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## **The socio-affective stimulation of primary school students: A necessary approach in the post-pandemic context**

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**Abstract**---In the post-pandemic context, the growing level of complexity of Cuban social and educational environments, as well as the low perception of risk with minors from home, generated the need for educational practices, although they are based on the principle of the unity of the cognitive with the affective, to ponder the socio-affective content in the formative process of the new generations. Faced with this challenge, the objective of this research was declared: to favor the socio-affective stimulation of primary school students from a sociopedagogical conception. The diagnosis carried out with a mixed approach revealed cognitive and procedural deficiencies in the socio-affective stimulation of primary schoolchildren, which led to the structuring of a sociopedagogical proposal. It was based on the theoretical methods inductive-deductive, analytical-synthetic, historical-logical and systemic-structural-functional. It had a flexible, participatory and contextualized vision, whose feasibility to enter the

educational praxis was corroborated by the criterion method of specialists and the user method.

**Keywords**---competency-based education, traditionalist education, active methodologies, project-based learning.

## Introduction

It is a reality that the COVID-19 pandemic generated a considerable impact on the integral development of children and young people. Currently, the Cuban educational system at its different levels is going through the first face-to-face school year in a new normality. In this new context, the main challenge is to reduce the negative effects of the two years of the pandemic, both in the learning of schoolchildren, and in their socio-affective development, in order to maximize their abilities, abilities and personal qualities. To this end, curricular adaptations were made, teacher training and efforts have been made to strengthen the family-school bond. Even so, the educational community faces the new challenge of pondering the socio-affective sphere of the school, since it is evident in many schoolchildren that the lack of social interaction and the stress experienced in a prolonged way during the pandemic, have affected their social skills to interact with peers in the school environment, adapt to teaching demands, as well as to empathize and regulate emotions.

In Cuba, researchers such as: Ares (1995); Garcia (1999); Castro (2005); Diaz (2006); Azahárez (2009), Cruz (2009); Grenier (2009); Toledo (2010) and more recently Castelló (2015); Ojalvo (2016), Gutiérrez (2016), Pacheco Gómez, A; Velázquez Acosta, L., (2019). and Caraza (2021), addressed socio-affective development emphasizing the educational role of the family, socio-affective preparation in the preschool environment and socio-affective education at the higher education level. However, to date, the stimulation of socio-affective development in the school stage is not a very addressed issue, since studies have focused mainly on the postnatal, preschool and juvenile stages.

That is why, although his studies deal with the subject, an approach to the subject is required in the school stage due to its relationship with the cognitive, physical, affective and social transformations typical of this evolutionary period. In this regard, Machuca F, et al (2019) refer: Psych pedagogical practice demonstrates the need to analyze this process from the insertion of the child in school, the community, and the peer group, given its importance for the progressive adaptation to the environment and to growing self-knowledge (p.3). From this perspective, the authors, with the use of theoretical, empirical methods and the consultation of normative documents, made a first approach to this topic from a diagnostic study carried out in a sample of 104 subjects (24 teachers, 40 parents or guardians and 40 schoolchildren representing 41.3% of the population of three municipalities of the province of Guantánamo).

Interviews, surveys, and psychological tests were applied to them, whose analysis revealed that the majority of primary school children (72%) present difficulties in the manifestation of empathy, being assertive and in their emotional regulation.

In turn, 66.0% of teachers and 62.5% of parents or guardians have little knowledge about socio-affective development and use little instrumental, psychological and pedagogical educational resources based on it. Based on the cognitive and procedural limitations observed in most teachers and parents, it is demonstrated the need to conceive forms of preparation and guidance on socio-affective development and its modes of stimulation, so that they can be applied during the formative process of primary school in the post-pandemic context. The above allows us to declare the following scientific problem: How to contribute to the stimulation of the socio-affective development of primary school children in the current post-pandemic context? The objective was to elaborate a sociopedagogical conception for the socio-affective stimulation of primary school children in the current post-pandemic context.

### **Method**

It is opportune to use a mixed design of research of a sequential (quantitative-qualitative) nature, where a descriptive-explanatory, cross-sectional study is declared since the object is measured in a certain fraction of time. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) define the mixed approach as "(...) a process that collects, analyzes and pours quantitative and qualitative data, in the same study" (cited in Barrantes, 2014, p.100). To carry out this study, the analysis of the specialized and updated literature on the stimulation of the socio-affective development of primary school students was based. Normative documents of Cuban Primary Education were also consulted, as they offer legal support for the procedures to organize, direct and regulate the formative process of primary schoolchildren.

Then, the variable was defined, operationalized, and parameterized in dimensions and indicators, the units of analysis were determined, and the research instruments were developed, which were applied during the 2019-2020 school year. For the determination of the variable and delimitation of its dimensions and indicators, the theoretical systematization carried out from the consultation of authors such as: Valcárcel (1998), Cerezal (2005), Valle (2011) and Matos and Matos (2017) was useful.

Also, it took into account what was stated by Sampieri, H. (2010) cited by Matos and Matos (2017), about the variable: "is a property that can vary (acquire different values) and whose variation can be measured" (p.36). They also go on to point out that variable operationalization is "the process of taking a variable from an abstract level to a more concrete plane (...) and its basic function is to specify as much as possible the meaning given to a variable in a given study" (Matos and Matos, 2017, p. 37).

### Subjects and selection process

- An intentional sample was chosen, consisting of 104 subjects: 24 teachers, 40 parents or guardians and 40 schoolchildren representing 41.3% of the population of three municipalities in the province of Guantánamo.
- The schools were selected from three municipalities of the province of Guantánamo, in order to have a greater representativeness in the sample. These were: "Omar Ranedo Pubillones" graduated school of the Yateras

Municipality with external regime, "Asdrubal López Vázquez" graduated school with external regime of the Salvador Municipality and "Heroes of Vietnam" Semi-boarding school of the head municipality.

- The sample of schoolchildren was constituted by those of 6th grade because it is the conclusive grade of primary education, hence the socio-affective qualities formed from the transit through this educational level can be evaluated.
- The selection of teachers was looking for a representation of each school grade to investigate how they promote the stimulation of socio-affective development in Primary School. The 24 teachers are in practice and correspond to the selected schools.
- In the case of parents or guardians, those of schoolchildren and for the educational-affective function they play in the family environment were selected.
- To know the current state of the variable, the following methods were applied:

### **Empirical Methods**

- The Interview: According to Troncoso-Pantoja, C & Amaya-Placencia, A (2017) "is framed within the qualitative task as an effective tool to unravel meanings, which were elaborated by the subjects through their discourses, stories and experiences" (p.1). It was applied to teachers to know their criteria on the socio-affective development of primary school children and their preparation to influence it.
- Survey: at the discretion of López-Roldán, P.; Fachelli, S. (2015) this method: "has become more than a single technical instrument of data collection to become a whole method of social research whose application means the monitoring of a research process in its entirety" (p.9). It was applied to parents or guardians to know the initiatives they use in socio-affective stimulation. It was also applied to schoolchildren to know their criteria on their socio-affective qualities and the mediation of teachers and parents or guardians in the stimulation of these.
- Observation: For Aldana, L (2020) "observation, in addition to a method, is a rigorous research process, which allows situations to be described and/or hypotheses to be contrasted, being therefore a scientific method" (p.2). In this research, teaching and extra-teaching activities were observed in order to verify the stimulation carried out for the socio-affective development of primary school children and their socio-affective qualities.
- Psychological testing: The American Psychological Association – APA (1999) defines it as "an evaluative procedure by means of which a behavioral sample of a specified domain is obtained and subsequently evaluated and scored using a standardized process" (cited in Ramos Vega, Z, 2018, p. 4). In this case, the sentence completion test was applied to identify the socio-affective qualities of primary school children or the insufficiencies that they may present in this regard.
- Criteria of specialists: According to Mesa Anoceto, M; Guardo Garcia, M; Vidaurreta Bueno, RA (n.d.), "specialists must be distinguished by their experience in the "concrete-thought" object proposed by the researcher, and

be characterized by being critical, willing to cooperate, among other desirable characteristics" (p.2). Its application allowed to evaluate the theoretical relevance of the sociopedagogical conception for the stimulation of the socio-affective development of primary schoolchildren.

- User criteria: It made it possible to assess the socio-pedagogical conception and its possibility of application. It is a method provided by Matos, Z and Matos, C (2006) and: it allows to obtain the opinions issued by the subjects who become users or direct beneficiaries of a proposal, who, moreover, are or will be responsible for the application of such results in the immediate or immediate future (p.2).

### **Statistical - mathematical methods**

Descriptive statistics: According to Rendón Macías; Villasís Kever; Miranda-Novales (2016) "formulates recommendations on how to summarize, in a clear and simple way, the data of an investigation in tables, tables and graphs to process the empirical data" (p.1) For this purpose, this method was used to process the empirical data obtained, in the elaboration of tables and the calculation of the absolute and relative frequency.

### **Discussion**

The initial measurement was carried out between June and October 2019. To this end, the determined exploratory instruments were applied to the teachers, parents or guardians and primary schoolchildren of the sample. The tabulation of the results obtained in the dimensions, subdimensions and indicators of the socio-affective stimulation of primary school revealed that: in the "Mediational" dimension, the subdimension "Teacher mediation", the indicator "Knowledge about socio-affective development" revealed that 66.7% of teachers are in the Inadequate category and 33.3%, in the Adequate. In the indicator "Use of instrumental, psychological and pedagogical educational resources", 70.8% are evaluated as inadequate and 25.0% as adequate.

In this subdimension, most teachers demonstrate little knowledge about socio-affective development and use instrumental, psychological, and pedagogical educational resources in an inadequate way. Similarly, in the subdimension "Mediation of parents or guardians" insufficiencies are shown since it was found that 37.5% are categorized as inadequate in their knowledge about socio-affective development, while 62.5% are located as Adequate. Likewise, in the indicator "Use of educational resources of an instrumental and psychological nature" it is evaluated in 62.5% of Adequate and in 37.5% of Inadequate.

On the other hand, the evaluation of the dimension "Socio-affective qualities of primary schoolchildren" revealed difficulties in all its indicators due to the inadequate stimulation they receive. As for the Empathy indicator, 72.5% of schoolchildren manifest it inadequately and 27.5% as adequate. In the indicator "Assertiveness" the majority is in the category of Inadequate (72.5%), while in the indicator "emotional regulation" 65.0%, are inadequate and 35.0% adequate. It was also found that in the indicator "Positive self-esteem" 65.0% have inadequate self-esteem, while 35.0% are in the category of Adequate. In turn, the indicator

"Openness to diversity" reveals that 70.0% of schoolchildren were rated as Inadequate and 30.0% were in the category of Inadequate.

Based on these results, the dimension "Socio-affective qualities of primary schoolchildren" is affected for most schoolchildren, which confirms that their socio-affective development is insufficient. For the above, the current state of the studied variable is represented in Figure 1.

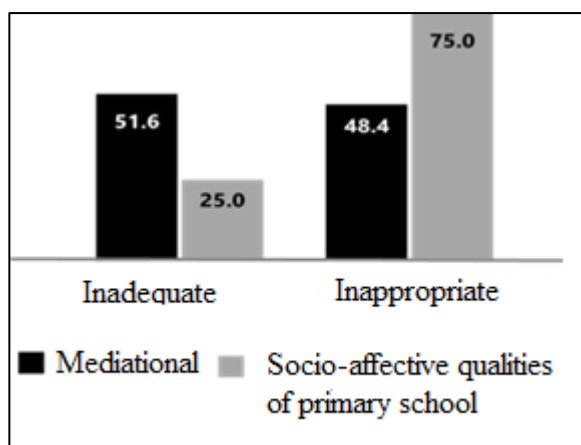


Figure 1. Status of the "Socio-affective stimulation of primary schoolchildren"

The current state of the variable is since its two dimensions are deteriorated: from the cognitive and procedural difficulties to carry out stimulation by teachers and parents, as well as the presence of insufficiencies in the socio-affective qualities of schoolchildren, almost all its indicators are affected.

Therefore, for the achievement of this development in primary school children of 6th grade it is necessary to stimulate them in how to be assertive, they are encouraged to name and recognize their own emotions so that they learn to manage them in a healthy way, understand and accept each one as he is. They should also prepare for identifying their individual strengths and motivating them on the basis of mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance of self-worth. In this sense, Ortiz, (1999) points out: "emotions are not only intrapsychic experiences, but the processes of changing, initiating, maintaining or interrupting the relationship with the environment, internal or external, when this relationship is relevant" (p.8). And adds Blázquez Torralba, O (2021): "That's why they are relevant in social skills" (p.2). It coincides with these criteria, because they reveal the relationship of interdependence of the affective with the social and the need to enhance both dimensions in an integrated way in the formative process through which each individual passes.

The importance of the above is reaffirmed in the midst of a pandemic context where it is urgent to strengthen attention to socio-affective content. In this regard, Uribe (2022), director of the Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago) pointed out that: "After the prolonged closures of schools, today it is more urgent than ever to give teachers

tools to accompany their students in their socio-emotional dimension, strongly impacted by the pandemic" (p.3).

It coincides with this criterion and defends the intention to give continuity, enrichment, and consolidation to the work of formation of the socio-affective content, and, in this sense, there is an openness to its continuous improvement. On the other hand, the priority of the formative attention of the socio affective in primary education lies in the fact that the school stage contains a sensitive period of development, understood by Rodríguez, P (2015) as: "a somewhat broader temporal space for the acquisition of certain skills (...) Our brain is more sensitive to certain acquisitions (...) it extends up to ten years" (p.15). Hence the need to consciously and planned stimulate socio-affective development; Because if it is not adequately promoted at this stage, it is difficult for the schoolchild to be a socially self-regulated adult in the future, assertive, able to live together, useful to society and capable of facing the various challenges of their environment. For this purpose, a socio-pedagogical conception is proposed.

### **Proposal of a sociopedagogical conception for socio-affective stimulation**

The word conception "(...) It has its origin in the Latin *conceptio*, -ōnis, which means action and effect of conceiving." (DRAE, 2001). From the analysis carried out to different authors about the definition of conception, they agree in raising among its essential features that it is a scientific construction, a system of ideas, concepts, representations, laws and principles with the aim of describing, understanding, assuming, explaining and contextualizing abstract representations about the object of study. At the international level, there are few investigations that provide conceptions for the improvement of the pedagogical process, although there are studies by Simao (2017) and Simõe (2019). In Cuba there are numerous authors who have contributed this scientific result from the XXI century, among the most recent are: Creagh (2018) and Santiesteban (2019).

In the conceptual order the category "sociopedagogical" responds to Sociopedagogy, a branch of Social Pedagogy that emerged in the late nineteenth century with the philosophical work of Paul Natorp (1896). For Arroyo Simón (1995, p.205) Social Pedagogy: "It deals with the theory and praxis of the perfection of man as a social being, (...) of their personality, behaviors, attitudes, and habits that promote the individual's educational social values" (p. 61) The previous quote reveals the fundamental scope of the conception proposed in this research: to contribute to the social, affective formation and moral education of the individual, aspects inherent to socio-affective development, considering for this the educational action of society, which at a more organized and directed level is located in social institutions such as the family and the school. These in the post-pandemic context still require more integrated work.

This will allow to guide the interactions, criteria, and actions that teachers and parents must carry out on the basis of a methodological organization, reflection and cognitive empowerment to influence the socio-affective content of primary school. Based on these relationships, the ways in which the teaching staff, directors and parents will be prepared and guided to carry out the socio-affective stimulation are conceived:

1. The theoretical-methodological preparation of the integrative working group formed by directors, cycle managers, teachers and the parents' council is framed in three fundamental forms: preparation course, pedagogical reflection workshops and teacher and family self-preparation.
2. The educational orientation will be used so that the student receives a favorable influence on his emotional regulation, the resolution of conflicts and knowing how to be empathetic.

For the methodological concretion of these aspects, it is considered pertinent to propose a system of general and integrative ideas, conceived as main maxims for the socio-affective stimulation of the primary school, these are:

The stimulation of the socio-affective development of the primary school occurs based on the unity of educational influences in the school-family context.

Socio-affective stimulation in the school stage is carried out from guidelines or steps.

The stimulation of socio-affective development goes through the stages of inquiry, preparation, implementation of actions and evaluation of results.

The preparation for socio-affective stimulation must be intentional in the initial and permanent training process of the Primary Education professional.

As a synthesis of this section and all the above explained, the graphic presentation of the sociopedagogical conception in which the components of each subsystem shown in figure 2 are articulated.

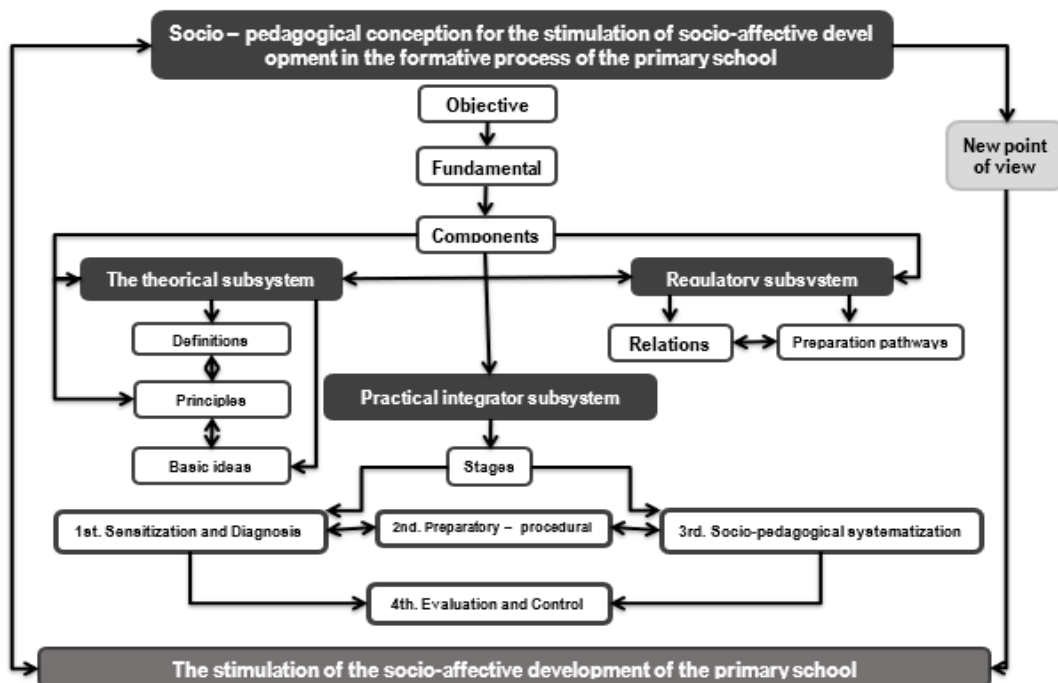


Figure 2. Graphic representation of the socio-pedagogical conception.

From the insertion of this alternative in the formative process of the primary school in the post-pandemic context, the validation of the results obtained using the methods: criterion of specialists and the criteria of users is carried out. These were the results obtained:

- ✓ In the criteria of the specialists, the survey applied to 19 pedagogues revealed that 89.5% are very much in agreement with the theoretical systematization carried out and 84.2% are very much in agreement with the correspondence between the structural, methodological, and didactic organization of the conception since it denotes a coherent systemic relationship with the objective to be achieved.
- ✓ 84.2% strongly agree on the applicability and possibilities of implementation of the proposal, while 94.7% strongly agree with the methodological procedure for its implementation. These results are confirmed by calculating absolute frequency, cumulative absolute frequency and the relative one could be found that the valuation category with percentage expression was that of Very agree with 88.0%.
- ✓ The content, structure, and methodological procedure of the sociopedagogical conception were submitted to the assessment of the users who will implement it in educational praxis. With these, two pedagogical reflection workshops and one family orientation workshop were carried out for their initial theoretical-methodological preparation.
- ✓ Subsequently, a survey was applied whose results revealed that 82.6% (19) strongly agree with the conception because it contributes to the formation of qualities and values from a more flexible and affective perspective, an aspect limited in primary education, from the current complexity of the family environment for integrated work with the school.
- ✓ In turn, 17.4% agree with the viability of the proposal, because – based on the current pandemic context – there is a call to work and intentionally strengthen the socio-affective dimension in all age groups.
- ✓ Regarding the assessment of preparation actions for teachers and parents, 65.2% (15) strongly agree that these favor integrative family-school work

These results demonstrate the relevance, from the theoretical-practical point of view, of the conception that is provided; Therefore, it enriches the pedagogical practice in the attention to the identified problem.

## **Conclusion**

The study contributes to the guiding practice that is carried out to the family and the school in pursuit of a comprehensive education of the primary school under post-pandemic conditions. The educational function of the family and the school is strengthened in aspects that still require greater emphasis through the procedural preparation of the teacher and family guidance. The socio-affective stimulation of primary school children in the post-pandemic context is a formative practice that contributes to building new procedural knowledge in accordance with current social singularities.

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