "Higher education"). Thus, competencies development and the culture of peace in higher education in Colombia have not occupied a significant position within the academic community.

Additionally, a bibliographic review was conducted across the following databases: Dialnet, Google Scholar, Redalyc, and Scielo, focusing on education for peace and the culture of peace in higher education.

Results

In the first place, the documentary analysis showed that the trend in peace research has focused on negative peace, positive peace, cultural peace (Johan Galtung), imperfect peace (Francisco Muñoz), and neutral peace (Francisco Jiménez) (Jiménez Bautista and Jiménez Aguilar, 2014). Inquiries into peace have enriched its epistemological foundation and, as a result, a more expeditious understanding of the different conceptions of peace has been achieved.

In second place, it was observed that studies on education for peace have focused on its genesis, with the waves playing a predominant role: first wave, the new school; second wave, the UNESCO approach; third wave, non-violence; and fourth wave, Research for peace (Jares, 2005).

Thirdly, it was observed that the research on education for peace has focused on content. As such, the content of education for peace should be centered on education for disarmament, education for development, education for conflict (Jares, 2004), education in human rights, education for solidarity and education in values as a fundamental

“ Comprehensive training is essential to strengthen the competencies required by the Colombian professional in order to initiate the strengthening of the culture of peace. ”

basis for peacebuilding. Fourthly, it was observed that education for peace is focused on the culture of peace as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In accordance with the documentary analysis, the core question of the research was addressed: Is higher education in Colombia focused on developing competencies for peace?

In a society characterized by the rapid pace of change due to globalization, technology, information, knowledge, science, artificial intelligence, economics, and politics, the Colombian education system emphasizes strengthening competencies that support the growth of an economic, social, and cultural model centered on market relations and capital accumulation. To a lesser extent, new professionals are trained to coexist with others through democratic, ethical, and solidarity-based values (Ramírez, 2020).

Higher education that focuses on promoting peace must be grounded in fundamental values and principles that contribute to social transformation through teaching, research, management, and outreach (Vallaey and Álvarez, 2019). These functions must be driven by the pursuit and reinforcement of values, attitudes, and ways of life based on respect for life, dignity, and human rights. Additionally, adherence to core principles such as democracy, freedom, justice, social cohesion, solidarity, and respect for diversity is essential.

Education in the Colombian context is a necessity, a response, and a foundational element in the processes of seeking and building peace (Pozo, 2016). It serves as a key tool for addressing challenges and developing strategies for learning that foster peaceful living and coexistence. One of the primary goals of education is to support students in the comprehensive development of competencies that reinforce and uphold fundamental rights, aiming to consolidate human values and achieve peace (Picón and Frausto, 2022).

The creation of a culture of peace in higher education begins at a personal level, shaped by family, social, and institutional influences. Future professionals must be trained in values and critical thinking to actively contribute to the pursuit and consolidation of social justice. Establishing a culture of peace at the university level requires fostering a new culture defined by democratic values, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the rejection of all forms of violence, respect for life, and adherence to human rights. (Delfín et al. 2024). The culture of peace is part of a learning process for peaceful conflict resolution that serves as a catalyst for projecting and grounding multidimensional changes aimed at building and consolidating a culture of peace (Hernández et al. 2017). The culture of peace is implicitly embedded in people's values and attitudes, fostering individual quality of life and manifesting in social and academic dimensions (Torres et al. 2019).

On the other hand, if Colombian society remains in a state of violence, it legitimizes exclusion and vulnerability, as referenced in the National Political Constitution of 1991. This situation constitutes a violation of the legitimate right to peace and the right to receive an education that fosters a culture of peace, ensuring that curricula evolve towards well-being and civic coexistence.

Discussion

The future of higher education is oriented towards quality of life, social change, environmental care, and technological development. (UNESCO, 2021). According to projections for education toward 2050 and beyond, peace represents a prevailing aspiration, focused on the construction of a fairer and more egalitarian society, one that respects diversity and maintains harmony with nature.

The development of peace education in higher education institutions in Colombia has not occupied a preeminent position. Due to university autonomy, the teaching of peace is contingent upon academic programs and

approaches. Each higher education institution approaches education for peace based on its specific context. Consequently, opportunities for learning, dialogue, reflection, research, and peacebuilding are determined by the autonomy of each academic faculty. The foundations of higher education in relation to peace research and peacebuilding are based on the concept of positive peace. This approach is oriented toward improving quality of life, respect for human dignity, justice, social cohesion, human rights, and all democratic values (Ramírez, 2020).

Comprehensive training serves as a key pathway for human transformation, offering valuable tools to strengthen critical thinking, ethical development, and the direction of university education towards human transformation. Given its multidimensional nature, this education fosters a strong sense of social awareness, enabling individuals to contribute to the construction of a new culture, known as the culture of peace (Gutiérrez, 2023).

This being the case, the principle of higher education is to accompany and facilitate the integral development of human potential. One category that guides the analysis of the results is the culture of peace, the focus on capacities and the recognition of the human being. For the purposes of the research, the focus has been on the culture of peace, characterized by being:

A culture of coexistence and participation, founded on the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance and solidarity; a culture that rejects violence and is dedicated to preventing conflicts at their source and to solving problems through dialogue and negotiation; and a culture that ensures all human beings the full exercise of their rights and the necessary means to participate fully in the endogenous development of society (Tuvilla, 2004, p. 57).

With regard to the speed of change in the 21st century, new educational needs have emerged that have been promoted by different countries, leaving values and capacities to preserve vitality, respect and responsibility, necessary elements for strengthening democracy, in the background (Nussbaum, 2010). It is necessary to opt for the capabilities approach, which conceives each person as an end in themselves and is characterized by respect for freedom of choice and the individual's capacity for self-definition. Building a new culture requires ten core capabilities: life; physical health; physical integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; and control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2012, pp. 53-54).

“ Education in the Colombian context becomes a necessity, a response and a primary foundation in the dynamics of the search for and construction of peace (Pozo, 2016). ”

Conclusions

Today's society demands that higher education rethink and reimagine its educational work in order to respond pertinently to the multidimensional changes that are experienced in everyday life in relation to the creation of a new culture called the culture of peace. Competency development for peace is a new challenge that higher education must face in order to respond to the Colombian people's desire to live in peace through a systemic vision.

The epistemological basis of positive peace and imperfect peace are the beacon for advancing research and innovation in the curriculum, didactics and pedagogy of universities in order to focus on learning, reflection, dialogue, research and peacebuilding from an academic perspective.

It is necessary to reinforce, enrich and strengthen the leadership and experiences of those universities that, within the framework of the Constitution and the law, have focused on promoting the achievement and maintenance of peace. The prospect of capacity building opens the door to innovation in education to focus on the multidimensionality of the human being and to accompany them in the development of their capacities aimed at respecting, caring for and valuing the life, dignity and rights of every human being.

Higher education, in addition to professionalizing, needs to accompany the student in their human formation so that they learn to live in harmony with themselves, with others, with nature and with transcendence. One purpose of higher education is to offer tools to the disciple so that they can choose a lifestyle that transcends ethical action, the search for the common good, the transformation of society and the construction of a culture of peace.

For the construction of a culture of peace, it is necessary to strengthen the life and peace competencies of future professionals. This requires going beyond the Chair of Peace to a lifestyle focused on respect for the life of human beings and their rights. In this sense, we turn to the mission of higher education, which, in addition to training suitable professionals with competences for working life, must also be a manager of peace, since the policies, actions and purposes of the national government in this area need the strength of all Colombians

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No todo es como lo hemos aprendido: obstrucciones epistemológicas de la educación inclusiva 1, 2

Not Everything is as We Have Learned: Epistemological Obstructions of Inclusive Education

Nem tudo é como aprendemos: obstruções epistemológicas à educação inclusiva



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RESUMEN

En esta oportunidad se analizan algunas opresiones fundamentales que afectan al género académico indexado como educación inclusiva. A tal efecto, sostengo que lo que conocemos como educación inclusiva no es tal cosa. Sólo conocemos un disfraz pseudo-heurístico que impone los paradigmas fundantes de la educación especial, su modelo didáctico y epistemológico, para rellenar estratégicamente un espacio en blanco. Lo que nombramos a través del sintagma 'educación inclusiva' no es más que un sistema de transliteración arbitraria de diversos cuerpos de saberes, formas categoriales y repertorios metodológicos propios de la educación especial, cooptando signos definitorios – identidad y rostricidad – de la educación inclusiva. Estamos en presencia de un territorio de investigación que deambula con gran fuerza por diversas estructuras académicas, compromisos éticos y proyectos políticos – muchos de ellos, de dudosa reputación – sin saber quiénes. El trabajo concluye observando que, tomar la educación especial como educación inclusiva es incurrir en el mismo fallo. Por ello, resulta fundamental comprender a la educación inclusiva en tanto estética de lo sensible, no solo porque construye un *sensorium* específico, sino, porque sus fuerzas de organización intelectual tienen la difícil tarea de desarmar el ensamblaje sobre el que se asienta el reparto de lo sensible, para permitir que emerjan nuevas formas de distribuir las formas de ver, de representar, de escuchar, de hablar, etc. Esta es una capacidad críticamente democrática.

Palabras claves: educación inclusiva, problemas de análisis, epistemología y construcción del conocimiento.

ABSTRACT

On this occasion I analyze some fundamental oppressions that affect the academic genre indexed as inclusive education. To this end, I maintain that what we know as inclusive education is not such a thing. We only know a pseudo-heuristic disguise that imposes the founding paradigms of special education, its didactic and epistemological model to strategically fill in a blank space. What we name through the phrase 'inclusive education' is nothing more than a system of arbitrary transliteration of diverse bodies of knowledge, categorical forms and methodological repertoires typical of special education, co-opting defining signs - identity and face - of inclusive education. We are in the presence of a research territory that wanders with great force through various academic structures, ethical commitments and political projects – many of them, of dubious reputation – without knowing who it is. The work concludes by observing that taking special education as inclusive education is making the same mistake. For this reason, it is essential to understand inclusive education as an aesthetic of the sensitive, not only because it builds a specific sensorium, but also because its forces of intellectual organization have the difficult task of dismantling the assembly on which the distribution of what is based is based. sensitive, to allow new ways of distributing ways of seeing, representing, listening, speaking, etc. to emerge. This is a critically democratic capacity.

Keywords: inclusive education; analysis problems; epistemology; construction of knowledge.

RESUMO

Nesta ocasião analiso algumas opressões fundamentais que afetam o gênero acadêmico indexado como educação inclusiva. Para este fim, afirmo que o que conhecemos como educação inclusiva não é tal coisa. Conhecemos apenas um disfarce pseudo-heurístico que impõe os paradigmas fundadores da educação especial, o seu modelo didático e epistemológico para preencher estrategicamente um espaço em branco. O que denominamos através da expressão "educação inclusiva" nada mais é do que um sistema de transliteração arbitrária de diversos corpos de conhecimento, formas categóricas e repertórios metodológicos típicos da educação especial, cooptando signos definidores – identidade e face – da educação inclusiva. Estamos diante de um território de pesquisa que vagueia com muita força por diversas estruturas acadêmicas, compromissos éticos e projetos políticos – muitos deles, de reputação duvidosa – sem saber quem é. O trabalho conclui observando que considerar a educação especial como educação inclusiva é cometer o mesmo erro. Por isso, é fundamental compreender a educação inclusiva como uma estética do sensível, não só porque constrói um sensorio específico, mas também porque as suas forças de organização intelectual têm a difícil tarefa de dismantlar o conjunto sobre o qual se dá a distribuição do que é baseado é baseado em sensível, para permitir que surjam novas formas de distribuir modos de ver, representar, ouvir, falar, etc. Esta é uma capacidade criticamente democrática.

Palavras-chave: educação inclusiva; problemas de análise; epistemologia; construção do conhecimento.

Introduction

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to Universidad de La Serena (ULS) and, in particular, to Professor Marcos Elizondo Vega for this unexpected yet generous invitation to speak with you today. With each passing opportunity, I find greater fulfillment in engaging with diverse communities of meaning and application as I share my research on the epistemology of inclusive education.

I would like to begin this lecture by asserting that what we recognize as inclusive education is, in fact, not what it claims to be. What we currently conceive as inclusive education is merely a pseudo-heuristic construct, one that imposes the foundational paradigms of special education—particularly its traditional didactic and epistemological model—strategically filling a conceptual void that remains largely unexplored. The term inclusive education functions as an arbitrary transliteration system, borrowing from various bodies of knowledge, categorical frameworks, and methodological repertoires inherent to special education. In doing so, it appropriates the defining markers—identity and subjectivity—of inclusive education itself.

We are confronted with a research field that forcefully navigates across multiple academic frameworks, ethical commitments, and political agendas—many of them of questionable legitimacy—without a clear sense of its own identity. I have termed this intricate process the ‘Oedipization of the object of inclusive education’—that is, the true essence of inclusion remains unknown to us, and even less understood in its vast complexity. What dominates specialized literature, public policies, research, and the pre- and post-graduate training of educators is its most paradoxical failure—that is, the persistent misinterpretation of inclusive education as special education. This misrepresentation crystallizes a body of knowledge that originates in deception and perpetuates multiple layers of misdirection, a knowledge system devoid of objective self-referential foundations. This concept serves as the foundation for what I describe through the metaphor of the ‘deceiver-deceived’.

The hegemonic notion of ‘inclusion’—both as a field of study and as a social phenomenon—and ‘inclusive education’—as an intellectual framework—is fundamentally shaped by what I have previously defined as its most paradoxical failure. This leads to various epistemic distortions, categorical misinterpretations, and methodological misconceptions in the way its object and terminology are approached. In dominant discourse, the category of ‘inclusion’ exhibits an extreme degree of elasticity, giving rise to a loosely defined policy of indiscriminate acceptance—an ‘anything goes’ mentality driven by an excessively overused and uncritical qualifier. I support this point, given that discussions on inclusive education are often marked by reductionism and trivialization. The discourse appears constrained by signifiers that align with specific political and theoretical positions—positions that, while restrictive, serve to enable various forms of political opportunism and epistemic reductionism.

My presentation today will not focus on what my colleagues—whose wisdom, experience, and knowledge I greatly respect—have discussed so far regarding interculturality, the primary object of inquiry in this colloquium. Instead, I will position my argument within what I refer to as a syntagmatic field³—a conceptual framework that reveals the underlying structure of inclusive education as an epistemological construct. This construct, which I term epistemological diasporism, underscores that specialized knowledge is not static but emerges from dispersion, movement, relational thought, encounters, plasticity, translation, and the dynamics of external interactions. Each of the epistemological resources that constitute the production field of inclusive education

3. This perspective is inscribed within a transformation of the analytical order of its objects of study, rejecting any appeal that is purely rhetorical. It embodies a syntagmatic shift that restructures the way in which its analytical products are arranged

“ Inclusive education as a field of knowledge is a non-existent territory in which margins are crossed and a series of ideas are dislocated and affected by a series of mutations, translations and rearticulations. ”

forms an assemblage whose structure is sustained by the principle of external relations. Let us not forget that inclusive education constructs a new object—one that belongs to no single entity. It is not indifferent; it does not reject any of its inheritances. Rather, it is engaged in generating something fundamentally new—an entity whose uniqueness lies in its inability to be fully encapsulated within the paradigms of any existing discipline, as it inherently transcends them. Its epistemological foundation is post-disciplinary, acknowledging that its specialized knowledge is constructed outside and beyond the limits of each of the disciplines that contribute to it.

Before proceeding, I would like to make two crucial clarifications. The first is that when we speak of inclusive education, we are not referring to special education. I want to emphasize this unequivocally because this distinction represents its primary genealogical failure or cognitive misinterpretation, resulting in a process of hybridization and distortion that reconfigures the power of the qualifier as a characteristic of the special. In response to this, I must clarify that while the special can be considered a form of the inclusive, the inclusive is not a form of the special. Rather, it constitutes a strategy for transforming all fields of knowledge and spheres of human development, where the human being is understood as a subject of multiple singularities.

The second clarification is that inclusive education, as a field of knowledge, is an intangible and non-fixed territory in which margins intersect, and a series of concepts undergo displacement, transformation, translation, and rearticulation. To fully grasp this, I believe it is necessary to recognize five fundamental problems that shape inclusive education as an investigative domain. These problems are: a) Fundamental Problem 1: The *ontological problem* of inclusive education—the tension between (anti)humanism and the inventive paradigm of human forms. b) Fundamental Problem 2: The *epistemological problem* of inclusive education—the pitfalls of replication and mimesis, and the unconscious reliance on arguments versus the creative power of epistemological agency. c) Fundamental Problem 3: The *methodological problem* of inclusive education—how we conceptualize knowledge, the imaginative challenge of reconfiguring research practices, and the evolving approaches to training professionals in this field. d) Fundamental Problem 4: The *morphological problem* of inclusive education—shifting from the study of essentialist-individualist structures to the development of a vocabulary that aligns with multiplicity. e) Fundamental Problem 5: The *semiotic problem* of inclusive education—icons and images that are validated as markers of inclusion versus the frameworks of perception and discourse that shape our understanding.

The first fundamental problem highlights the absence of an ontological framework with clear criteria for intelligibility and mechanisms of standardization that would allow for the recognition of the subject beyond a reductive policy of recognizing knowledge objects or objectified subjects—an erroneous approach rooted in a neo-special perspective. This process is ultimately the result of a complex policy that conceals a series of essentialist-individualist assumptions, closely resembling the perspectives that the preceding speakers in this colloquium have addressed.

The second problem pertains to the epistemic dimension. Here, the central issue is the absence of a theory that defines the meanings, scope, and nature of this approach from its intellectual differential. This field lacks a comprehensive theory; at present, it is shaped by a diverse set of influences. The only existing epistemology is the one proposed by Ocampo (2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020). In my view, the epistemic dimension diverges from a canonical signifier traditionally associated with grand paradigms, thereby obstructing the study of the heuristic forms specific to this field. For this reason, my work focuses on examining the conditions under which its specialized knowledge is produced, recognizing that the epistemic problem—or rather, its epistemic deficit—demonstrates the field's inability to clarify what inclusive education is in terms of its nature, function, meaning, and scope. This issue manifests in an analytical-methodological landscape that struggles to define its own singularity or scientific identity.

The third fundamental problem I identify concerns the lack of research methods and methodologies, a deficiency that not only hampers a precise understanding of each research problem but also significantly impacts the training parameters for professionals in the field. *Methodological* considerations, in dialogue with the specificity of inclusive education, confirm three key dimensions of analysis: a) Interest in methodology invites us to reflect on *how* we conceptualize a given phenomenon or, alternatively, the epistemological strategies employed by practitioners when engaging with a particular object. b) *How* we structure the training and instructional frameworks for future professionals in this field, taking into account its epistemological and ontological foundations. c) *How* we access and interpret its theoretical, empirical, and analytical object.

The fourth problem, termed the *morphological problem*, pertains to the *study of its conceptual structures* and the nature of its conceptual instruments. It highlights the foundational categories that define this field and documents a significant deficiency of conceptual tools capable of authentically describing each of its objects. Let us recall, as Bal (2009) suggests in the remarkable book published in Spanish by Cendeac, entitled: “*Conceptos Viajeros en las Humanidades: una guía de viaje*” (Traveling Concepts in the Humanities: A Travel Guide), that concepts function as miniature theories. They create the conditions for dialogue and equity among diverse fields of knowledge, ensuring legibility and comprehension for each of their objects. When misused, these concepts tend to distort the function of the object. When founded on the imposition of the special, the object is constructed from erroneous categories, which blur the potency of its intellectual action. I will further elaborate on this point throughout my presentation. The object of inclusive education, inherently post-disciplinary, is eccentric and possesses an external voice, reaffirming that it listens to and articulates its concerns beyond theoretical work. That is, it engages with a broad spectrum of knowledge projects in resistance, political initiatives, and ethical commitments—many of them anti-humanist.

The final fundamental issue of inclusive education pertains to the study of its images or visual representations. The challenge of dismantling and/or altering the dominant visual imaginary of inclusivity lies in the persistence of a being that is not. I have termed this issue the Oedipization of the object of inclusive education—something more than a heuristic resentment, an operation that inhibits a full, vital comprehension of its intellectual, ontological, and now visual forms. This inhibition ensures that it remains bound to a corpus of properties that do not belong to it. As a result, a consistency is preserved that fixes properties erroneously attributed to it, sustaining its state as an object subject to persistent formative deterioration.

However, studying the images of inclusive education should equip us with tools “to alter the order that defines its properties, granting the ability to introduce a decisive transformation in its mode of manifestation” (Soto, 2023, p. 61). These images can be interpreted as visual constructs that move without a defined destination. What is clear, however, is their capacity to guide us toward other planes of sensitivity. Inclusive education establishes a distinct sensorium centered on multiplicity and heterogeneity.

“ Inclusive education builds a new object that does not belong to anyone, it is not indolent, it does not deny any of its inheritance, but rather, it is in charge of producing something new whose singularity is that it cannot be described in the paradigms of any of the current disciplines, because it overflows them. ”

Below is a summary table outlining the main characteristics of the fundamental issues of inclusive education⁴.

Table 1. Most relevant characteristics of the fundamental problems of inclusive education, identified by Ocampo (2024)

Fundamental Problem 1. The ontological problem of inclusive education: (anti)humanism and the inventive regime of human forms.	- Traditionally, the dominant discourse on inclusive education has reduced the question of the subject within this discourse to the ontological representation of 'disability' and 'educational needs.' However, this definition, while widely accepted, is fundamentally flawed in its cognitive foundation—it reduces the meaning, scope, and nature of inclusive education to the imposition of the traditional special education model. This perspective, referred to by Slee (2012) as a neo-special vision, is characterized by its conception as a linear extension of the academic-normative framework inherited from special education. It is superimposed onto the concept of inclusive education without mediation or adaptation, filling the void within the inclusive paradigm using the established knowledge structures of special education. Continuing to equate special education with inclusive education means perpetuating the same failure. This transfer has resulted in a strategic alignment with the matrix of essentialisms and individualisms, which, as Bal (2021) describes, finds its foundation in <i>binary imagination</i>. - This strategic commitment to the essentialist-individualist matrix creates a residual effect that constrains the existential modes of student collectives and cultural groups, embedding them within a framework of defectology, abnormality, deficits, and diagnoses that are then transformed into social explanations. This forms the basis of the academic framework of inclusive education. - It is recognized that the multiplicity of human expressions or the particularized subjectivities of specific groups are shaped by strategically constructed inventive frameworks emerging within the context of modernity/coloniality. This process generates the circulation of prefabricated ontological regimes that capture and confine the existence of the Other, determining its trajectory. - This conceptualization of alterity reflects an unequal understanding of being, reinforced through various practices of social differentiation and differentialism. - The ontological framework of inclusive education seeks to subvert the normocentric regime of difference, redefining the ways in which human representations navigate the various levels of the educational system. - In the mainstream, difference is subjected to a corpus of negative attributions that subordinate and classify individuals, reaffirming a commitment to a humanist framework centered on legitimizing a single existential form of the human. Meanwhile, anything that does not conform to these criteria of legibility is condemned to inhabit the ontological exteriority articulated by modernity—a space composed of diverse forms of the human that are not fully recognized as such, but rather as objects of persistent processes of racialization, sexualization, and oppression, to say the least.
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4. Identified by Ocampo.

Problema fundamental 1. El problema ontológico de la educación inclusiva: el (anti)humanismo y el régimen inventivo de las formas de lo humano.

- The dominant ontological politics of inclusivity is not only precarious but also inherently flawed, leading to various forms of confusion. One of the most significant paradoxes I frequently observe in the dissemination of this discourse is a form of individualism that takes multiplicity as its starting point, yet remains incapable of addressing the most pressing challenges of a world that is inherently plural. This framework constructs a contingent interest that groups diverse identities together, only to repress them in the name of individualism—now under the guise of a critically democratic interest.
- Let us not forget that the authentic ontological politics of inclusive education operates within the realm of multiplicity of singularities, fostering an infinite understanding of particularized modes of singularity. This is a procedural and relational ontology. The points outlined above inform us about a discrete or normative ontology, which can be characterized by the following attributes: a) Monumental ontology. b) Monotopic hermeneutics. c) Canonical and totalizing ontology and epistemology. d) A closed expression of the human.

Fundamental Problem 2. The epistemological problem of inclusive education—the pitfalls of replication and mimesis, and the unconscious reliance on arguments versus the creative power of epistemological agency.

- My interest lies in exploring the configurations that shape knowledge in inclusive education, particularly in defining its conditions of production. Although I have shed some light on this topic in the various works I have published, the issue remains that inclusive education is an uncharted field, one whose nature cannot be fully understood through the traditional frameworks of thought typically used to interpret the diversity of educational phenomena. We are confronted with an imaginative problem of a catachrestic order, which constructs an objectual network that must be examined with a high degree of sophistication. This phenomenon unfolds amid many intersecting dynamics, which is why I find value in framing its morphology within a corpus of phenomena that can only be comprehended through a metalogue or an over-legible effect. This is what allows us to define this field as a revolution without a predetermined model.
- The form of inclusive education with which we are most familiar and which we practice today is the result of a complex process of Oedipization— or a castration of meaning— imposed by the rationality ascribed to special education. I want to emphasize that this is not the root of all the problems in inclusive education; rather, it is about how the entrapment of this object is governed by forces that prove inadequate for its own comprehension. Additionally, the imperceptible absence of inquiry into the nature of inclusion and the overall lack of knowledge surrounding it have played a pivotal role in positioning special education as the scapegoat for all of inclusive education's shortcomings. This problem can be broken down into at least three dimensions. The first revolves around the dictatorship of the signifiers of special education in constructing the inclusive. This is its primary cognitive failure. The dictatorship of special education's signifiers establishes, materially, semiotically, and semantically, what we recognize as the imposition of the epistemic and didactic model of special education as a means of justifying the theoretical dimension of inclusivity. This mechanism operates through mimesis and masquerade, whose conditions of production are built upon the metaphor of the 'deceiver deceived'— that is, a form of knowledge that originates in deception and, through its extensive application, perpetuates various modes of self-deception. Such a framework of deception produces an epistemic structure that constructs its understanding without any objective references to itself. Special education is thus established as a dominant knowledge structure, one from which it is impossible to identify an effect of inter-referencing or cross-referencing among multiple elements, thereby manifesting the impossibility of generating alternative imagination frameworks. I refer to this process as a system of heuristic repression

Fundamental Problem 2. The epistemological problem of inclusive education—the pitfalls of replication and mimesis, and the unconscious reliance on arguments versus the creative power of epistemological agency.

- The second dimension highlights the presence of a heuristic vacuum that is strategically filled to suppress access to the true index of singularity within inclusivity. In this sense, I am referring to the question of its fundamental nature. All of this prevents us from recognizing that we are dealing with two diametrically different entities. The analytical task before us involves strategically reorganizing our cognitive habits in order to establish new modes of interaction with this body of phenomena.
- The third dimension demonstrates that the object— which, given the nature of this field, cannot be conceptualized in strictly canonical terms, but rather as an objectual network composed of diverse phenomena— is something that has been unintentionally lost. The notion of a 'lost' object signifies a network devoid of meaning, rendering it incapable of being situated within a broader framework of thinkability. When inclusive education is solely centered on the representation of disability, it tends to reproduce a normative mode of knowledge in addressing difference. To conceptualize difference within, from, and through essentialism is to maintain a continuous link to an unresolved past, preventing the realization of meaningful conditions of justice for all student groups who navigate the various levels of the education system and engage with its institutional structures. When the signifiers of inclusive education are appropriated by those of special education, their meaning becomes distorted. Undoubtedly, established reason lacks objective references about itself. What we are witnessing is a self-righteous reason. It derives its effectiveness from sanctioned ignorance, which rarely manifests in an explicit or discernible manner. The absence of a theory that delineates the specificity of inclusion reinforces a persistent intuitionism, one that disregards the pragmatic details intrinsic to the field itself. Critical intellectual work must seek to transform each of these problematic conditions, transcend their structural limitations, and foster alternative possibilities.

Fundamental Problem 3. The methodological problem of inclusive education—how we conceptualize knowledge, the imaginative challenge of reconfiguring research practices, and the evolving approaches to training professionals in this field.

- The issue goes beyond merely pointing out the absence of research methods and methodologies aligned with the epistemological nature of inclusive education.
- However, the deficit of methodological rigor that affects the regulatory structures of the field extends even further. This dimension informs us about how we conceptualize a given subject— that is, the habits of thought or epistemological performances that shape our analytical itineraries across different topics. The way we think about something is, by definition, the foundation of the methodological domain. As such, it is shaped by at least three crucial dimensions: a) The way we approach a variety of subjects of analysis, concepts, structural and political issues, relationships, etc. b) The strategies we employ to reach the critical core of each of these objects. c) The methods used to frame the issues within the field.
- The term 'inclusion' signifies a distinct approach to studying an amalgam of heterogeneous phenomena rooted in post-structuralist, post-colonialist, and post-critical perspectives within education. Investigating inclusive education requires adopting a critical stance toward a multiplicity of phenomena that can only be fully understood through various forms of cross-referencing.

Fundamental Problem 4. The morphological problem of inclusive education—shifting from the study of essentialist-individualist structures to the development of a vocabulary that aligns with multiplicity.

- Morphology refers to the study of forms, which, within the epistemological contextualism of inclusive education, function as synonyms for the conceptual nature of the field. This is one of the most significant epistemological attributes in any research domain.

Fundamental Problem 4. The morphological problem of inclusive education—shifting from the study of essentialist-individualist structures to the development of a vocabulary that aligns with multiplicity.

- The network of concepts within inclusive education serves to delineate the cognitive framework of its corpus of phenomena, as well as the conditions that determine their visibility. Another of its functions is to establish a strategy for framing and defining the general contours of the field. Concepts form the foundation for structuring the objects of analysis with which we engage. Another key function is to organize the frameworks of understanding within each domain of study.
- The morphological problem of inclusive education partially documents how the conceptual tools employed to support this framework of understanding ultimately distort its units of analysis. Simply put, the concepts we use to analytically examine the challenges of inclusion tend to distort and destabilize our understanding of the object, as they are consistently conflated with the essentializing legacy of special education. The issue lies in the fact that these conceptual units, in their entirety, are embedded within the normocentric framework. Let us not forget that the concepts through which we interpret specific phenomena define the very essence of their structure. Typically, conceptual tools associated with alterity, heterogeneity, diversity, difference, and otherness emerge from the critical nucleus of multiplicity. This constitutes the conceptual foundation of truly inclusive education.

Fundamental Problem 5. The semiotic problem of inclusive education—icons and images that are validated as markers of inclusion versus the frameworks of perception and discourse that shape our understanding.

- The images we typically associate with inclusive education are merely fragments of an evanescent reflection of its true identity.
- Many of its hegemonic representations tend to distort and trivialize the scope of its actual nature.
- The semiotic problem of inclusive education highlights the distortion present in the visual interpretation of this field. Here, visibility as a cognitive structure falls prey to the metaphor of the 'deceiver-deceived'— an image born in deception that, in turn, generates multiple forms of visual misrepresentation.
- The images of inclusive education are the product of a persistent essentialist academic tradition that systematically regenerates itself through various markers of inequality and stereotypes. It is upon these foundations that every process of semiotization is built.
- We engage with images of inclusivity by consuming them through an identity that is clearly defined for the gaze of the researcher and/or spectator. The consumption of images is the most prevalent practice within the falsified regime of the genre discussed here. To deconstruct adherence to this imaginal regime, we must analyze the binding relationships that exist between certain images and the phenomena they represent. Inclusive education is an imaginably wounded genre.
- What stands out is that, despite all the visual challenges inclusive education faces, we cannot speak of a subject without an image— only of a subject shaped by a weakened, artificial, and erroneous imaginative framework. These are images that reduce the subject to a state of objectification, as it is the image that configures the subject— an enterprise inherited from the representational regime and its modalities of sensibility. This is the logic of meaning within the imaginal regime of the abject, a classic within the (pseudo-)academic study of inclusion.

Note: Source: Prepared by the authors.

If we connect these five major analytical obstacles, we can conclude that this field is a no man's land— an assumption that leads me to assert that inclusive education does not adhere to any specific theoretical or methodological practice, despite developing and applying its own methods. It is a space where multiple knowledge

projects intersect, interact, mediate, translate, engage in dialogue, and negotiate. However, in its (re)articulation—referring to its epistemological pragmatics—little to nothing is effectively restructured, translated, or interrelated in accordance with the heuristic frameworks of this unique field of analysis. This results in the continuous proliferation of assimilation practices, understood as practices of social vindication—principles regulating the zone of being⁵, imaginary spatiality, and the geopolitics characteristic of Eurocentrism and the multiple political and analytical regimes legitimized by a Western-centric rationale. These, without a doubt, lead to the systemic erasure of the social experience of numerous groups marked by the signifier of the abject— instruments that function as regulatory figurations, or strategically prefabricated ontological regimes. At a cognitive level, they generate *subject-effects* and *legibility-effects* in shaping the understanding of subjects within inclusive education.

Inclusion as a Singular Structural and Micropractical Phenomenon⁶: A Bond of Sociopolitical Rearticulation

The complexity revealed by the phenomenon of *inclusion* confirms its structural and micropractical nature. It invites us to rethink political and micropractical coordinates— the everyday, lived experience, and the corpus of objects that shape our orientation within these experiences— and the spatialities that crystallize in response to the political, social, cultural, and economic demands that this singular program of change must address.

The call issued by the title of this section is to recognize that many proposals on justice— particularly those that integrate *the social* as an additive element— ultimately leave us in the same place. This is because we face a system of co-optation by the hegemonic and supremacist rationality of capitalism, which demands that we shift toward situated transformations, complex understandings, and disruptive imaginaries to critically explore the intersections between the structural— institutional rules governing societal function— and the micropractical— the everyday— that unfold within the complexities of social and pedagogical intermediation. When we speak of education and interculturality, we are also addressing inherently social and political phenomena. It is at this intersection that nearly all, if not all, of our discussions converge on transforming the interrelations of multiple systems that constitute the contemporary world we inhabit.

Let us now consider: why and for what purpose does inclusive education exist? At the research center I direct— the Center for Latin American Studies of Inclusive Education— we structure our intellectual activity around inclusive education as a political project, not as a parliamentary relationship, but rather as one that preserves the inherent nature of social conflicts. This idea distinguishes itself from politics, understood as the means of institutional reproduction, such as laws, decrees, and other regulatory mechanisms. We operate within the framework provided by Chantal Mouffe in her book published in 2007 by Fondo de Cultura Económica (FCE), titled: *En torno a lo político* (On the Political), to understand that, as both a political and ethical project, inclusive education interrogates the ethical climate and moral fiber of our time. It challenges us to rethink the forms of relationships that structure the civic fabric and the mechanisms that shape subjectivity. Inclusive education generates alternative relational orders, new frameworks of coexistence, and different mechanisms for the production of subjectivity.

Currently, educational research in our region confirms a significant cycle of reproduction within the field of inclusive education—one that remains tied to the same structures. This aligns with the metaphor proposed by Ocampo (2018) regarding *inclusion of the same*, referring to an inclusion that compels us to build structures of inclusive assimilation while preserving existing systems of oppression, inequality, domination, segregation, and other forms of exclusion. These dynamics reflect the performative and regenerative functions of power— central characteristics the formats of power. I define *formats of power*⁷ as the various manifestations, both material and subjective, through which segregation, structural violence, oppression, domination, and silenced discrimination take shape. These expressions of power manifest in different ways, strategically affecting the lives of social groups and individuals in distinct and deliberate manners.

5. Intersectional and Multipositional Space of Full Existence.

6. Concept introduced by Ocampo.

7. Concept coined by Ocampo in his doctoral thesis, developed within the Official Doctorate Program in Education Sciences at Universidad de Granada (UGR), Spain.

“ Inclusive education does not subscribe to any particular theoretical and methodological practice, despite finding and producing its own method. ”

In that case, it is important to understand that inclusive education is founded on Feuerbach's eleventh thesis regarding the social—and consequently, educational—transformation of the world. However, its purpose is obstructed by the construction of an empty signifier, which, in turn, affects the very forms of justice that have been co-opted and embedded within the core of advancing capitalism. It is from this very center that a discourse advocating for inclusion and justice is articulated, *reaffirming what bell hooks* asserts in her remarkable work: *El feminismo es para todo el mundo* (Feminism is for Everyone), in which she argues that people waste a great deal of time struggling from within the system—within the very structures that generate imperceptible critical knots, ultimately restraining the transformative potential of the world. We do not yet know how to break free from these structures that silently co-opt the free-will of multiple collectives.

In this regard, at the Center for Latin American Studies in Inclusive Education (CELEI), we understand inclusion as a knowledge project in resistance, driven by the pursuit of social justice and the progressive transformation of structures of social and educational participation. Thus, we recognize that social change projects, and indeed the majority of political projects, have exhausted their historical function. Examples of this include socialism and communism. If we were to critically examine the notion of inclusion, we would observe that this approach offers nothing genuinely new in its intellectual assertions, necessitating the emergence of a new ethical awareness to engage in discussions on difference. From another perspective, the term 'inclusive' has circulated across various fields, geographies, and knowledge projects, even within academic structures under different names, while still upholding the same objectives of struggle. This point carries significant implications for its epistemological understanding and the foundational qualities upon which its political objectives are built.

The question then arises: when will the new truly begin? Here, once again, it becomes necessary to revisit the insistence I have expressed in various works and lectures—drawing from Braidotti (2009)—which confirms that a large portion of change programs have reached the limits of their historical function, evolving into a deceptive form of social reformism and critical radicalism that merely reaffirms the banality of self-interest as a necessary lesser evil, allowing the organic framework of neoconservative political liberalism to persist in our era. The new fails to materialize in contemporary theoretical proposals. It is essential to subject the syntagmatic order upon which any declarative act in favor of the new is constructed to critical scrutiny.

All of this reaffirms the foundational violence of the new, thereby reinforcing a conception of *liberal inclusion*, as I usually call it, a matrix regulated by a set of essentialist-individualist principles that give rise to new forms of political opportunism and epistemic reductionism. These elements permeate the educational function, which at times embeds within research practices a series of multi-categorical interests, whose recipients are defined through quota policies—objects of knowledge—without considering the functioning of social structures and the educational, cultural, and political spatialities, for example.

We are confronted with a critical perspective for understanding how social and school structures function when it comes to inhabiting inclusion. The focus is placed almost exclusively on opening school doors and increasing student enrollment, which, to a certain extent, is a mistaken approach. However, by constitutional right, children and young people in Latin America must participate in some form, stage, or level of education. This leads us to another flawed approach—merely increasing the number of enrolled students does not equate to achieving inclusion. Questioning the operational modalities of school grammar prompts us to examine how these structures produce surplus populations while simultaneously exercising the right to education. At this stage, research highlights a significant gap, which is nothing more than the need to comprehend the underlying mechanics of the multiple expressions of power.

As a knowledge project in resistance, inclusion challenges each of the dominant narratives that seek to capture the essence of inclusive education. Heuristically, it interrogates the narratives driven by psychology, the social sciences, and politics—domains of analysis that confine and diminish its function, treating it as a passive and naive endeavor. This process imposes a strongly essentialist ontological policy, rooted in deficit frameworks and/or

semiotic mechanisms that define difference as an absence of reciprocity, thereby reinstating the ontological issue of social groups. Under this paradigm, difference is ultimately reified into constrained identities, powerless forms of otherness, and so forth. It is an operation that reinforces the withdrawal of agency from both individuals and collectives—this is the subjugation that essentialism and individualism impose on multiplicity. Without a doubt, this is a crucial point that must be critically examined, as there is an almost unrestricted tendency to discuss differences while simultaneously imposing subtle forms of differentialism. This point deserves a footnote.

“ From the Center for Latin American Studies on Inclusive Education (CELEI) we understand inclusion as a project of knowledge in resistance motivated by the desire for social justice and the progressive transformation of the structures of social and school participation. ”

The ontological politics of inclusive education is not concerned with differences or diversity but rather centers its force around singularity, a category with subversive political potential that rescues the essence of being without reifying its power, as the categories of difference and diversity tend to do. At an analytical level, these two categories exhibit a much greater semiotic force and ethos in terms of their signifiers within the intersubjective framework, whereas singularity suffers from a deficit of audibility as a term. Continuing to emphasize differences perpetuates a corpus of flawed analytical and ontological effects, leading to practices of segregation, *apartheid*, and devaluation based on a logic regulated by the absence of reciprocity. It is necessary to challenge these semiological constructs that function as cognitive failures in understanding the (inter)subjective experience of subject constitution and the multiplicity of particularist modes of subjectivity.

Returning to the political tensions of inclusive education means recognizing the growing demand for subjectivating singularities, which highlight the transition from a substantialist/humanist ontology—centered on deficit, a locus of enunciation, and/or the production of objects of knowledge—closely linked to the reproduction of certain colonial codes, such as race, among other categorical structures that remain unresolved in the zone of non-being. This geopolitical spatiality exacerbates all forms of domination and oppression in diametric terms. Within it, dehumanization intensifies. I am interested in understanding its constitutive mechanics and the material mechanisms through which it affects the infra-psychic world of being. Thus, the challenge is to overcome this barrier and position the understanding of being and its becoming within a materialist or processual ontology, as Braidotti (2009) proposes. This refers to the infinite production of being—an entity in constant variability that challenges the ways in which justice is constructed from a simplified perspective, as Walzer (1993) argues. To go beyond this, I propose a conception of complex justice, a framework that rejects the logic of universalism as a monolithic structure—a grammar of homogenization—since it acknowledges that such an enterprise denies differences and the specific needs of each collective and its respective connections to the territory to which each singularity belongs. Moreover, it recognizes that universalism is responsible for generating even greater segmentation frameworks.

I thus share one of the central approaches in the thinking of the Italian philosopher and sociologist Mauricio Lazzarato (2006) in: *Políticas de lo menor* (Policies of the Minor), I will argue that if the goal is to achieve equality and equity while simultaneously reaching everyone—a whole composed of multiple singularities—it will be necessary to establish a fundamental baseline to uphold each right in accordance with the specific needs of each community, following the logic of distributive wholes. This endeavor calls for challenging the distributive paradigm, revealing the inability of societal frameworks to conceive alternative coordinates for intervention in the contemporary world.

Within these proposals, individualism operates as a desirable standard, interwoven with specific logos, brands, and epochal clichés, leading us to reclaim a materialist and nomadic philosophy that inaugurates an alternative conceptual framework. This framework consolidates a structure that enables the transition from an alternative signifier to one that disrupts the functional order of its regulatory units—alter-disciplinarity, since alternative movements tend to replicate hegemonic status, obstructing various counterpoints of opposition. This, in turn,

reduces their action to a mere act of resistance against normative structures, often resorting to the same categories—a future that is sustainable and aligned with the demands of each collective. From a *Guattarian* and *Deleuzian* perspective, what the alternative seeks to accomplish is the dismantling of such structures—intellectual, social, and political—by urging us to step outside these spatialities. This is synonymous with other modes of meaning-making, allowing for the production of something entirely new. Thus, a third space is inaugurated, a zone that does not emerge from linearity but from nomadism, incompleteness, unpredictability, and transposability, reaffirming the necessity of revisiting the syntagmatic category of political passions, as proposed by Mouffe (2007). The political task of inclusive education is not confined to the reproduction of systematic damage to the self or the erosion of individuation, which, to some extent, serves the functionality of advanced capitalism.

In this context, nomadic subjectivity entails a materialist approach to affectivity and a non-essentialist form of vitalism. It is a realm of multiple mutations that diverge from frameworks of technological adherence, moral imperatives, or neoconservatisms embedded within critical discourses advocating for multiplicity. At this point, we must question what the oppressive alliances are and what set of pressures foster the proliferation of imperceptible actions within knowledge projects aimed at reproducing inequality—preferably—by adhering to the analytical and methodological chains that progressively and silently confine the power of such proposals.

Multiple singularities and the ethics of difference?

Inclusive education, drawing from Braidotti's (2006) approach, affirms that non-unitary subjectivity is signified in terms of the nomadic, the dispersed, and the fragmentary. This vision, however, remains functional, coherent, and responsible in the liberation of the self and its ethical consciousness. If we were to reflect on the kind of ethics required by inclusive education, we would undoubtedly have to refer to the work of the distinguished Italian-Australian philosopher Rosi Braidotti and the Chicana academic Chela Sandoval, whose seminal work, *Metodología de oprimidos* (Methodology of the Oppressed), allows us to redefine this constellation of figurations.

In Braidotti (2009), we find the necessity of seeking reactive and alternative responses to the ethical-political rationality that upholds the liberal and individualistic character that currently structures the discourse of inclusion. This is often articulated through naive relational forms that limit the potential to generate other worlds—one of the most significant objectives of inclusivity. Inclusion is both a sign of social disruption and a heterodox marker, and simultaneously, it is an event—something that breaks in, displacing us from conventionality and placing the matrix of essentialist-liberal frameworks under strain, upon which its contemporary mission is structured. It challenges the comprehensive forms of the human being. For this reason, in the case of inclusivity, ontological politics is inscribed within what Ocampo (2018) defines as ontologies of the minor, of multiple singularities, or of the molecular revolution. Within these broader frameworks, inclusion embraces the critical drive and the dislocating impulse to construct other possible worlds that work toward dismantling the enunciative traces of the dominant human subject.

Ethics of difference? We refer to a positive notion of difference, whose analytical figuration and spectral presence place it in proximity to the signifiers of singularity. Its purpose is to subvert and delimit the essentialist-individualist forms that underlie the ontological problem of social groups—also known as substantialist ontology—which marginalizes and reifies large populations, thereby justifying a corpus of public policies that merely reproduce an assimilationist effect and a multi-categorical framework that reinforces their function around passive signifiers of inclusion.

This ontological figuration results in the hierarchization of being, which, within the framework of inclusive education proposals, translates into quota policies or dual systems rather than a genuine transformation of the world. Indeed, Braidotti (2009) asserts that this categorical figuration

[...] enabled the distinction between hierarchical orders of being, classifying some as more advanced or closer to the civilizational ideal of Western culture and the prototype of the human being promoted within it: the white, heterosexual, Christian, and property-owning man, synthesized in its most defining attributes (González, 2018, p. 174).

This assertion is essential in exposing the blindness of the dialectical pair ‘center/periphery.’ Another analytical issue arises: we continue to conceive the challenges of the field in a linear and categorical manner, in terms of inclusion/exclusion. My relational analysis transcends the Hegelian dialectical figuration, which defines the coordinates of being—lived experience—as existing either inside or outside, as reaffirmed by the dominant research paradigm in the field.

The challenge is to think relationally, to understand how each of these articulations of inclusion/exclusion is interwoven in a multilevel and scalar manner. I bring this up because in countries like Argentina, there is extensive discussion about the notions of the common and the collective. I am intrigued by the idea that, rather than fostering a revolution at the molecular level or embracing the multiple constitutive minorities of the world, we are instead imposing new forms of homogenization on the material and psychological dimensions of these proposals. The conceptual framework of center and periphery applied to our continent is a Eurocentric fiction, detached from an interpretative paradigm rooted in our own peoples, kingdoms, and empires, which predate the arrival of the European to the ancestral cities that formed *Abya Yala*. The very act of positioning the margin and the center in opposition is a Eurocentric construct that limits the development of more complex understandings of inequality, injustice, redistribution, and related issues.

Therefore, I will argue that the correct ontological figuration that authentic inclusive education demands—one that is diasporic, itinerant, and nomadic; one that creates a new object that belongs to no one—rescues, in the words of Braidotti (2006), individual plurality or, in the words of Ocampo (2019), a multiplicity of singularities. The ontological policy that affirms this approach aligns with the principles of the molecular revolution, that is, the minor—the singularity. In other words, it is a space for the proliferation of a vast array of living entities, created to ensure that singularity materializes within these structures.

The “creative displacements engendered by non-linear interconnections” (Braidotti, 2009, p. 244) lead to the recognition that human behavior does not seek to impose individuality and thereby “anticipate and control everything, but rather to deterritorialize, to open up spaces of fluid movement where the discontinuous subject (unequal to itself, though not fragmented), having ascetically renounced itself” (Braidotti, 2009, p. 245), humbly cultivates its potential without harming itself or others (González, 2018).

Approaches to an Epistemological Understanding of Inclusive Education

Starting from the premise that inclusive education not only generates new knowledge but also offers powerful alternative perspectives on reality, I will argue that its purpose is not solely the assurance of rights but rather their enactment—an epistemological pragmatics that I often reference, concerned with fostering habits of action derived from conceptual frameworks that enhance people’s lives, particularly those affected by the zone of non-being. It distances itself from the signifier that seeks to aggregate and increase the number of students within the schooling structures without addressing the underlying operational logics. It proposes to engage with architectures not conceived by the civic fabric and its corresponding institutional rules of operation, inviting us to step away from the signifier that persistently advocates for equity, justice, and inclusion from within the dominant grammars upon which these declarations are constructed.

The dominant educational grammar operates in opposition to gender, interculturality, and inclusion. If we observe closely, today we speak with great force about the contributions of feminism, social and educational justice, postcolonial thought, and interculturality, giving rise to something even more symptomatic. Particularly within academic structures, a significant number of researchers and educators declare themselves in favor of each of these critical movements merely *per se*, with the intention of continuing to inhabit and engage with these knowledge structures and remain part of the discourse, often without fully grasping the analytical depth, ethical commitments, and political tensions that these new ways of conceptualizing the world and its structures entail. This (mis)framing establishes correlations between what is articulated, its value frameworks, and its languages of adherence, leading to diametrically different repercussions.

Inclusion dislocates and reshapes the school grammar validated by educational systems as a consequence of Western-centric rationality—an action that challenges the notion of time, urging us to shift from monochrony to

heterochrony—multiple heterogeneous temporalities interwoven within the same spatiality. This shift compels us to conceive of a heterotopic space, where teaching coordinates disrupt conventional ways of thinking about education. At this point, it is worth revisiting one of the misguided teleological assumptions embedded in inclusion: the notion that it should consolidate a specialized practice or a fixed, programmatic model for accommodating children with disabilities.

One of the most powerful heuristic properties of inclusive education is its psychic-relational force, which shapes reality. I refer to this as the principle of audibility—a set of coordinates that, by the mere act of articulation, generates a particular *ethos* capable of mobilizing distinct states of consciousness in its recipients—and the sculptural principle of the world. This is why the qualifier “inclusive” does not function as a paratactic arrangement, merely assembling elements side by side, but rather as an element of disruption and mobilization, enabling us to reclaim the most intrinsic dimension of educational practice—the authentic essence of education.

As a rule, we tend to assume that an inclusive teacher is simply one who respects all students, provides a welcoming environment, and expands opportunities. However, if we closely examine these premises, we will recognize that such prescriptions do not inherently define inclusion. Instead, they align with the core and essential aspects of teaching practice and pedagogy—dimensions that are intimately embedded in the ethical foundation of the teaching profession. What warrants closer examination are the underlying causes that drive the transfiguration, co-optation, and decentering of each of these tensions associated with the qualifier, necessitating a multi-axial analysis that intersects the social, cultural, political, educational, and economic spheres, among others. Inclusion actively shapes reality and the modes of relationship within it, as well as the regulatory frameworks of the (inter) subjective and the semiotic mechanisms that generate specific signs and criteria of legibility for diverse social groups. Let us not forget that inclusive education ultimately raises the fundamental question of the multiple existential modes of human beings.

Indeed, from my theoretical and political standpoint, I identify three central teleological purposes of inclusive education, namely: a) the establishment of a knowledge project in resistance and an analytical strategy aimed at generating new knowledge and perspectives on life, existence, affectivity, subjectivity, desire, and education, among other areas; b) the transformative reconfiguration of reality and of each field of human development, leading to the creation of an alternative world of possibilities; and c) the emergence of a powerful mechanism for recognizing contemporary educational theory and all the constitutive fields of the Sciences of Education.

If we now explore some of the epistemic coordinates of inclusion, I will argue that its heuristic approach is shaped by the postcolonial metaphor of “talking back,” constructing a new vocabulary and a cognitive framework dedicated to understanding the multiplicity of issues that converge at its critical core. In light of this, I assert that inclusion today should be understood as a metaphor, rather than a paradigm or methodology. Why a metaphor? Simply because its analytical coordinates frame its argumentative field as an explanatory construct that resonates widely across different regions of the world, employed by diverse groups in various ways. It establishes multiple points of contact with different struggles for social change in favor of so-called minorities—who, in reality, constitute the majority in the world. To prevent its signifier from becoming restrictive and crystallizing into rigid applications, we must uncover other heuristic and epistemological expressions embedded within this qualifier.

Today, this field is in a phase of discovery. This recognition compels us to consider the index of singularity and situates us within the broader discussion about the specificity of the territory. Although this is a discourse frequently invoked—appearing in postgraduate studies, mass media, and various academic and non-academic events—these argumentative frameworks still fail to concretely define its nature, leaving its singularity index ambiguous. Its syntagmatic structure, as I refer to heuristic constructs composed of two or more terms emerging

“ Inclusive education ratifies, inspired by Braidotti’s (2006) approaches, that non-unitary subjectivity is signified in terms of the nomadic, the dispersed, the fragmentary, a vision that is nevertheless functional, coherent and responsible in the liberation of the self and its ethical conscience. ”

“ Inclusion is synonymous with the production of other worlds, it imposes an altering signifier of reality and of the educational task, it profoundly challenges pedagogical knowledge. ”

within the context of so-called postmodernity, operates within a network of relationships and overlaps that share five fundamental challenges already discussed: epistemic, methodological, ontological, morphological, and semiotic/visual deficits.

Based on these characteristics, inclusion—as an analytical category—becomes a strategy for developing deeper interpretative frameworks regarding the multiple manifestations of power, recognizing that each one is endemic and serves as an articulator of social experience. A critical task of inclusive education is to establish the forms of relationship that converge and gain legitimacy within its argumentative framework, examining in depth whether each of these allows for the development of alternative understandings of affectivity, bonding, and relationality, as required by the authenticity of this verb and qualifier. All of this leads us to analyze the rhetorical mechanisms that interpellate the term itself, its object, and its signifier.

From this perspective, it seems essential to revisit the idea of “inclusion of the same,” a metaphor that describes the invariability or the persistent reinforcement by social agents of the very understandings that underpin the notion of liberal inclusion. This notion focuses on reintegrating individuals into the same structures that often serve as the core of various mechanisms of exclusion, marginalization, and barriers to self-development within social and educational trajectories and in the biographical processes of individuals. It is crucial to conduct a thorough examination of how the center-periphery regulatory process is articulated. This metaphor highlights the inability of educational and social structures—as well as curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative frameworks—and the conceptual blindness of their foundational principles to foster alternative educational models and architectures. Addressing these challenges requires confronting complex obstacles conceived as multi-level relational units with a dynamic and intricate order. These obstacles manifest across different dimensions and moments, shaping the schooling experience and social participation of specific groups.

Inclusion signifies the production of alternative worlds. It introduces an alternative signifier of reality and educational praxis, fundamentally challenging pedagogical knowledge. If inclusion generates new perspectives on knowledge, its epistemology constitutes an intellectual, political, and ethical counter-space, illustrating that this category remains in constant pursuit of its meaning. Its domain gives rise to the creation of an “intermediate space of zigzag and non-linear crossings—chaotic, nomadic, yet responsible and committed; cognitively valid, discursive, and materially embedded; coherent without succumbing to instrumental rationality” (Braidotti, 2002, p. 13). In *Derridean* terms, inclusion can be understood as a *philosopheme*, as it permeates all fields and matrices of participation in civic life—in life itself—and in social experience.

By asserting that inclusive education is a field shaped by silent forms of essentialisms-individualisms, it faces the challenge of advancing the subversion of

[...] a type of differentiation that is ultimately additive or operates through a cumulative method that requires others to be named as Others, while retaining the generic term as a grid of general intelligence, offering a morphology with the power to account for additional, divergent, or deviant ones (Chow, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013, p. 792),

thus imposing an extensive set of categorical frameworks for conceptualizing the singularizing force embodied by various groups. This, in turn, constitutes one of the central foundations for defining the ontological problem of social groups.

Regarding the epistemological dimension of inclusion, I argue that the concepts of difference and the common are inherently relational, residing at the core of this distinctive heuristic domain. If we consider what constitutes the authentic knowledge of this domain, it is plausible to assert that it is a theory that cannot be confined within the paradigms of any single discipline. This argument, in turn, allows us to affirm that its nature is post-disciplinary. At this juncture, I would like to revisit Chambers' (2009) notion of “the exteriority of theoretical work,” which

refers to analytical operations that articulate and/or interpret their field of inquiry, objects, and phenomena from outside and beyond their traditional forms of alloy and components—disciplines, discourses, concepts, theories, methods, subjects, ethical commitments, political projects, and problems, among others, that converge within it.

Its object surpasses all these elements, leading it to employ heuristic forms of translation. In my work, this relates to the creation of conditions of legibility through processes of rearticulation, countering the technique of epistemic applicationism, which confines knowledge and its authenticity-driven impulses within frameworks, languages, and analytical-methodological coordinates that do not inherently belong to it. This aspect is crucial in establishing conditions of legibility for the numerous contributions interwoven into the rhizomatic trajectory of inclusive education, recognizing that it relies on an extensive array of intellectual project rearticulations and theoretical paradigms. While these may not always share a clearly defined theoretical object or language, they succeed in generating new modes of inquiry and application—what Ocampo (2017) refers to as epistemic *translation*. However, in agreement with Oppermann (2011), the challenge arises of formulating a corpus of new theoretical principles that align with the heterogeneous nature of its constellation of phenomena. At the same time, its object and research praxis reflect a distinctly socio-political character, as it engages with a set of pressing global issues while considering the subjectivizing singularity of its foundational communities.

Its distinctive rhizomatic nature provides meaningful pathways to transcend the presence of “plurality and dissemination, producing differences and multiplicities, making new connections” (Best and Kellner, 1991, p. 99). The rhizomatic refers to the manner in which its body of phenomena circulates through diverse, predominantly resistant, knowledge projects. We are confronted with a singular, multifaceted regionalization, which, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1970), “assumes various forms, from the extension of a branched surface in all directions to its concretion in bulbs and tubers. More importantly, the rhizome is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather, directions in movement” (p. 78).

If its intellectual practice signifies a spiral of transformation, adaptation, and the connection of multiple points and diverse forms of alloy, then its organicity materializes through the principle of heterogenesis, unveiling a complex grammatical issue that operates from and toward connection and multiplicity.

Inclusion underscores the diverse meanings it assumes within different discourses, being prominently employed among some of the most influential contemporary critical intellectual movements. The discourse of multiplicity and difference occupies a central place in many feminist, anti-racist, and postmodern narratives and policies, though these have had limited impact on the social relationships that sustain such phenomena.

Synthesizing its main coordinates of constitution and heuristic and/or methodological regulation within the domain, it is assumed that its levels of scientific construction confirm: a) an ontological dimension focused on the minor, that is, the molecular revolution, centered on multiple singularities; b) an epistemological foundation of a post-disciplinary nature⁸, whose operation is based on diasporism and epistemological nomadism—an order of production or internal laws that define the functioning of the field. This premise leads us to revisit the assertion *that inclusive education does not adhere to any specific theoretical or methodological practice. Instead, it emerges from complexes of genealogical entanglements that shape its locus of enunciation* (Ocampo, 2017). c) Its conceptual universe arises from the critical core of multiplicity; d) It does not adhere to a clear method but instead documents methodological intersections and contaminations operating under the tactic of abduction.

By way of synthesis, I assert that:

- The field of inclusive education is fundamentally contested by a multiplicity of disciplines, theories, objects, methods, territories, subjects, influences, interests, modes of analysis, concepts, bodies of knowledge, ethical commitments, and political projects.
- It constructs a non-disciplinary space. It moves continuously and non-linearly through each of these dimensions, and at each new point of arrival, it extracts—through a process of translation—the most

8. The prefix *post-* diverges from a linear trajectory to assert itself as a force that disrupts, rearticulates, and reorients the ways in which certain analyses converge within the domain of inclusion. Post-disciplines construct a new object of knowledge that belongs to no one, revealing a diasporic and itinerant nature, forging an analytical-methodological constellation characterized by movements that function harmoniously within disorder or in a configuration akin to heterogenesis.

relevant and significant aspects of each epistemological resource, aiming to fabricate a new object and body of knowledge.

- It establishes a space for the disposition of disciplines and a specific historical disposition of truth (a form of knowledge). It becomes an analytical category
- of intermediation.
- Its work is structured around analyzing its knowledge system as a *theory without discipline*, functioning as a toolbox—seeking to repair, organize, and identify which new ideas can be incorporated, and subsequently, which of these facilitate a situated reading of its intellectual conjuncture. Conceived in this way, it materializes as a multi-localized critical map, interwoven with intense influences. Its theoretical construction is conceived as a system of continuous imports and exports of diverse epistemic-methodological resources.
- Inclusion is an inherently relational and structural concept. As such, it functions as both a research strategy and a critical practice aimed at (re)articulating a more complex understanding of the world and its chronic sociopolitical pathologies, including oppression, social injustice, and inequality across multiple domains.
- As an *analytical category*, inclusion becomes a strategy for developing deeper interpretative frameworks regarding the multiple manifestations of power, recognizing that each of them is endemic and an active articulator of social experience.
- As an analytical category, inclusion has the capacity to integrate a wide range of critical theories and approaches, positioning itself as a field of convergence for diverse contemporary critical perspectives. Thus conceived, it constitutes a social movement of differential opposition and transformation.
- Understood as a differential social movement, it borrows—through the performativity of rearticulation—contributions of varying scope from primarily anti-humanist movements advocating for women, children, race, gender, sex, non-normative sexualities, human liberation, and more. Inclusion, as both a sculptural and interventionist strategy within the world-system, designates a heterodox sign and a knowledge project in resistance, becoming a mechanism for transformation and disruption of the oppressive forces that relationally shape identity and its coordinates of social configuration.
- The epistemological understanding of inclusive education provides elements that contribute to the materialization of such actions—many of them self-aware manifestations of resistance that do not merely engage with the proliferation of oppositional ideologies but also foster new strategies of resistance and creativity.
- Despite not holding a disciplinary status, it constructs an ambivalent, complex, and multidimensional object, fundamentally border-crossing and post-disciplinary, articulating specific issues primarily related to education but applicable within social, political, and cultural contexts. Conceived in this way, it constitutes an open-ended object, utilized in various ways.

Finally, it should be noted that the epistemological field of inclusive education consists of intricate and intensive analytical-methodological *import and export* strategies and mechanisms which, without translation, would fail to achieve the full potential of their objectives. Epistemological resources of heterogeneous nature are drawn from other fields, disciplines, and epistemological territories. Undoubtedly, the epistemological project of inclusive education relies on borrowing theoretical tools, conceptual frameworks, and methodological resources from other disciplines. However, its constructive processes are not limited to or reduced to an arbitrary system of borrowing; rather, they operate through conditions of translation and/or rearticulation, redirecting its energies toward new directions.

The epistemology of inclusive education—hereinafter, the system of *updating/translation of contemporary educational theory*—is framed within the epistemologies of dispersion. Hence, its order of production is expressed

through dissemination and diasporic movement. Its connections are sustained through mobile flows, giving rise to expressions of interweaving, hybridization, and plasticity, among others, from which new, more solid flows emerge—flows that can “connect and disconnect with any other, creating or annihilating” (Esperón, 2016, p. 22). Each of its objects, methods, influences, theories, ethical commitments, political projects, subjects, territories, disciplines, concepts, bodies of knowledge, and discourses—an infinite multiplicity of epistemic singularities—configures a theoretical and methodological structure composed of a system of constellations. It explicitly forms an unstable assemblage from which the irruption of the new—chaos—emerges.

The adjective “inclusive” operates in terms of an “open trajectory,” which refers to its most significant epistemological property: movement. It constitutes a body of knowledge in continuous construction, transformation, and development, evolving as a process that integrates the social and political within a unique configuration of subjectivity.

Inclusion, as a knowledge project in resistance, an analytical strategy, and a critical praxis, consciously creates conditions for liberation and deep affective processes—fostering the creation of a new form of subjectivity—which, in turn, result in alternative historical positions that challenge the dominant social order. It generates a form of knowledge capable of breaking with the *corpus* of specific social and ideological formations that structure deep-seated oppressive processes, contexts, and dynamics that inhibit self-development and reinforce essentialist frameworks. These structures are dedicated to dismantling their own logic of meaning. It intervenes within, from, and through these formations, exploring new connections and broader social and political objectives, sharpening a dialectical engagement with various ideological forms of liberation and consciousness-raising aimed at sculpting transformation.

“Inclusiveness highlights the diverse meanings it adopts in different discourses, being used prominently among some of the most prominent critical intellectual currents of the present time. ”

Conclusions

Inclusive education, as a category of analysis, allows us to investigate and understand the specificity and fabric of our time. At this point, it is recognized as an essentially unconditioned category. Corona (2018) explains that its ontology operates as a system for refocusing critical theory in response to the *diversity* of constitutive problems of the present. In this regard, it aligns with the principle of negativity, understood as a critical desire for destabilization and continuous transformation of the intellectual systems involved in the study of justice, human resistance politics, inclusion, and the coordinates for constructing a present that coheres with the issues of the zone of non-being. Inclusive education is, in itself, a negative desire to conceptualize the contemporary world—it becomes an insistence on transformation. “It reveals to us the space of freedom that we can still enjoy and the changes that can still be made in our lives” (Corona, 2018, p. 318).

The ontology of the present constitutes another critical task faced by inclusive education. In part, it creates an ontological figuration of contemporary time—an endeavor that revives Kant’s fundamental question regarding what we are in this moment. It is a framework of space-time coordinates of an evanescent order, whose deep regulatory structure takes on the challenge of offering a specific diagnosis of the political, cultural, social, and educational conjuncture. At this point, the interpretative frameworks of inclusive education expose their own limitations. The ontology of the present, as an analytical practice, seeks to destabilize in order to counter-argue the function of cognitive maps—theories—that shape the configuration of educational subjects, those

[...] that must be examined in their conditions of emergence and preservation within a given era or culture, but also in their own contingency, so that it becomes possible to overcome all forms of submission or exclusion to which we, as subjects, are currently exposed (Corona, 2018, p. 320).

The heuristic framework of inclusive education, in its effort to construct a knowledge system relevant to the present, must be capable of offering an analysis of the general conditions that constrain the cognitive mechanisms of an era. Its epistemological singularity evolves into a complex system of thought regarding the coordinates that shape the cultural framework in which we exist. Indeed,

[...] knowledge about the present is no longer constituted through the transcendental consciousness of the subject but rather through a set of power practices that provide knowledge itself with both the conditions of its emergence and its continuity and permanence. However, despite the radical critique of transcendentalism, Foucault did not seek to diminish the role of the subject in history. Rather, through a meticulous historical analysis of scientific knowledge, he aimed to develop a diagnosis of the present that accounts for the power and dominance exerted by hegemonic discourse in the constitution and definition of the contemporary subject (Corona, 2018, p. 320).

Viewed in this way, inclusive education is, in itself, an ontology of the present, shaped by a set of folds and forms of subjectivity production that become a historical form of knowledge. Its depth and complexity are defined by the objective of reconfiguring the matrix that constitutes its modes of verification. Inclusion is a space of knowledge in constant transformation, reconfiguration, and deformation⁹—it is a domain of reactions, forms, and inventions of what is possible. The ontology of the present interrogates the coordinates of relation and implication within the diverse temporal frameworks legitimized by the universal/monochronic order of educational action. It articulates a spatialized vision of the educational event, wherein “ontological condensations (discursive, dispositional, and subjective) function as conditions of possibility of the present” (Perea, 2011, p. 21), disrupting the logic of contemporary pedagogical thought production.

The objectives of the ontology of the present, affirmed by inclusive education, align with the creation of knowledge that enables the multiplicity of singularities—an ontological politics of the minor—to exist and articulate its interventionist-creative force within an entirely distinct space: an *out-of-series* or heterotopic space, a third space (Ocampo, 2017). Inclusive education unfolds through a multi-scalar shift—it is a misconception to assert that it undergoes only a single transformation—that affects the ontological, epistemological, political, morphological, methodological, visual, temporal, and spatial dimensions. In short, it permeates all levels of world regulation. The theoretical contribution of the ontology of the present operates within what Spivak (2006) refers to as a *double bind*, initiating both a historical critique and a critique of educational practice and cultural analysis.

9. I employ the notion of deformation as a means of generating alternative modes of imagination for conceptualizing and experiencing the contemporary world.

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Características y mediaciones en la enseñanza de la música tradicional del caribe colombiano

Characteristics and Mediations in the Teaching of Traditional Music of the Colombian Caribbean

Características e mediações no ensino da música tradicional do Caribe Colombiano

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RESUMEN

El propósito general de este artículo es destacar los aspectos metodológicos que utilizan las personas en Bogotá y Barranquilla para la enseñanza de la música tradicional del caribe colombiano, reconociendo en mayor medida la participación en educación inicial y el desarrollo de aprendizajes significativos al vivir elementos culturales que favorecen el reconocimiento de su entorno, su identidad y desarrollo social. Se realizaron 124 encuestas a docentes, formadores/as, agentes educativos, maestros/sabedores, entre otros, en escenarios formales, principalmente en entornos urbanos y en algunos rurales de educación infantil, teniendo el mayor número de participantes en estratos 1 y 2. Se reconocen los elementos más destacados, las mediaciones y otros aspectos importantes en las experiencias de aprendizaje, que dan uso a tecnologías en la mayoría de casos análogos, como lo son instrumentos musicales usados en este ritmo. Como conclusión se evidencia la importancia que tiene la música como herramienta primordial dentro de las aulas de clase en especial en la primera infancia.

Palabras clave: cultura, música, artes, mantenimiento cultural, educación preescolar.

ABSTRACT

The general purpose of this article is to highlight the methodological aspects used by people in Bogotá and Barranquilla in the teaching of traditional music of the Colombian Caribbean, recognizing to a greater extent the participation in early education, developing significant learning by experiencing cultural elements that favor the recognition of their environment, their identity and social development. 124 surveys were made to teachers, trainers, educational agents, teachers/learners, among others in mostly formal scenarios, in urban environments mainly and some rural environments of early childhood education, having the highest number of participants in strata 1 and 2, recognizing the outstanding elements and mediations among other important aspects in the learning experiences, making use of technologies in most cases analogous, such as musical instruments used in this rhythm, evidencing the importance of music as a primary tool in the classroom, especially in early childhood.

Key words: culture, music, arts, cultural maintenance, preschool education.

RESUMO

O objetivo geral deste artigo é destacar os aspectos metodológicos utilizados por pessoas de Bogotá e Barranquilla no ensino da música tradicional do Caribe colombiano, reconhecendo em maior medida a participação na educação infantil, desenvolvendo aprendizagens significativas através da vivência de elementos culturais que favorecem o reconhecimento do seu meio, sua identidade e desenvolvimento social. Foram realizadas 124 pesquisas com professores, formadores, agentes educacionais, professores/alunos, entre outros, em ambientes majoritariamente formais, principalmente em ambientes urbanos e alguns ambientes rurais da educação infantil, com maior número de participantes nos estratos 1 e 2, reconhecendo os elementos marcantes e as mediações entre outros aspectos importantes nas experiências de aprendizagem, fazendo uso de tecnologias na maioria dos casos análogos, como os instrumentos musicais utilizados neste ritmo, demonstrando a importância da música como ferramenta primordial na sala de aula, principalmente na primeira infância.

Palavras - chave: cultura, música, artes, manutenção cultural, educação pré-escolar.

Literature Review

As background, there is the research article from Universidad Simón Bolívar “Enseñanza de la música tradicional del caribe colombiano y su preservación en estudiantes del colegio Jorge Isaac de Barranquilla (Teaching Traditional Music of the Colombian Caribbean and Its Preservation Among Students of Jorge Isaac School in Barranquilla),” which aims to describe the didactic and curricular components of traditional Caribbean Colombian music to strengthen the cultural identity of the students (Barriga, 2021). Another document that allowed the recognition of the landscape concerning the teaching of traditional music is the article by Salazar, N. (2016) “Músicas tradicionales en espacios académicos: la rueda de gaita como experiencia de aprendizaje (Traditional Music in Academic Spaces: The Gaita Circle as a Learning Experience),” which focuses on the gaita music documented in research articles, presentations, and fieldwork where the musical elements and teaching-learning processes present in this tradition are studied to find ways to leverage them in academia

Method

Design

For this article, developed as co-researchers of the “Latin America Node Project: Know in Key the Techniques and Technologies,”³ a non-experimental descriptive design was arranged, as it aims to recognize the variables based on the characteristics that define them without the direct intervention of the researcher on them. Recognizing these characteristics, the technique used for this research is the designed survey, which was administered over a specified period of six months, without any follow-up on the evolution of the variables. Likewise, the present study aims to relate the variables established in the instrument through an exploratory analysis.

Technique and Instrument

Based on the survey technique, an instrument was designed using the “Kobo Toolbox” tool. It consists of 22 items with both open and closed-ended questions related to the general characterization of individuals teaching traditional Caribbean music in specific locations in Colombia, such as Bogotá and Barranquilla, the duration of their experience, and the educational setting (formal, non-formal, and informal). On the other hand, the aim was to understand the types of knowledge involved in the pedagogical experience, the presence or absence of a curriculum guiding the teaching and learning process, the issuance of certifications upon completion of the training processes, and the use of analog or digital technologies indicating their type.

The instrument was evaluated by 17 co-researchers of the project, item by item, under the considerations of: relevance to the study, semantics, and syntax of the sentence. The evaluation was conducted on the assessment of a continuous scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated that it was not adequate and 5 indicated that it was very adequate. The internal consistency of the instrument was measured through the calculation of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a result of 0.965, indicating high consistency.

3. The project is based on the bibliographic and cinematographic production of: (Córdoba - Villota & Velásquez-Mantilla, 2023; Forero - Mesa & Socha - Frontado, 2023; Quimbayo-Feria et al., 2022; Rodríguez et al., 2022; D. A. Velásquez - Mantilla, 2016a, 2016b, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019a, 2019b, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d, 2022e; D. A. Velásquez - Mantilla, Andrade - Sánchez, et al., 2022; D. A. Velásquez - Mantilla, Castiblanco, et al., 2018; D. A. Velásquez - Mantilla, Castiblanco Roldán, et al., 2018a, 2018b; D. A. Velásquez - Mantilla et al., 2016, 2019; D. A. Velásquez - Mantilla, Rodríguez Ardila, et al., 2022; Velásquez - Mantilla, 2023; D. A. Velásquez-Mantilla & Hernández - Pacheco, 2017, 2018; D. A. Velásquez - Mantilla & Rojas - Guerra, 2018; D. A. V. Velásquez - Mantilla, 2022)

Results

Study Participants

For this study, 124 individuals, both men and women, participated by responding to each of the items presented in the questionnaire. The study began with their characterization and their pedagogical experiences in teaching traditional Caribbean music in various locations in Colombia, specifically in Bogotá and Barranquilla. In the records, experiences predominantly come from Barranquilla, with a higher percentage, and to a lesser extent from Bogotá, totaling 101 in Barranquilla, 18 in Bogotá, 3 in Bolívar, 1 in Córdoba, and 1 in Magdalena. It is important to note that the origins of traditional Caribbean music are aligned with the locations where pedagogical experiences are most developed. Conversely, in cities like Bogotá, the focus encompasses folk music from across the country (not just from the Caribbean), incorporating urban rhythms and fusions with other musical styles to better connect with listeners.

Graphic 1. Location map of the origin of the experience

Folk music from the Caribbean region of Colombia



Note: Description of the location and origin of the experience.

According to the collected data, it can be seen that in the areas closest to the Colombian coasts, where these music genres originate, it is more common to find teachers who instruct in traditional Caribbean music. In contrast, in central cities like Bogotá, fewer people teach this musical genre. Similarly, it is evident that in regions such as Atlántico, Magdalena, and Córdoba, this type of education can be found within formal settings, in classrooms of private and/or public educational institutions, and in grades ranging from early childhood to secondary education. The teachers who conduct these classes are not necessarily licensed in arts but rather uphold the legacy of the place where they live.



Table 1. Setting and socioeconomic level of the participants

Setting			Socioeconomic level %			
	Unit	%	0	1	2	3
Urban	117	94,354838	0,85470085	70,0854701	26,4957265	2,56410256
Rural	7	5,6451612	14,2857143	57,1428571	14,2857143	14,2857143

Note: Description of data on the setting and socioeconomic level of the participants. Prepared by the authors.

As previously mentioned, the predominant experiences are part of the urban setting, totaling 117, with only 7 in the rural setting. This demonstrates that in city capitals, or urban spaces, there is interest in the teaching processes of traditional themes such as the music of the Colombian Caribbean coast.

It is also important to mention that in both settings, urban and rural, there are more experiences in socioeconomic level 1 with 70.0854701. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that historically, the traditional Caribbean music developed by drums and singers narrates the daily stories of those who have engaged in labor-intensive jobs, household chores, and caregiving for people of higher socioeconomic levels. Even though the stratification system did not exist at that time, this is still acknowledged through the lyrics and stories that are told, for instance, through the *bullerengue* music, which recognizes the African heritage of call-and-response songs accompanied by drums and dances.

Table 2. Duration of Educational Experiences and Socioeconomic Level

Time of Existence of Educational Experiences			Socioeconomic level %			
	Unit	%	0	1	2	3
1-3 Years	51	41,1290323	1,96078431	80,3921569	11,7647059	5,88235294
3-5 Years	27	21,7741935	-	70,3703704	25,9259259	3,7037037
6-10 Years	19	15,3225806	-	63,1578947	36,8421053	-
11 Years or more	27	21,7741935	3,7037037	51,8518519	44,4444444	-

Note: description of the relationship between the duration of educational experiences and socioeconomic level. Source: Prepared by the authors.

The duration of the recorded experiences ranged from 1 to 3 years, with the highest percentage being 41.1290323% and a percentage of 80.3921569% in socioeconomic level 1. Therefore, this socioeconomic level continues to predominate among the experiences involving various variables and the time of existence of the educational practice. The outcomes of this research focused on the number of pedagogical experiences; socioeconomic level 1 is the most predominant, while the least predominant are socioeconomic levels 0 and 3. In the same way, it is observed that, for the most part, the highest percentage of duration of the experience is 1-3 years with 80.3921569%, 3-5 years with 70.3703704%, 6-10 years with 63.1578947%, and finally, 11 years or more with 51.8518519%. The others exhibit a low percentage that varies between 1.96078431% in the 1-3 year range and 5.88235294% in socioeconomic level 3. This demonstrates that, although in socioeconomic level 1 there is low purchasing power, it is where educational experiences lasting between 1-3 years are maintained for the longest time, accounting for 41.1290323%.

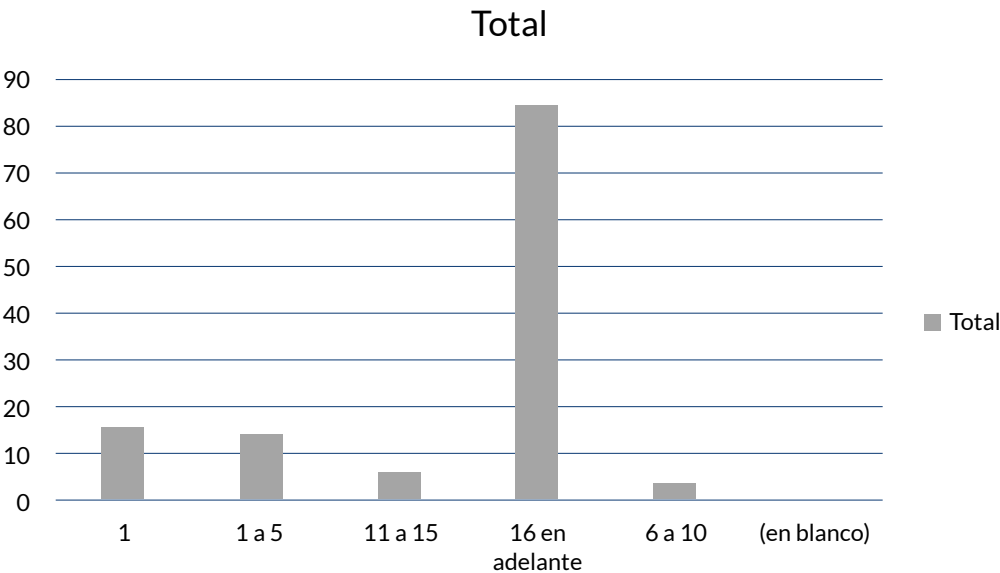
Table 3. Type of educator involved in the experience and socioeconomic level

	Unit	%	0	1	2	3
Educational Agent	64	51,6129032	-	84,375	15,625	-
Child Agent	37	29,8387097	-	54,0540541	43,2432432	1
Popular educator	9	7,25806452	11,1111111	44,4444444	44,4444444	-
Teachers	5	4,03225806	-	60	20	20
Instructor	3	2,41935484	-	33,3333333	33,3333333	33,333333
Educator	2	1,61290323	50	50	-	-
Knowledge holders	2	1,61290323	-	100	-	-
Monitor	1	0,80645161	-	100	-	-
Instructor	1	0,80645161	-	-	-	100

Note: Description of the types of educators involved in the experience and socioeconomic level.
Source: Prepared by the authors.

Regarding the type of educator, teachers identified themselves as educational agents with 51.6129032% of the outcomes, and 29.8387097% identified as children's agents, 7.25806452% identified as popular educators and to a lesser extent identified themselves as teachers, knowledge holders, monitors, instructors, and monitors. Regarding the relationship of these data with the socioeconomic levels of each type of educator, socioeconomic level 1 continues to predominate as the prevailing socioeconomic level with the highest number of educators involved in the traditional Caribbean music education experience. Likewise, it is important to state that the largest percentage of men and women identify as educational agents, with 51.6129032%, taking into consideration the "diversity of profiles encompassed by the concept of an educational agent (service personnel, community members, family members, or professionals linked to protection, nutrition, health, or education sectors)" (Zambrano et al. 2019, p.43).

Graph 2. Number of educators involved in the experience



Note: Description of the number of educators involved in the experience. Source: Prepared by the authors.

The study also identified the number of educators involved in the experience, with a predominance of 85 experiences involving more than 16 educators, 15 experiences with only 1 educator, and 14 experiences attended by 1 to 5 educators. Only 4 experiences involve between 6 to 10 educators, and finally, 6 experiences worked with groups of 11 to 15 educators. This indicates that these are experiences conducted within large educational spaces, as the number of educators is extensive, and a similar-sized venue would be needed to accommodate this proportion. Similarly, the trend of a majority of educational agents in socioeconomic level 1 is maintained.



The following survey responses indicate that the highest percentage of individuals receiving the pedagogical experience is concentrated in children, with 109 individuals.

Table 4. Persons receiving the pedagogical experience

Poblaciones involucradas			Estrato %			
	Unidad	%	0	1	2	3
Children	109	87,9032258	-	72,4770642	25,6880734	1,83486239
Youth	3	2,41935484	33,3333333	33,3333333	-	33,3333333
Elderly individuals	1	0,80645161	-	-	100	-
Women heads of household	1	0,80645161	-	100	-	-

Note: Description of the relationship between populations involved in the experience and socioeconomic level

Regarding the target population of the study, the predominant group is children, with 87.9032258% of records. Hence, they are considered the central population for this article. The remaining groups—youth, the elderly, female heads of households, and others not categorized as children, youth, indigenous population, displaced youth population, among other types that were part of this study—accounted for 4.03225806%, representing smaller, yet still important, populations for the study.

In the following table, the relationship between the involved actors and the socioeconomic levels can be observed, which indicates the highest participation percentages and the actors with a low percentage of participation.

Table 4. Populations Involved in the Experience and Socioeconomic Level

Actors Involved			Socioeconomic Level %			
	Unit	%	0	1	2	3
School or institution	90	72,580645	-	65,5555556	32,2222222	2,22222222
Knowledge Holder	19	15,322581	-	94,7368421	5,26315789	-
Student or apprentice	8	6,4516129	12,5	50	25	12,5
Family and/or community	7	5,6451613	14,2857143	71,4285714	-	14,2857143

Note: Description of the actors involved in the experience and socioeconomic level. Source: Prepared by the authors.

The predominant actor in the implementation of experiences is the school or institution with 52 experiences at 72.580645%. Following closely is the knowledge holder with 15.322581%, and finally, we have the student or apprentice and the family and/or community, with 12.64516129%, showing a predominance in socioeconomic socioeconomic level 1, as is the case of the other samples.

Regarding stratification, it is evident that the majority of experiences were in socioeconomic level 1 with a total of 86, in socioeconomic level 2 with a total of 64, and in socioeconomic level 3 with a total of 12, for a total of 124 respondents. This indicates that there is a higher population density in socioeconomic levels 1 and 2, which is why more experiences related to traditional music education are developed and applied in these georeferenced spaces and specific socioeconomic levels.

Table 6. Knowledge Involved in the Experience and Socioeconomic Level

Knowledge Involved			Socioeconomic Level %			
	Unit	%	0	1	2	3
Ancestral/Traditional Knowledge	91	73,3870968	-	78,021978	20,8791209	1,0989011
Academic Knowledge	24	19,3548387	8,33333333	50	37,5	4,16666667
Empirical Knowledge	9	7,25806452	-	33,3333333	44,4444444	22,2222222

Note: description of the relationship between the knowledge involved in the experience and socioeconomic level.
Source: Prepared by the authors.

As for the type of knowledge involved, ancestral/traditional knowledge predominates with 73.3870968%, and with it, socioeconomic level 1. It is therefore necessary to specify that the instruments used in traditional Caribbean music, such as the tambora, alegre and llamador drums, the male and female gaita, maracas, and the singers, as an essential part of conveying the message or story of each lyric, are elements that have been passed down from generation to generation and are transferred to other types of spaces, in this case, educational spaces, to maintain these rhythms which, although along with the instruments have undergone some variations, have remained over time.

The table below displays the technologies used in the recorded experiences, with analog technologies predominating at 60.483871%, followed by digital technologies at 28.2258065%, for a total of 11.2903226% in the use of analog and digital technologies.

Table 7. Technologies Involved in the Experience and Socioeconomic Level

Technologies Involved			Socioeconomic Level %			
	Unidad	%	0	1	2	3
Analogous	75	60,483871	-	70,6666667	29,3333333	-
Digital	35	28,2258065	5,71428571	65,7142857	17,1428571	11,4285714
Analogous Digital	14	11,2903226	-	71,4285714	28,5714286	-

Note: Description of the technologies involved in the experience and socioeconomic level. Source: Prepared by the authors.

Among the elements used to carry out the experience reported by the participants, the most common are the computer, musical stories, costumes and outfits for cumbia, negritos costumes, masks, the Son de Negros, writing materials, photographic images, plans, 'sombrero vueltiao' hats, sound equipment, elements that help represent the cumbia dance (candles, handkerchiefs), and the handling of traditional instruments from the Caribbean coast such as: The tambora, llamador and alegre drums, maracas, flutes, the Guache, female and male gaita, among others. Of the analyzed experiences, 116 report not having dissemination through the internet, 3 do have dissemination, and 5 do not know or did not respond.

On the other hand, it can be seen how this knowledge is or is not imparted through the curriculum and likewise if it generates a certificate for the participants, as observed in the following tables.

Table 7. Knowledge imparted in the curriculum

	Unidad	%
No	93	75
Yes	27	21,77419355
Not Specified/Not Recorded	4	3,225806452

Note: description of the knowledge imparted in the curriculum. Source: Prepared by the authors

These tables demonstrate that this knowledge is not imparted through a curriculum, with 75% of responses, and in the same way, no certificate is awarded upon completion with 76.6129032%, which shows that the children, youth, and adults who come to this space are not expecting this certificate. Similarly, each person who imparts the knowledge does so in a different manner without having a general orientation or guide on how to impart this knowledge to others.

Table 8. A certificate is awarded upon completion

	Unidad	%
No	95	76,6129032
Yes	28	22,5806452
Not Specified/Not Recorded	1	0,80645161

Note: Description of the relationship of experiences that grant a certificate upon completion. Source: Prepared by the authors.

As for educational scenarios, it is evident that the highest percentage of experiences is found in formal education with 93.5483871%, which is an important data point that prompts reflection on how those imparting this type of knowledge are understanding education. Although the highest percentage of education is formal, the responses given earlier indicate that it is neither being delivered through the curriculum nor is a certificate being awarded upon completion. This leads to the question: in what manner is this knowledge being imparted, and in which scenarios of formal education is it being carried out?

Table 9. Educational Scenario and Socioeconomic Level.

Educational Scenario			Socioeconomic Level %			
	Unit	%	0	1	2	3
Formal Education	116	93,5483871	-	71,5517241	26,7241379	1,72413793
Non-formal Education	5	4,03225806	40	20	20	20
Informal Education	3	2,41935484	-	66,6666667	-	33,3333333

Note: Relationship between Educational Scenario and Socioeconomic Level. Source: Prepared by the authors.

In the table above, it is observed that there is a low percentage of teachers who integrate the learning process into everyday life in an incidental manner. The pedagogical experiences of these students are acquired outside of traditional formal educational institutions, where the acquisition of such learning is mandatory despite lacking any planning. In general terms, it is demonstrated that there are individuals who are concerned with ensuring that our history and roots are known through traditional music, with 124 teachers who developed pedagogical experiences in any educational setting.

In cities like Bogotá, specialized training processes in Caribbean folk music were found in informal and non-formal settings, with teachers both with and without professional training who often impart this knowledge in an empirical manner. In the center of the country, formal music education combines various streams such as classical music, urban music, and folklore. This is experienced in a generalized manner, acknowledging the different regions of the country, but without delving deeply into any particular one, with very few exceptions.

On the other hand, it can be observed in the following table that the majority of experiences occurred during the initial cycle, with a total of 113 experiences, only 1 in secondary education, 1 at the professional level, and 1 in professional technical education.

Table 9. Education Cycle

	Unit	%
Primary Education	113	91,1290323
Other	8	6,4516129
Secondary Basic Education	1	0,80645161
Professional	1	0,80645161
Professional Technical	1	0,80645161

Note: Description of participation according to education cycles. Source: Prepared by the authors.

The table indicates that most of the pedagogical experiences conducted with students and teachers from different regions took place in primary education within a formal setting. This refers to students who are in early childhood, children ranging from birth to six years of age, starting from the recognition of their characteristics, particularities, and the context in which they live. This approach creates enriched environments through pedagogical experiences related to teaching of traditional music.

Teachers from these institutions analyze and interpret their environments, bringing their pedagogical experiences from outside a regulated educational system and without an explicit certifier.

Table 10. Type of relationship identified in the pedagogical experience

What type of relationship do you most identify with in your pedagogical experience?

		Unit	%
A	Teacher or expert ➡ Student or apprentice	32	25,80645161
B	Teacher or expert ➡ ↔ Student or apprentice	61	49,19354839
C	↓ Family and/or Community	3	2,419354839
D	School or estado ↓ Familia and/or ↑	1	0,806451613
E	Community School or estatament ↓ Familia and/or Community	1	0,806451613
F	School or estatament ↓ Teacher or expert ➡ Student or apprentice	3	2,419354839
G	School or estatament ↓ Teacher or expert ➡ ↔ Student or apprentice	2	1,612903226
H	Teacher or expert ➡ ↔ Student or apprentice ↑ Familia and/or Community	5	4,032258065
I	Escuela o estatament ↓ Teacher or expert ↔ × Student or apprentice ↑ Familia and/or Community	16	12,90322581

Note: Description of the types of relationships identified in the pedagogical experience.

Regarding the type of relationship identified by individuals in each of the pedagogical experiences, it can be observed that the primary response is option b, which indicates a two-way relationship between the knowledge holder and student or apprentice, with a percentage of 49.19354839%. This demonstrates that in these pedagogical experiences, the school or the state and the family and/or community are not being considered, as responses that include these two participants have the lowest percentage of selection, varying between 12.90322581% and 0.806451613%, which represents the image of the relationship between the school or the state and the family and/or community.

Discussion

Traditional music serves as a didactic tool for developing skills that can benefit the processes of each of the topics covered in educational curricula. In the teaching of mathematics, there is memorization of numbers and the application of spaces, in this case, concepts such as (fast-slow), etc. On the other hand, in the processes of literacy and text comprehension, it contributes to improving phonology (pronunciation, intonation, rhythms, and rhymes), facilitating the comprehension of texts they are currently learning. In this regard, traditional music and musical instruments are educational materials that are highly useful for educators, as they aim to achieve meaningful learning and serve as a cultural component that contributes to the identity of being Colombian.

Many values are recognized through the expression that becomes visible in children; every artistic space related to music is a form of civic construction, “a space where much more than music is learned; as a space for self-recognition and recognition of others; and as a place where a life project is built around music” (Barrera, 2017, p. 251)..

On the other hand, the diverse musical rhythms that are taught and learned from generation to generation represent an expressive form of human thought, a space where identities, worldviews, and everyday life with all its forms and times reside. A place where life contents and social practices weave specific relationships and evolve in particularly complex towns and societies. It seeks a positive atmosphere for addressing diversity, while not forgetting intercultural dialogue, meaningful learning, the development of knowledge, skills, and both fine and gross motor skills, as well as positive school coexistence, presenting the different cultures involved in traditional music to foster inclusive participation where coexistence is the mediating element and the protective framework that drives classroom experiences.

The teaching of traditional music in Barranquilla at an early age aims to highlight, through a formal teaching process, the struggle to preserve cultural traditions. For instance, the traditional cumbia of the Colombian Caribbean was recently declared intangible cultural heritage at the national level (Heraldo, 2022). In the case of Bogotá, although the Ministry of National Education incorporates the arts as a mandatory subject, music is often relegated to a supplementary space, or only visual arts or drawing are taught. Musical education is privileged only in some institutions with greater resources and trained personnel. In other cases, priority is given to exact sciences and literacy processes, overlooking the value it holds for the integral development of the human being. On the other hand, interviews reflect greater experiences in Barranquilla and fewer outcomes in Bogotá, which poses greater challenges for implementation and research in this regard in the nation's capital.

Conclusions

In this study, it was concluded that through the strategy “Latin America Node Project: Knowledge in Key of Techniques and Technologies” of the Master’s in Inclusive and Intercultural Education at Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios (UNIMINUTO), which sought, through a website, to disseminate information about various educational processes being developed and the perceptions of educators (Preschool Education Graduates, Child Educators, Early Childhood Technicians, Lic. In Music, in different arts, etc.), which document the various experiences inside and outside the classroom, where the mediation between the teaching of traditional music and the new trends influencing the formation of Colombian culture is experienced, the positive impact is noted by the entire surveyed population: children 109, and other groups, who belonged to rural and urban areas of Barranquilla and Bogotá in socioeconomic levels 0, 1, 2, and 3.

In their pedagogical experiences, teachers reported various aspects such as the use of resources, strategies, relationships among actors, types of knowledge, and impacts on the curriculum, among others. They succeeded in demonstrating that traditional music is a necessary and fundamental complement in the academic process carried out in educational institutions. This is because it enhances cultural expressions and the holistic development of the individual in Caribbean cities like Barranquilla, while also impacting other cities such as Bogotá, where different cultural movements from around the world converge. Throughout this article, reflections were made based on theoretical contributions regarding the importance of traditional music and its necessity for the transformation of an educational community, specifically in the initial stage from 0 to 6 years, that is, early childhood.

Through this study, analogous knowledge was identified, which, in a high percentage, served as the medium by which educators reached communities. This promoted interaction among students with and without disabilities, allowing them to build their cultural identity, preserve cultural heritage, have opportunities for expression, and more. Traditional music was used as a means of teaching and learning, strengthening the acquisition of fundamental knowledge for young children.

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Benchmarking: Comparative Analysis of Youth Houses

Benchmarking: Análise Comparativa de Casas Juvenis

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RESUMEN

Este estudio de investigación de mercados, Benchmarking: Análisis comparativo de casas juveniles en Bogotá, busca identificar mejores prácticas y características para ser tenidos en cuenta en la Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, en el eventual montaje de una casa juvenil propia. Su implementación apunta a enriquecer el perfil estudiantil, abordando el fortalecimiento de espacios inclusivos y orientados al servicio y espiritualidad que fortalezcan el desarrollo integral de jóvenes desde un entorno académico. Luego de mencionar su contextualización teórica y de abordar terminología propia de la situación de análisis como: Humanismo, Pastoral Juvenil y Misionalidad propia de la institución de educación superior. Metodológicamente, se empleó un enfoque mixto, combinando entrevistas y grupos focales con administradores y estudiantes de casas juveniles. Los resultados revelan una percepción globalmente positiva, destacando la participación dinámica y actividades de alto impacto. Las conclusiones resaltan que las casas juveniles son iniciativas valiosas que promueven crecimiento personal, espiritualidad y servicio, enriqueciendo la experiencia educativa.

Palabras clave: desarrollo juvenil; educación superior; espiritualidad y educación; investigación de mercados; participación estudiantil.

ABSTRACT

This market research study, Benchmarking: Comparative Analysis of Youth Houses, seeks to identify best practices and characteristics in Bogotá to be considered by the Minuto De Dios University Corporation in the potential establishment of its own youth house. Its implementation aims to enrich the student profile by addressing the strengthening of inclusive spaces oriented towards service and spirituality that foster the integral development of young people within an academic environment. After mentioning its theoretical contextualization and addressing specific terminology related to the analysis situation, such as Humanism, Youth Pastoral and Missionality characteristic of higher education institutions, a mixed approach was methodologically employed, combining interviews and focus groups with administrators and students from youth houses. The results reveal a globally positive perception, highlighting dynamic participation and high-impact activities. The conclusions emphasize that youth houses are valuable initiatives promoting personal growth, spirituality and service, enriching educational experiences.

Key words: youth development; higher education; spirituality and education; market research; student participation.

RESUMO

Este estudo de pesquisa de mercado, Benchmarking: Análise Comparativa de Casas Juvenis, busca identificar melhores práticas e características em Bogotá para serem consideradas pela Corporação Universitária Minuto De Deus na eventual criação de uma casa juvenil própria. Sua implementação visa enriquecer o perfil estudiantil, abordando o fortalecimento de espaços inclusivos orientados para o serviço e a espiritualidade que fortaleçam o desenvolvimento integral dos jovens em um ambiente acadêmico. Após mencionar sua contextualização teórica e abordar terminologia específica relacionada à situação de análise, como Humanismo, Pastoral Juvenil e Missionabilidade característica de instituições de ensino superior, foi empregada metodologicamente uma abordagem mista, combinando entrevistas e grupos focais com administradores e estudantes de casas juvenis. Os resultados revelam uma percepção globalmente positiva, destacando participação dinâmica e atividades de alto impacto. As conclusões enfatizam que as casas juvenis são iniciativas valiosas que promovem crescimento pessoal, espiritualidade e serviço, enriquecendo as experiências educativas.

Palavras-chave: desenvolvimento juvenil; educação superior; espiritualidade e educação; pesquisa de mercado; participação estudiantil.

Introduction

Youth centers are established as spaces for interaction, evangelization, and growth for both young people from educational institutions and communities in general. As a result, Corporación Universitaria Minuto De Dios, hereinafter referred to as UNIMINUTO, conducts a benchmarking evaluation of youth centers associated with provincial centers and higher education institutions in the city of Bogotá. This comparative evaluation exercise is referred to as benchmarking (Vilchez, 2023).

The following is the general objective to be addressed through its performance: Conduct benchmarking of some youth centers to identify the best practices and characteristics of youth centers in Bogotá, especially those associated with educational institutions, to provide useful information for the eventual creation of a youth center at UNIMINUTO that meets the needs and expectations of the student community.

The specific activities to be carried out in the development of this study are to conduct an initial search using internet search engines to make a personalized approach using contacts in the different provincial communities; as a second step, to apply qualitative and quantitative instruments to the selected sample; and finally present the results in a benchmarking format of the most representative characteristics of the Youth Centers that are part of the sample.

This project is considered relevant as it has not been carried out previously and provides a positive contribution to UNIMINUTO. In the same manner, it is considered pertinent as it relates to two focus areas: Initially, it aligns with the mission identity of UNIMINUTO, which promotes the need for a spirit of service and social impact; the institution must ensure continuous improvement aligned with the contexts and real needs of society. "This social and educational work is based on the Gospel, the Social Doctrine of the Church, and Eudist spirituality" (Flórez, 2020, p.2). The second focus area relates to marketing and market research as a tool for decision-making. It is pertinent insofar as it seeks an improvement in the services of the Pastoral Directorate through a research exercise developed by one of the flagship academic programs that boasts high-quality accreditation. This is an applied market research study.

In accordance with the above, the results directly contribute to the infrastructure and mission identity of Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios. For the Pastoral Directorate, it represents a strategic input for decision-making and for ensuring that the services offered by the youth center represent a distinguishing factor. For the Faculty of Business and Administrative Sciences and the Marketing Management Technology program, it represents an applied research exercise that can be consulted by students from different academic programs, as it is developed under a research path and includes traceability that will allow the generation of academic products. The ultimate impact sought is to contribute to the social transformation of individuals who voluntarily engage with the youth center, as they will be the ones to benefit from the services and their value offerings. According to Delgado (2021), this should be the central goal of any research framed within the pursuit of improving the quality of life of communities.

The scope of its development context is local, as it initially aims to contribute to the creation of a youth center at the Bogotá campus; however, the model is likely to be replicated in other regional campuses and their facilities.

Problem Statement

Within the framework of innovation and in response to the growth of Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, there is a reflection and perception of the need to create spaces for interaction with students that address the mission identity of the educational institution. Therefore, the University Pastoral area has decided to establish a unit for the support, accompaniment, training, and development of students in the form of a Youth Center, with the aim of complementing the professional education for those who voluntarily wish to participate in this space. The aforementioned is in the context of humanism, which in educational environments plays a relevant role. "The latter, irrespective of the current debate concerning the implications of a conception of man as a superior entity in the universe" (Saavedra & Lopez, 2022, p.276), since it is he who creates society and is dedicated to development and social transformation.

It is therefore necessary to understand how youth centers operate in different contexts and the services they offer. The current situation revolves around the social need to stimulate soft skills and additional dimensions to training in a specific subject.

Currently, despite significant technological and scientific advancements, humanity faces a scenario of rapid changes and economic models that have engendered wars, scarcity, indifference, and other social issues. Varillas (2024) mentions that among students, there are unrealistic notions and hate speech, which are instilled, for instance, through social media. These are reinforced by the amount of exposure time to various devices.

Diseases are not only physical; paraphrasing Soriano and Jiménez (2022), the current student community faces increasing pressure to achieve academic and professional success, which may neglect equally important aspects of holistic development. According to these authors, the lack of attention to mental health and emotional well-being in traditional education increases vulnerability to issues such as anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among students. For this reason, they emphasize the need to evolve pedagogy and didactics to transcend professional training and stimulate emotional and social skills in students. It is urgent to rethink the educational approach to include strategies that promote emotional and social growth, allowing young people to develop effective tools to face challenges in all contexts and build a more balanced society.

That is to say, it is necessary to address the fact that, in addition to academic training for job performance, one must consider the education of the self and its humanistic condition. This is particularly relevant to the intention of the services that will be offered at the youth center, where it is important that the services and strategies be assertive and meaningful for the student population and the communities with which they work.

Through the implementation of this benchmarking, precise and relevant information is generated for the creation of a youth center that complements professional training with soft skills, gospel, values, humanism, social responsibility, etc. Students expect to find a comprehensive education that is highly useful, not only in job performance but also in interpersonal relationships and in their personality and intimacy. It is necessary for individuals to feel valued and useful, stemming from a mindset permeated by self-esteem.

If these issues are not addressed, scenarios of injustice and negative social dynamics will continue to arise. From the perspective of education, as the first line of impact, it must be acknowledged that today's students will be the leaders of society in the future. A high-quality education can also leverage spaces for evangelization, service, and interaction with communities. The central question around which this work revolves and to which an answer will be provided is: What practices and characteristics do youth centers have that could be adopted for the eventual creation of a youth center at UNIMINUTO?

State of the Art

There are countless studies related to the present topic within the educational context, which can be referred to as the frontier of knowledge. For example, the following can be mentioned:

This relationship is considered close because it is from the individual constituted as a person that the family and social dynamics are formed. Specifically, a behavior approach that aims for excellent workers without achieving

excellent individuals, capable of living harmoniously in society, is not valid. "In the history of ideas, humanism has upheld as a fundamental premise the recognition of the Human Being as the center of knowledge and Free Will: (...) its destiny based on autonomy in its decisions" (Escobar, 2020, p.107), its happiness, and the possibility of being useful to society.

Pérez (2021) proposes a contribution related to social pedagogy, the scientific field, social education and professional activity. In his work, he mentions how, in a holistic manner, the topics are interrelated without allowing space for specifications or isms that foster the development of a single dimension. Methodologically, different models are related and an analysis of them is conducted to conclude that given the technological advancements and social dynamics (of the world), there is a need for individuals who are well-rounded and capable of managing a multidisciplinary approach, which includes soft skills.

Based on this delimitation and aligning it with the context, the approach of Orduz (2020) is revisited, who highlights the need for a Humanistic education in educational institutions. His work was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and is interesting in the sense that it marks this event as a milestone requiring broad cognitive skills from humanity, but also in a humanistic sense, as this event necessitates cooperation among humanity.

Theoretical Framework

From the epistemological perspective, three axes have been defined. In relation to humanism, from the perspective of education, the relationship between teaching processes and the academic environment is reflected in learning. However, there is also the possibility within the educational setting to generate interactions that allow for a profound social transformation. "The developmentalist vision and the humanist vision with a socio-critical sense" (Mansi, 2019, p.8) can be implemented through academic programs and extracurricular spaces, achieving a pedagogy that is more realistic in the face of social phenomena. Note that complementarity is provided whereas exclusion is not, since within classrooms, through concepts and tutorials, the teaching-learning process takes place. Depending on the teacher's skill, this relationship will be established by applying these concepts to real contexts. However, the approach is carried out through dialogue about the current situation, and the contribution is made from a perspective of completing the profile of the future graduate.

As a second axis concerning the Youth Ministry, it is possible to mention that it is present parting from the spirituality of individuals; likewise, it is a lifestyle dedicated to service and Social Transformation. "Addressing the topics of Youth Ministry involves considering two perspectives: one refers to the very concept of youth, and the other to the consideration of what the Church can offer to young people" (González & Basualto, 2019, p.11), being a highly advantageous scenario, as the Church is an institution capable of linking different dimensions. In pastoral work, it is expected that, through the teachings of the gospel, the values and the importance of maintaining excellent social relationships can be instilled in the student community. The concept of pastoral work and its principles emphasize the need of not neglecting or forgetting the love of God and His commandment of love and protection for one's neighbor. From the educational context, it is indicated that such a contribution stems from the knowledge acquired within the classroom setting.

Pastoral work must be understood and articulated within academic contexts; in its most basic description, it addresses religious contexts and interaction with communities.

The new value parameters in society, the critical situation of the Catholic Church, changes in education, and the effects of the pandemic we experienced pose a disquieting complexity for schools and add new conditions for the development of a pastoral approach that attracts, inspires, and unfolds the educational beauty of faith. Furthermore, the different approaches to understanding evangelization challenge the Catholic school to rethink its "catholicity," in the sense that this mission no longer relies so much on the transmission of the contents of the faith, as on what each student resolves for their own life (Neira, 2020, p.43).

From what has been mentioned about the importance of skills for each life context and not just the religious one.

As a third axis, the Mission of Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios is addressed, which is based on Eudist thinking. It aims to train individuals who can address the needs of communities through the knowledge acquired, while also emphasizing the importance of service through the praxeological model. According to Fajardo (2021), “to educate excellent human beings, competent professionals who are ethically oriented and committed to social transformation and sustainable development. Contributing, through our commitment and our testimony, to the construction of a fraternal, just, reconciled, and peaceful society” (Institutional Educational Project (PEI), 2016; p.1).

From the cited text, it is possible to interpret that the praxeological connotation expects learning to occur through the assimilation of meanings via experiences and doing. It is complemented with a clear goal which is to learn for service. This is not an obvious aspect; on the contrary, it is a necessity in education and is the hallmark of UNIMINUTO, and in the general vision of Corporación Minuto de Dios.

Paraphrasing what was proposed by Bernate and Puerto (2024), it is theoretically possible to suggest that pastoral work in education is important for fostering the integral growth of students, encompassing intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Praxeology as a pedagogical approach plays a guiding role in this process, providing opportunities for reflection, dialogue, and community action. This allows students to explore their beliefs and values, developing a deeper awareness of themselves and their place in the world, the latter being susceptible to be aligned with evangelization. Similarly, from teachers, there must be a “recognition of the variable of spirituality exercised within educational processes” (De la Cruz, 2024, p.120).

The integration of spirituality, the gospel, and pastoral work in education is an ideal setting to shape conscious, committed, and spiritually mature citizens. Praxeology fosters empathy, compassion, and solidarity, developing civic and spiritual competencies that prepare students to face the challenges of the contemporary world with sensitivity and compassion. This contributes to the construction of a more just, peaceful, and humanized society, where individuals can grow and develop in an integral manner. Pastoral work in education is indispensable for addressing the spiritual needs of students and fostering meaningful personal growth, serving as a foundation for the potential missionality of the youth center from the mission concepts properly mentioned. According to Diaz, et al. (2023), these concepts allow for a purposeful and meaningful use within their different roles in society.

Methodology

The research approach was mixed, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon. This approach was deemed pertinent “as it requires evidence that provides accurate solutions for the benefit of social actors, given that the issues are complex. Such complexity can only be addressed with measurable and interpretable data” (Albayero et al., 2020, p.49).

“Regarding the scope of the study, it is descriptive, as it presents the fundamental characteristics or traits of what was studied, demonstrating how the selected object manifests itself” (Osorio & Castro, 2021, p.78). In this way, the characteristics of the selected youth centers were described in detail, highlighting their operation and the services they offer.

The studied population included both administrators and youths associated with various youth centers. The sampling was by convenience, supplemented with snowball sampling to recruit additional participants through referrals.

In this type of sampling, participants in a study recruit other participants for a test or study. Here, the researchers use their own judgment to select the original participants, as opposed to simple random sampling where the probabilities of any member being chosen are the same (Manzini, 2023, p.84).

In particular, a systematic documentary review was conducted on websites where youth centers are described, complemented by qualitative instruments. The documentary analysis was an important phase, as it allowed for the development of instrumental skills and provided a useful methodological guide for the research. This approach facilitated a comprehensive and organized review of the relevant literature (Corona et al., 2023). The literature review focused on the websites of youth centers, which provided key information about their structure and operation.

Regarding the fieldwork, initially, a focus group was conducted with students linked to the pastoral direction of Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, due to its frequent use in various research contexts (Torres et al., 2020). Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrative staff from various youth centers, such as: Casa de Juventud El Frailejón in Usme, Ice Carmelitano, Casa Ignaciana de la Juventud, Congregación de Hermanas de la Sagrada Familia de Urge, Fundación Gilberto Álzate Avendaño. Additionally, interviews were conducted with young people associated with these institutions and with the organization Youth for Change in Mexico. As such, the inclusion criteria referred to individuals actively participating in youth centers with a connection to an educational institution.

This method was considered suitable because, in qualitative research, “the interviewee answers such questions freely and in the manner they prefer. In the case of qualitative research, the most common methods are non-standardized and unstructured or semi-structured interviews” (Gonzales et al., 2022, p.3). All data collection instruments were recorded in audio and video as evidence, ensuring the informed consent of the participants and explaining that its performance does not impact or harm any principles of bioethical norms.

Thus, it included:

- 9 youth centers tracked via web
- 6 youth centers whose administrative staff were interviewed - 1 in Medellín, 1 in Mexico, and 4 in Bogotá
- Two young students linked to youth centers interviewed
- 8 participants in the Focus Group between participating students and administrative staff

Seeking the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments, they have been validated by two faculty members with postgraduate training and full-time dedication in research areas related to social sciences.

Regarding the focus group, the following engagement questions were posed:

Table 1. Engagement questions in focus groups

1.	What aspects motivate you to participate in the activities of the university pastoral unit? Why?
2.	What activities or services of the university pastoral unit have been most significant for you? Why?
3.	What barriers or challenges have you faced when participating in the activities of the university pastoral unit? Why?
4.	What new activities or services would you like to see implemented in the university pastoral unit? Why?
5.	How do you think the university pastoral unit could improve its engagement and reach among students?

Note: engagement questions. Prepared by the authors

Subsequently, each person was asked to fill out the following questionnaire:

Table 2. Quantitative Form Questions

1.	Mention 3 words that, for you, represent your connection and/or work in the pastoral unit.
2.	Complete the paragraph: The pastoral unit is important within UNIMINUTO's mission-oriented framework, because.....
3.	What service, activity, or similar would you add to the pastoral unit to make it better and have a greater impact both for yourself and the community?

Note: Quantitative Form Questions Prepared by the authors

Once the exercise was completed within UNIMINUTO, data collection proceeded in the youth centers. For administrative staff, the following data collection instrument was initially assigned, and with the aim of addressing the sample, the following contact script was developed:



Table 3. Contact Script

Good (Morning, Afternoon), my name is .
I am contacting you from Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios. With whom do I have the pleasure of speaking?

The reason for my call is as follows: we are currently conducting research to characterize youth centers, youth pastoral centers, vocational youth centers, etc. I would like to know if we can schedule an in-person visit and with whom we could arrange an interview to learn more about your organization.

Contact Name:

Office hours:

Possible day of visit:

Thank you very much, I will be in contact to confirm the visit. I appreciate your assistance.

Note: Contact Script. Prepared by the authors

Table 4. Administrative questions for the youth center

It begins with a brief introduction of the person.
It continues with a brief presentation of the youth center and its general functioning.
1. What are the main services offered by your youth center, and how are they aligned with the needs of the educational community?
2. How would you describe the profile of young individuals who voluntarily participate in your youth center?
3. What aspects do you consider most important for strengthening the mission identity and social transformation through your youth center?
4. How has the integration of the youth center with local educational institutions been, and what benefits has this collaboration brought?
5. What challenges have been faced when implementing innovative programs or services within the youth center?
6. How do you assess the impact of the activities and programs of the youth center on the young participants and on the community at large?
7. What strategies are utilized to maintain the active participation of young people in the activities of the youth center?
8. What are the main lessons learned or best practices that could be shared with other youth centers or institutions interested in developing similar programs?
9. How do you foresee the future of the youth center in terms of growth and expansion of services?
10. What recommendations would you offer to improve collaboration between youth centers and educational institutions in Bogotá?
Note that the exercise focuses on 2 central issues:
11. What should a youth center include?
12. What should a youth center not have?

Note. Questions for the administrative staff of the youth centers. Prepared by the authors

Table 5. Questions for Students Linked to the Youth Center

Name	Age
University Affiliation: (Program, Schedule and semester)	
1. What aspects motivate you to participate in the activities of the university pastoral unit and why?	
2. What activities or services of the university pastoral unit have been most significant to you and why?	
3. What barriers or challenges have you encountered when participating in the activities of the university pastoral unit, and why?	
4. What new activities or services would you like to see implemented in the university pastoral unit and why?	
5. How do you think the university pastoral unit could improve its engagement and reach among students?	
6. How do you think the activities of the university p astoral unit have impacted your personal life, the student community, or the community at large?	

Note: Questions to students. Prepared by the authors

In relation to data processing, quantitative data is grouped by systematically searching for patterns through repetition – mode –, while qualitative data is handled through the hermeneutic paradigm, interpreting its meaning; in both cases, the categories refer to each question. As a conclusion, a triangulation of the outcomes is conducted to obtain a holistic view of the information contrasted with the studied situation; in this way, the outcomes are further enriched (Stasiejko, et al., 2024).

Results and Analysis

Outcomes and Analysis:

Focus group qualitative data

Table 6. Qualitative outcomes.

Category	Descripción	Participantes
Motivations	Sense of help towards others	P1, P2, P5
	Positive impact on the community	P3, P4
	Transmission of values	P4, P6
	Empathy and gratitude towards those in need	P1, P5
Meaningful experiences	Shared Bread: Sharing food with students in need	P1, P2
	Hygiene kits: Assistance for vulnerable women	P2, P3
	Spiritual Retreats: Spaces for reflection and connection	P4, P5
	Cultural activities: Integration and recreational events	P6, P7
Barriers and Challenges	Communication: Difficulties in reaching students	P1, P2
	Resources: Lack of resources to harness talents	P4
	Schedules: Schedule conflicts for participation	P5
	Stigmatization: Misconception of pastoral work	P6
Suggestions for New Activities	Musical events for students	P1, P7
	Retreats for families and pets Inclusive Activities	P2
	More Service and Connection Events	P3, P4
Improvements in engagement and reach	Greater participation of teachers	P1
	Improvement in communication with students	P2, P6
	More financial and human support	P4

Nota: Elaboración propia

Focus group quantitative data

Participants were requested to mention 3 words that represent their connection and/or work in the pastoral unit. Based on the data provided, the following keywords can be highlighted:

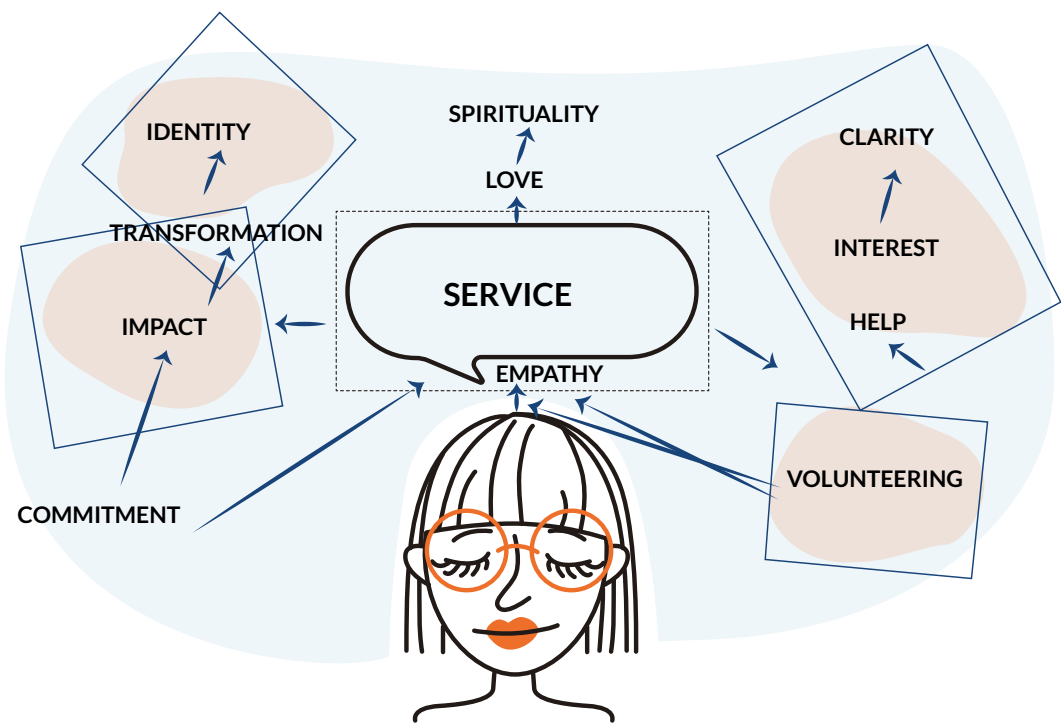
Table 7. Keywords

Identity, Commitment, Empathy, Transformation, Love, Impact, Community, Service, Spirituality, Humanism, Volunteering, Help, Interest, Honesty, Clarity.
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Note: Prepared by the authors

These words represent concepts related to work and connection in the pastoral unit, such as personal and community identity, commitment to service and helping others, empathy and the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, personal and community transformation, love and compassion, positive impact on the community, spirituality and humanism, among others. This is mapped out as follows:

Grafica 1. Mapa palabras clave



Note: Prepared by the authors

In this word map, service acts as the base word that connects various related concepts. These concepts include the commitment to service, volunteering as a form of voluntary service, the positive impact that service can have on the community and individuals, empathy towards those being served, and the act of helping others. Additionally, the service paves the way for personal and community transformation, aligning with spirituality and humanism, and promotes values such as love, engagement, clarity, and honesty in service interactions and relationships.

Table 8. Outcomes and Analysis of Quantitative Form

The pastoral unit is important within UNIMINUTO's mission-oriented framework, because..... Strengthening of values and spiritual support: The pastoral work provides spiritual support to the university community. This involves working within the individual realities and environment of each person, recognizing the diversity among community members. Integral human development and transformation of lives: The pastoral work is integral to human development as it transforms lives and cultural and sporting spaces. Community Service: The pastoral work is distinguished by its service to the university community, especially to middle-class and working-class students who study and work or have educational loans. Moral growth and personal development: The pastoral approach assists individuals in their moral growth and engages in their personal development process. Creation of Identities and Community Spaces: The pastoral work creates spaces that contribute to the identity of the university and foster a united and participatory community. Focused on the Gospel: It is emphasized that the gospel should be the center of all pastoral work, suggesting an orientation towards Christian values and teachings. It should be taken into account: from the strengthening of values and spiritual support to community service and the promotion of personal and moral growth. What service, activity, or similar would you add to the pastoral unit to make it better and have a greater impact both for yourself and the community? Based on the responses provided, several suggestions can be identified to improve and expand the services offered by the pastoral unit, with the aim of increasing its impact both for community members and for the community at large. Here is an analysis of the responses: Outings for families and ecological meetings: These activities can promote family integration and environmental awareness, offering opportunities for recreation and learning in a natural setting. Greater economic support and resources: It is suggested that there is a need for increased financial support to acquire musical instruments, dance equipment, and expand the workforce in the pastoral care sector. This would allow for a variety of activities to be offered on different days and expand the reach of the services. Activities related to fine arts and student needs: It is proposed to offer activities related to the fine arts, such as music and art, as well as activities that address the needs and concerns of students, promoting their personal growth and providing practical support. Promotion and Visibility: The importance of advertising and the periodic promotion of pastoral activities is emphasized to increase their visibility and participation. This involves sharing activities with students from other disciplines and reintroducing retreats as a means to foster interaction and spiritual growth. Cultural and Interactive Services: It is suggested to offer services that promote culture and creative interaction, providing opportunities for artistic expression and community participation. This approach aligns with educational methodologies that integrate traditional music teaching as a means to enhance cultural literacy and community engagement.

Note: Prepared by the authors

These outcomes suggest the need to expand the range of services offered by the pastoral unit, including cultural, artistic, ecological, and economic support activities. It also highlights the importance of promoting and ensuring the visibility of pastoral activities to guarantee their impact on the university community. These suggestions can serve as a foundation for identifying new services and activities that meet the needs and desires of students and the broader community. However, it is necessary to emphasize the sense of service.

Outcomes and Analysis of Interviews with Youth Centers

Based on the conversations with the administrative staff, we find that:

Table 9. Outcomes and Analysis Interviews with Administrative Staff

1. What are the main services offered by your youth center, and how are they aligned with the needs of the educational community?
Complementary continuing education, recreational and interaction workshops with communities in the form of volunteering, as well as dialogue spaces based on spirituality, are available. For those who wish, there are dedicated spaces for evangelization. “Here we offer workshops for optimizing free time, drumming workshops, DJ vocal technique workshops, and other workshops that we implement for the benefit of young people in the locality” (Frailejón, 2024).
2. How would you describe the profile of young individuals who voluntarily participate in your youth center?
In addition to identifying students, which can be an exclusion factor, it is considered in cases with vulnerable populations. “Almost all are from socio-economic levels one and two; it is also widely recognized thanks to word of mouth of the participants themselves. The priority is also to reach vulnerable populations” (Fn. Gilberto, 2024).
3. What aspects do you consider most important for strengthening the mission identity and social transformation through your youth center?
Addressing the reality and the needs of the context requires very spiritual and faithful individuals. “I would say that we take responsibility for the needs of our world, specifically for our brothers and sisters, because the needs are global” (Urgel, 2024).
4. How has the integration of the youth center with local educational institutions been, and what benefits has this collaboration brought?
Many have their own educational institutions; when this is not the case, agreements exist that allow for earning credits in certain subjects, such as internships. “The schools in the area know us, and furthermore, they send students as volunteers for community service. If they wish to help, they are welcome, and thus we accompany them throughout their academic journey, not only in high school” (Fn. Gilberto, 2024).
5. What challenges have been faced when implementing innovative programs or services within the youth center?
The retention of young people, the resources of time and money, and empathy. “Understanding with others, managing language, and asserting one’s stance. I have mine, but let us find common ground.” (Ignatian House, 2024).
6. How do you assess the impact of the activities and programs of the youth center on the young participants and on the community at large?
In addition to providing clear feedback, the entire process is traceable, and the permanence and willingness to repeat the activities serve as indicators. “It is based on listening, as this determines what type of service will be offered. When an activity resonates, that type of activity continues; if not, changes are made. Listen, understand, observe, analyze, and if it works, proceed further” (Comunidades, 2024).
7. What strategies are utilized to maintain the participation of young people in the activities of the youth center?
The articulation with institutions and a wide variety of activity offerings, in addition to maintaining a permanent digital ecosystem. “Something that is very useful for us is the social media, the ability to interact with them, create engaging videos, and utilize platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. We manage all these social media, along with our own website” (Ice Carmelitano, 2024).
8. What are the main lessons learned or best practices that could be shared with other youth centers or institutions interested in developing similar programs?
Working collaboratively, always highlighting the purpose of each activity and maintaining focus. “Do not fall into activism; often, we focus on what is urgent rather than what is important. We desire a well-executed process of high impact” (Casa Ignaciana, 2024).

9. How do you foresee the future of the youth center in terms of growth and expansion of services?

We increasingly have more opportunities to expand services; however, this entails the responsible use of resources to provide assurances to all stakeholders. “Assist a greater number of young individuals and bring in larger projects, support those from outside the region, students, or those who lack sufficient resources to obtain a quality education” (Comunidades, 2024).

10. What recommendations would you offer to improve collaboration between youth centers and educational institutions in Bogotá?

Show willingness to request and offer assistance, cooperation, by reaching out and assertively identifying stakeholders. “It is important to work on identifying educational institutions, because that is where the young people are, and thus they can be accompanied in: Schooling; university and work” (Frailejón, 2024).

11. What should a youth center include?

Spaces that go beyond the religious and focus on spirituality and the dimensions of the being-individual-person, where religion is not the priority, but rather the feeling of being useful and at peace with oneself, because the youth has significantly changed its beliefs. Clearly, evangelization is present and constitutes a pathway for work. “The population is mixed, there must be tolerance and interculturality. We believe in areas of personal adjustment, and that is where we focus our work” (Fn. Gilberto, 2024).

12. What should a youth center not have?

Totalitarian or impartial discourses dedicated to religion or politics; too many activities without any objective; spaces solely for recreation without activities dedicated to service. “The values must be clear. It should not be just a place to spend time; it is a place where we go to grow as individuals” (Urgel, 2024).

Note: Prepared by the authors

Following the conversations with the interviewed students, we find that:

Table 10. Outcomes and Analysis of Interviews with Linked Students

What motivated them to participate in the Youth Center?	a. Alejandra: “A desire to serve and spiritual reconciliation.” b. Andrés: “Opportunities for encounter and spiritual connection.”
Which activities have been significant?	a. Alejandra: “Spiritual exercises and walks.” b. Andrés: “Social projects, leadership, and volunteering.”
What barriers or challenges have been encountered?	a. Alejandra: “Personal time management.” b. Andrés: “Travel time and economic resources, but with arrangements to participate.”
What activities or services would you like to see implemented?	a. Andrés: “Themes of feminism, sexuality, masculinities, and spirituality through art.” b. Alejandra: “Ecology, green dialogues, and spirituality and art.”
How to improve participation and reach?	c. Andrés: “By establishing connections with more universities and promote on social media.” d. Alejandra: “Through social media and personal recommendations.”
How did you come to know the Youth Center?	a. Andrés: “Through the school and university pastoral work.” b. Alejandra: “Personal recommendations and social media.”
How do you perceive the duration and turnover of young people?	a. Alejandra: “It varies according to interests and stages of life.” b. Andrés: “It depends on life moments and personal interests.”
How does your participation generate an impact on activities in personal and community life?	a. Andrés: “Tools for leadership, awareness, and application in different fields.” b. Alejandra: “Leadership development, proactivity, and service.”

How does the Youth Center make you better people?	a. Andrés: “By providing tools to apply in various settings.” b. Alejandra: “Empowering leadership and service.”
How has being in the Youth Center made you a better student?	a. Alejandra: “It helps me to focus, discern, and apply what I have learned.”
What services should a Youth Center offer?	a. Alejandra: “Community connection, modern spirituality, and social dialogues.” b. Andrés: “Community processes, spiritual, social, and cultural dialogues.”
What mistakes should be avoided when setting up a Youth Center?	a. Alejandra: “Closed groups, lack of hospitality, and diversity of proposals.” b. Andrés: “Exclusion, power hoarding, and lack of opportunities.”
How do you view the difference between gospel in pastoral work and spirituality?	a. Andrés: Spirituality is broader, multidisciplinary, and inclusive.

Note: Prepared by the authors

By triangulating the data collected from the interviews and focus groups conducted with administrators and students of Youth Centers, it is interpreted that the Youth Center should be an inclusive space that fosters community connection, spirituality, and social dialogue. The main premise should be to avoid exclusion and power hoarding by allowing committed and equitable participation.

The evaluation of youth centers reveals a globally positive perception, characterized by dynamic participation and high-impact activities. Although improvement ideas emerge, initiatives predominantly focus on increasing their social influence. Participants appreciate the opportunity to collaborate on projects that align with their academic interests and social values, fostering a sense of purpose and community commitment.

Conclusions

The concept of evangelization and its religious connotation are present as they form the foundation upon which the creation of the youth center is based. This is valid considering that it refers to love for one’s neighbor and sharing messages through testimonies, in doctrines and biblical practices (Strahsburger, et al., 2021). However, in favor of an inclusive narrative and taking into account the ideologies of the students, a broader and equally accurate concept is spirituality. It can be defined as believing in a meaning beyond the physical, which aims for mental, social, and physical harmony (Carmo, 2023).

Youth centers are distinguished by their diversity of projects and activities aimed at commemorating significant dates, fostering enriching encounters among individuals. The approach transcends attendance at religious events, promoting personalized communication and a space for listening and being heard. Youth centers must be more assertive, surpassing their perception as just another unit within educational institutions, as in the specific case of UNIMINUTO.

The practices and characteristics that youth centers have, which can be adopted for the eventual creation of a youth center at UNIMINUTO, are:

Allow course of credits or subjects in the form of volunteering in youth centers, specifically internships and degree options, that is, to develop specific activities with identified communities alongside the creation of intercultural spaces for education and service. It is also relevant to achieve the maintenance of short-term training in soft skills, trades, and competencies.

The youth centers must adapt to contemporary reality, including family diversity and emerging needs. These innovative initiatives will address the current and future needs of the community by promoting a comprehensive and sustainable education that is at the forefront of identified lifestyle preferences and dynamics from data collection. It is crucial that each activity aligns with serving others, and this aspect should be emphasized. It is recommended to engage in further research to measure the impact of the youth center after a defined period.

As a final comment, it is appropriate to acknowledge this type of initiative, given that in the epistemology of education, there is frequent mention of the need to construct holistic and suitable profiles that complement strong skills, professionalism, and professional competencies, enabling excellent job performance. Service is the axis from which the functioning of youth centers unfolds.

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Competencias ambientales: aproximación desde una reflexión conceptual

Enviromental Competencies: Approach from a Conceptual Reflection

Competências Ambientais: abordagem a partir de uma reflexão conceitual



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RESUMEN

Este artículo de reflexión se origina a partir de la observación de las afectaciones de los fenómenos medioambientales y comportamentales que afectan los ecosistemas naturales y las poblaciones humanas, la educación ambiental y la ecopedagogía, estableciendo la necesidad de analizar cómo se desarrollan los procesos cognitivos que derivan en la gesta de capacidades y formación de competencias ambientales de los sujetos en formación, lo cual conduce a que desde la escuela se reproduzca una cultura ambiental frente a las problemáticas ambientales a nivel local. Se analizan aspectos conceptuales que exponen la formación y las relaciones entre las capacidades y las competencias. También se hace reflexión frente al rol del docente en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje y apropiación de la didáctica de la educación ambiental desde contextos naturales. Por último, se observan las problemáticas ambientales como puntos focales importantes para que los procesos didácticos y de enseñanza para que la escuela y sus programas de educación ambiental faciliten la formación de competencias ambientales en los estudiantes.

Palabras claves: capacidad, competencia, ambiental, enseñanza, aprendizaje, educación ambiental, problemática

ABSTRACT

This reflection article originates from the observation of the effects of environmental and behavioral phenomena that affect natural ecosystems and human populations, environmental education and ecopedagogy, establishing the need to analyze how cognitive processes develop that lead to the development of capacities and the formation of environmental competencies of the subjects in training, which leads to the reproduction of an environmental culture in schools in response to environmental problems at a local level. Conceptual aspects that expose the formation and the relationships between capacities and competencies are analyzed. There is also a reflection on the role of the teacher in the teaching-learning processes and the appropriation of the didactics of environmental education from natural contexts. Finally, Environmental issues are seen as important focal points for teaching and didactic processes so that the school and its environmental education programs facilitate the development of environmental skills in students.

Keywords: capacity, environmental, competence, teaching, learning, environmental education, problematic.

RESUMO

Este artigo de reflexão tem origem na observação dos efeitos dos fenômenos ambientais e comportamentais que afetam os ecossistemas naturais e as populações humanas, a educação ambiental e a ecopedagogia, estabelecendo a necessidade de analisar como se desenvolvem os processos cognitivos que conduzem à conquista de capacidades e à formação de capacidades ambientais, competências dos sujeitos em formação, o que leva a escola a reproduzir uma cultura ambiental diante dos problemas ambientais em nível local. São analisados aspectos conceituais que expõem a formação e as relações entre capacidades e competências. Há também uma reflexão sobre o papel do professor nos processos de ensino-aprendizagem e apropriação da didática da educação ambiental a partir de contextos naturais. Por fim, os problemas ambientais são observados como pontos focais importantes para os processos didáticos e de ensino para que a escola e seus programas de educação ambiental facilitem a formação de competências ambientais nos alunos.

Palavras-chave: capacidade, competência, ambiental, ensino, aprendizagem, educação ambiental, problemas.

Introduction

Environmental education has made significant progress since the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972, further accelerated by the advancements of the 1980s which led to the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit held in June 1992, where 172 countries and 2,400 representatives of non-governmental organizations participated. This summit highlighted the consequences of technological advancements and the destruction of natural habitats, as well as concerns about poverty and inadequate educational indicators. Gomes and Cárdenas (2023) discuss aspects of the impact of the agreements 30 years after this event, emphasizing the declaration of the local and school Agenda 21. This document commits states to integrate environmental education into their educational systems and school curricula, emphasizing sustainable development of natural resources through training and civic culture (Aguirre et al., 2021).

According to Mora (2020) and Martínez (2010), humanity and its technological development affect the environment in various ways, such as the population growth that runs parallel to productivity and consumerism, alongside the trade agreements of countries that have laid the foundations for a globalized world. This has led to the deterioration of natural ecosystems because it is from these spaces that natural resources are extracted as raw materials that enter the means of production and the market. The costs of this human maneuver are, for example, chemical discharges into rivers and seas, reduction of forests which implies a decrease in animal species populations, air pollution, increase of inorganic solid waste, among other issues affecting cities, towns, and natural ecosystems. For society to become interested in the issues, there must be a transformative environmental education that succeeds in involving the individual, strengthening sensitivity and responsibility, to prevent, mitigate, and solve environmental changes (Fajardo et al., 2024).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2016), and Nay and Febres (2019), based on international legislations derived from international agreements, environmental education should contribute to schools promoting environmental competencies in society from the levels of early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, university education, and non-formal education. This requires an education that considers new forms of pedagogical thought capable of posing theories and didactics so that, from research and active education, a transformative environmental culture of school and community environments is promoted (Valencia and García-Noguera, 2024).

According to Mora and Guerrero (2022), and Cruz (2022), in Colombia and other Latin American countries, it is essential for educators to consider different approaches to developing competencies in individuals, particularly in environmental education (EE). This need arises from the guidelines of the local and school Agenda 21 from the Rio Summit, which have been integrated into educational systems. Specifically, this integration is reflected in the curriculum linked to interdisciplinarity and transversality. In other words, it leads to the reflection processes in the environmental field and the teaching-learning processes resulting in environmental competencies or performances in individuals in training. This discipline combines theoretical, scientific, and practical elements, necessitating a structure or pedagogy capable of creating experiential spaces that enhance teaching-learning processes. These processes should significantly impact students, resulting in performances that manifest as environmental habits for sustainable development within their school and community life spaces.

In line with the pedagogical exercise that connects the teacher-knowledge-student and the aspects related to the development of environmental competencies in individuals in training, this reflection of authors and their publications aims to answer the question: How are environmental competencies developed?

Ecopedagogy and Competencies

Addressing ecopedagogy as an educational tool requires educators with the ability to facilitate the transmission of knowledge in a subject that is inherently multidisciplinary, involving various fields such as educational theories, and concepts from social and natural sciences. Ruiz et al. (2021), in their review of the contributions of ecopedagogy in the educational field, indicate that a large portion of the publications observed have a theoretical and critical focus on current educational contexts. Likewise, others present practical experiences in this regard, but do not delve into the problems that this pedagogy aims to solve, which involve cultural changes where scientific and environmental competencies are reflected in the various social contexts represented by the member countries of the United Nations Organization.

Ecopedagogy, as an active branch of environmental education, has an outstanding task regarding the integration of the pedagogical elements that compose it and its operability in educational communities to generate learning that results in environmental competencies that transform culture and the environment. Morales and Mardones (2023) present significant advancements in the educational policies of the states, but are specific about the results involving activities that encompass aspects of environmental competencies, which implies a need to redefine how the school leads to environmental competencies. This multidisciplinary tool must transcend being merely a cognitive stimulus; instead, it should be a collective practice of collaborative learning that influences group consciousness and remains a constant presence in public opinion, that is, in the life of communities (Tapia et al., 2023).

Competencies and their Importance

The human being as a subject in formation is one of the elements within the educational system whose cerebral plasticity provides an opportunity for pedagogical strategies, through various stimuli, to generate changes, outcomes, and transformations in attitudes that are reflected towards the environment. Castellanos and Rojas (2023), and Pimentel et al. (2019) indicate that competence is defined as the set of socio-affective behaviors and cognitive, psychological, sensory, and motor skills that enable an individual to adequately perform a task, function, activity, or duty, and are considered scientific when they allow the person to recognize scientific language, skills for classification, experimentation and teamwork, among other performances.

The report made by the United Nations (2018), fourth goal, item 7, states that by the year 2030 “all students will acquire the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge to promote sustainable development, among other things through education for sustainable development.” This implies that states, by creating the conditions for educational systems to understand the environmental agendas of international summits, specifically the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs], lead communities to meet their educational goals and reproduce environmental competencies.

Environmental Competencies through an Active Pedagogy

Understanding and reflecting on the ethical aspects of environmental values is fundamental for those in training, both in the classroom and during recess and other areas of their daily lives, to actively and consistently develop and strengthen their human relationships. Through activities that promote cultural awareness and the development of environmental competencies, individuals can have a positive impact on their environment. These activities provide them with the opportunity to express and contribute to environmentally friendly practices, which can include small actions such as propagating and dispersing plants, keeping pets, reusing and recycling solid waste, among others. According to Delgado (2022), it is important to consider educational innovation within a society subject to changes, which in turn implies an intervention that connects and activates the teaching-learning processes of subjects (teacher, student, community), the planning, and the agreements of practical, feasible, and measurable didactic actions from investigative approaches that allow observing the development of these competencies.

For the contemporary challenges of commercially and politically interconnected societies, educational innovation must encompass pedagogical and didactic adaptations to new realities and contexts so that active teaching-learning processes lead to the internalization of sound environmental practices that endure over time to become culture, and likewise, a public policy.

Awareness, a Starting Point for Environmental Competencies

The discussion about values regarding the environment and other living beings that develop within ecosystems lies in recognizing their existence, their role in life, and their biology. In other words, awareness begins with the study of theoretical and practical knowledge of living entities. The individual's reflection once they recognize others promotes sensitivity (what matters); thus, the affirmation of the individual and collective subject is shaped towards the protection of rivers, recycling, and environmental recovery.

Cruz et al. (2023) indicate that starting from environmental ethics and proper awareness, transformations occur in the didactic and pedagogical processes that must ensure that the learner understands and realizes that there are situations and conditions of an unsustainable nature, such as climate change, species reduction, deforestation, slavery, diseases, food crisis, poverty, and immigration. These issues require commitment and participation.

Thus, when didactic strategies facilitate the learner's recognition of environmental reality and its implications, they can lead to the development of environmental competencies within the community and communities, aimed at developing environmental leaders with skills such as teamwork, among others, enabling a transition from helplessness to environmentally friendly action.

How is an environmental competence developed?

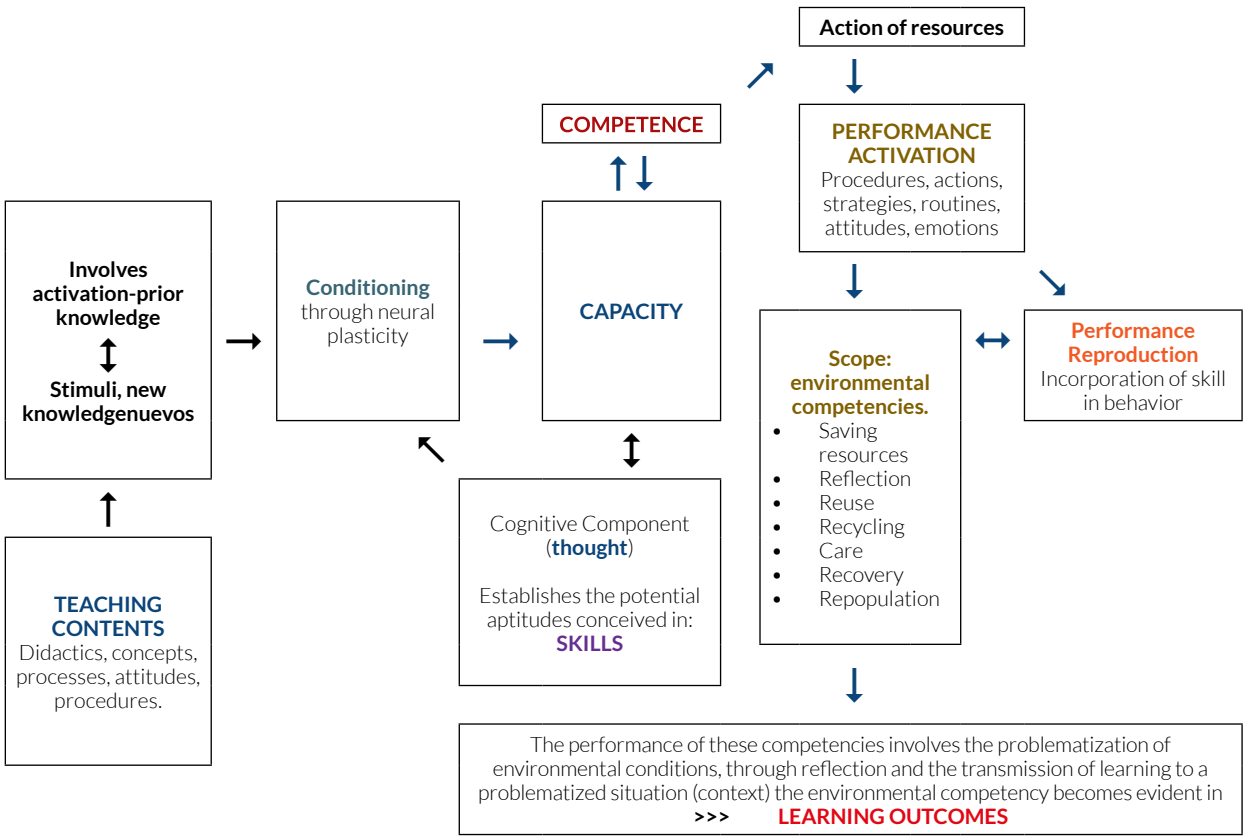
From the environmental perspective, in accordance with international and national legislation, it has been advocated that educational systems and institutions focus on incorporating environmental competencies into the profiles of graduates through curricular adaptations that result in cross-cutting proposals at the secondary and university levels (Castro et al., 2019); (UNESCO, 2016). It is crucial that for the reproduction of behaviors or an environmental culture related to or observed from environmental pedagogy, as a competence in the field, there must be cross-cutting proposals and actions promoted through school organization and educational projects.

Mora and Guerrero (2022), and Gonzales (2021), state that in order to understand how competencies manifest in individuals in training, attitudinal aspects must be taken into consideration, such as: capacity, understood in relation to the cognitive potential that implies learning aptitude; and performance or practice, which is denoted as acquired competence. Likewise, competence will be understood as the projection of a capability, that is, expressing the level of development of the capability, which intrinsically comprises the cognitive, attitudinal, emotional, and procedural components whose mental framework is associated with and refers to knowledge and learning.

The attitudinal nature of competence is demonstrable in action within a specific context, requiring the activation of the neural network (brain plasticity) that encompasses abilities, cognition, knowledge, values, and experiences. Thus, given the previous reflection, there is a *sine qua non relationship* between capacity and competence, where one of the processes cannot exist, function, or express itself without the other, and it is the operability of the capacity that leads to the development of competence.

Capacities are understood as contained elements, psychological potentialities, with a predominance towards possession and thought rather than execution, since when the latter comes into play, it results in the expression of competence or performance. Consequently, internal reflection, the type of thinking that involves capacity, is related to performances that imply competence. This relationship, which in practice is a duality, comprises: perception - interpretation, evaluation - analysis, execution - creation, and decision-making - transformation. In Figure 1, the formation of environmental competence is presented, which in an integral way exposes the capacity-competence relationship that allows the learner to culturally reproduce actions as "learning outcomes," predictable aspects that the student is expected to be able to understand, perform, and demonstrate.

Figure 1. Development of Environmental Competencies in the Subject



Note: Description of the development of environmental competencies in the subject. Source: Prepare by the authors (2024), based on Mora and Guerrero (2022).

In the environmental field, this relationship can be expressed through the application of educational content that involves environmental references (living beings, objects, natural resources, issues, reflections, intervention actions) organized with ideological, physical, and digital resources capable of being cognitive stimuli for the different intelligences of students in training. This generates or establishes a “thought” in the student, a capacity that has the potential to be executed, exercised, and become part of the culture when reproduced given an opportunity or need. In this way, when the action occurs, the performance of the capacity indicates the environmental competence specified in actions of environmental reflection, resource conservation, recycling, reuse, environmental care or recovery, and reproduction - repopulation of living beings.

Evidence of Environmental Competence

It is fundamental that the training and intervention processes generate products, whether material or immaterial, that denote and evidence environmental competence. This means that it should be perceptible in the values and behaviors of the students, as well as in the environmental state of the school or community setting. Velásquez et al. (2020) and Rodríguez (2012), through review and reflection, argue that the school as a teaching-learning space should provide students with elements that stimulate the development of meaningful life skills and competencies. This implies that learning is acquired when cognitive stimuli are applied through the implementation of effective didactic strategies under a learning theory. This suggests that environmental competencies should be approached from the domains of knowledge (knowing, doing, and being), given that the neural network of the individual integrates knowledge into actions. In other words, it demonstrates a performance that reflects values and motivations projected in the care and protection of the environment.

The reflection of this aspect lies in the demonstration of environmental competence. For this purpose, the educational system from the school level instills in students' behaviors that will succeed when they become part of the individual's culture and the social collective to which they belong (Insuasty et al., 2022) and thus, this set of knowledge and their environmental culture are the evidence. The same occurs when the environment expresses environmentally acceptable conditions consistent with the efforts of environmental education embedded in the educational system.

Role of the Teacher in Environmental Competencies

This actor and their role as a "teacher" is a fundamental aspect for the student to acquire the knowledge and skills that lead to competencies. They must be the first to be competent in the environmental field, also from an attitudinal perspective. The university education of teachers must also integrate environmental education across study programs, ensuring that teaching-learning processes are effective. Traversa and Gonzales (2022) and Nesmith et al. (2016), they explain how research processes in teacher education are fundamental for developing and strengthening their environmental competencies. In this case, research experience in topics such as wetlands, conservation biology, and water reuse enhances educators' skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy. In this way, a stimulated teacher can develop and stimulate environmental competencies in their students.

It is important for didactics to progress beyond lectures, which, in the case of natural sciences and environmental education, can encounter institutional limitations in curricular adaptations. This leads to the transmission of a dogmatic view of science that does not take advantage of the natural environment as a teaching-learning space, which helps to strengthen the scientific and environmental competencies that students need to develop. Hernández et al (2020) indicate the necessity for a didactic approach that incorporates the natural environment (outside the classroom) as a learning opportunity, so that individuals in training have the chance to directly experience and interact with the surrounding environment and the natural processes operating within it. This approach strengthens knowledge and the apprehension of conceptual, attitudinal, and procedural content.

Environmental Issues and the Teaching-Learning Process

In environmental education, real or virtual scenarios that are part of the context can focus on a focal point, which can be an issue such as climate change or a solution within the environmental field like forest repopulation. In this way, the focal point attains significant importance, becoming a theme in the school, a content that encompasses conceptual, attitudinal, and procedural aspects to enhance the emergence of students' environmental competencies in the teaching-learning process.

Gavilanes and Tipan (2021) point out that an environmental issue or focal point always involves a component of resilience and socio-environmental factors. Therefore, it is important for schools to become the primary transmitters of data that highlight the focal point, as presented in Table 1, as well as in the formation of ecological habits for reproduction by the student population. These habits add to the pro-environmental values and behaviors imparted at home, which converge in the environmental culture. The aforementioned implies that the teacher's role is to guide students in recognizing the theme or focal point so that they form their own understanding within their neural framework, that is, establish a capacity subject to becoming or deriving into an environmental competence.



Table 1. Environmental themes as focal points in education

Focal Point	Contents	Procedures
Climate Change	Greenhouse effect, droughts and extreme rains, mitigation of climate change	Analysis of climate impacts, web-based climate modeling, climate variable measurements, emergency prevention.
Reuse and Recycling	Recycling of solid and organic waste, reuse of solid and liquid waste.	Handicraft-making. Reutilization of plastic and metal materials, water reuse, compost formation .
Reproduction and Repopulation	Especies amenazadas, Endangered species, reproduction of plants and animals, reforestation (planting), reproduction and release of animals.	Plant care, soil preparation for planting, plant care, animal husbandry for animal breeding.
Environmental recovery	Soil contamination, erosion, degradation of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, health impacts from pollution, conservation of ecosystems.	Environmental recovery of soils and water sources, elimination of contamination hotspots.
Consumerism	Exploitation of terrestrial and marine ecosystems.	Reflections, environmental ethics, environmental dialogues.
Sustainable Development	Strategies for sustainable development, rational use of natural resources, resource prospecting, renewable resources, production of clean energy.	Planeación para desarrollo Planning for sustainable development, technologies for clean energy..

Note: Description of environmental themes. Source: Prepared by the authors.

Thus, the effectiveness of environmental education in fostering environmental competencies within the student body greatly depends on the school's establishment of coherence between the focal points of the global, regional, and local contexts, and the institutional curriculum, which implies that it should be adapted according to the needs for educational improvement. These actions can enhance students' perception and motivation regarding the topics and content to achieve the desired impact. Aparicio and Domínguez (2023) and Hernández and Camarena (2023) present and conclude that to construct the formation, the theoretical identity of environmental education, the educational system that derives in the school must promote curricular adaptations that guide the human intentionality of the educational triangle (teacher – knowledge – student), so that the actors engage in pertinent reflections on “knowledge.” This involves serious classroom discussions of topics, appropriation of projects and research, student empowerment, research workshops, discussion forums, in-depth exploration of topics, practical activities with recyclable materials, intervention in resource utilization, landscape care and recovery, among other actions. In this way, competencies can be developed by combining the teacher's expertise with the student's motivation and availability to facilitate environmental education.

Conclusions

The consequences of human development, with the exacerbation of environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and ecosystem degradation, are a concern for environmental education and its variants like ecopedagogy. This is so that environmental competencies are reproduced from the school, leading to an environmental culture that involves the entire society in solutions. The reflection on the highlighted aspects allows us to conclude that strengthening the teaching-learning processes in the environmental field through curriculum adaptations pertinent to the educational and community context are actions that enhance the teaching practice, ensuring effectiveness in the development of students' environmental competencies.

The development of environmental competencies starts from the premise that the school and its curricular adaptations in teaching content relevant to global and local contexts facilitate individuals in training (neuronal network) to gather cognitive elements that are reflected in the capacity or potentiality connected to competence. By activating procedural actions, attitudinal approaches, and routines evident in ecological and scientific language, observation, reflection, and intervention in the environment, these competencies become apparent in both the "being" and "doing" of environmental competencies.

The role of the teacher is fundamental to the teaching-learning processes of environmental education in the development of students' environmental competencies. This depends on their training and research experience in the environmental field, which allows them to use a didactic approach that involves the school context and natural spaces as elements that stimulate students' knowledge and competencies. It is fundamental for the educator to bring environmental issues into focus, making them a reality within the educational context of teaching. This enables students to grasp the knowledge involved in these issues, thereby facilitating the development of environmental competencies.

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INCLUSIÓN
y DESARROLLO

