

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AS ENHANCERS OF COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN BOYS AND GIRL IN EARLY EDUCATION

AMBIENTES DE APRENDIZAJE COMO POTENCIADORES DEL DESARROLLO INTEGRAL EN NIÑOS Y NIÑAS DE EDUCACIÓN INICIAL

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ABSTRACT: Well-designed and used learning environments enhance the cognitive, emotional, social and physical development of infants for a successful future. The objective of this study was to analyze the use of learning environments and their influence on the integral development of children in early education centers of circuit 03 in the city of Portoviejo, Ecuador. The research was based on a qualitative-quantitative approach and was descriptive. For the collection of information, survey techniques and observation forms directed to teachers were used, as well as interviews with experts. The results show the need to improve learning environments, limited use of strategies and resources to enhance development, and a weak use of assertive competencies in the interaction with infants. The absence of skills evaluation practices after learning experiences was also identified. It is concluded that, although teachers understand the importance of learning environments to enhance the development of skills in early education, these environments are not fully implemented or adequate, which constitutes a significant limitation that may have short and long term repercussions in infants.

Keywords: *Learning environments, Teaching competencies, Integral development, Creative education, Affectivity.*

RESUMEN: Los ambientes de aprendizaje bien diseñados y utilizados potencian el desarrollo cognitivo, emocional, social y físico de los infantes para un futuro exitoso. El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar el uso de los ambientes de aprendizaje y su influencia en el desarrollo integral en niños y niñas de centros de educación inicial del circuito 03 de la ciudad de Portoviejo, Ecuador. La investigación se basó en un enfoque cuali-cuantitativo y fue de tipo descriptiva. Para la recolección de información se utilizaron técnicas de encuesta y ficha de observación dirigida a docentes, además de entrevistas a expertos. Los resultados evidencian la necesidad de mejorar los ambientes de aprendizaje, limitado uso de estrategias y recursos para potenciar el desarrollo, y un débil uso de competencias asertivas en la interacción con infantes. También se identificó la ausencia de prácticas de evaluación de destrezas posterior de las experiencias de aprendizaje. Se concluye que, aunque los docentes comprenden la importancia de los ambientes de aprendizaje para potenciar el desarrollo de destrezas en educación inicial, estos ambientes no se encuentran completamente implementados ni

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adecuados, lo que constituye una limitación significativa que puede tener repercusiones a corto y largo plazo en infantes.

Palabras clave: *Ambientes de aprendizaje, Competencias docentes, Desarrollo integral, Educación creativa, Afectividad.*

INTRODUCTION

The stimulation that children receive in the first years of life determines the way they act in the different spaces that they will have to develop throughout their lives, therefore, an adequate pedagogical mediation is necessary to contribute to this end. In this context, trained teachers and learning environments conducive to the participation of children in their development process are required.

In recent years, Ecuador has sought to guarantee quality education by recognizing child development in a comprehensive and complex manner in all its interrelated aspects (cognitive, social, psychomotor, physical and affective) (Ministry of Education, 2014a). However, many educational institutions continue to maintain traditional educational practices and learning environments that do not provide resources to stimulate creativity in children.

In recent years, the way teaching and learning takes place in the country has been extremely uncertain, marked by a series of changes that have not favored education in Ecuador. Despite conversations about an educational innovation, its positive effects have not been manifested in classrooms (Barrera et al., 2017).

Several educational experiences and studies confirm that an inadequate use of learning environments, especially in the context of early education, influences children's ability to access sensory stimuli that favor attention and meaningful interaction with teachers and among peers, in addition to the opportunity to explore, experiment and learn effectively.

The objective of this research focuses on analyzing the use of learning environments and their influence on the integral development of boys and girls. This context of study aims to open a debate about the favorable conditions that enhance child development and allow the construction of solid foundations for children's academic and personal future. It is noteworthy

that, in contrast to conventional practices, the effective use of learning environments, the use of play and creativity in the classroom, are indispensable to take into account in early education. The following are studies that support this theme.

According to Chasig (2023) learning environments designed for early education are a priority for children's cognitive, emotional and social growth. This is achieved through the implementation of play activities, games and teaching methods that allow children to naturally discover their environment, exploring and interacting with various objects and materials, which will contribute to the construction of their first knowledge from direct experiences.

For Piedad et al (2019) learning spaces are defined by the interaction between the physical environment and the interactions between people at a specific time, which generates meaningful learning experiences for children. These spaces, planned for educational purposes, serve as resources that encourage children's active participation, creating an environment conducive to explore, experiment, play and create.

In line with the ideas of Jerez (2023), it is essential that the teacher has a comprehensive understanding of the environment in which he/she will teach his/her group of students, as he/she may often lack adequate infrastructure, sufficient materials, or a large classroom. Given these limitations, the teacher must show creativity in designing, evaluating and adapting the space so that each play or work area stimulates children's curiosity and fosters the development of important skills, such as the use of the five senses, cognitive thinking, fine and gross motor skills, as well as personalized attention.

Students are the protagonists in the creative school, which contrasts with the traditional school and turns them into people capable of creating and imagining, this is related to the study conducted in Colombia for the Universidad del Norte, which proposes that, according to Sanchez and Morales, the teacher must have a broad vision of the work space, given that infrastructure and resources may be limited. The teacher's creativity becomes crucial to design and adapt each learning area, stimulating children's curiosity and fostering the comprehensive development of skills such as senses, cognition, and motor skills, as well as individualized attention (Sánchez and Morales, 2017).

Carneros' publication, orients and creates awareness about the innovation of the alternative and creative school, motivating the creation of spaces and the selection of materials that relate in the daily routine, facilitating the exploration and manipulation of children. Each environment, with its specifications, contributes to a relaxed climate without external pressures, where simply being and experiencing freedom is encouraged (Carneros, 2018).

When educational environments are effectively implemented, they foster social interaction and communication, stimulating a diversity of stimuli that promote autonomy in learning and facilitate decision-making. In addition, it creates a safe space that enhances creativity and social and emotional intelligence. It is crucial to recognize the importance of play in the integral development of children, since play activities promote the development of creative thinking.

The concepts of creativity and creative process become relevant in the context of child development and its connection with learning environments and spontaneous-directed play. The presence of teachers with creative and assertive competencies is crucial in the educational environment, as they play a key role in the classroom. The coherence between what they think and do will reflect their creative skills in daily practice, being a model for students.

Activities are required that break the monotony of traditional teaching, integrating both fun and learning. These activities can take various forms, such as games, experiments, sports practices and other initiatives that encourage active participation and discovery, thus providing an enriching and stimulating environment for the learning process (De la Mora et al., 2023).

DEVELOPMENT

Socio-constructivist learning

Socio-constructivist learning is a theory that emphasizes the importance of social interaction and the shared construction of knowledge in the pedagogical process. In this approach, learning is recognized as an active and collaborative process, where individuals construct

meaning through interaction with others and with their environment. Children participate in activities that allow them to share ideas, confront perspectives and solve problems together, which fosters deeper and more meaningful learning.

This process highlights the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the dynamic construction of knowledge. In this perspective, emphasis is placed on the creation of educational environments that foster children's active participation, facilitating communication, exploration and discovery in a meaningful way. Teachers play a crucial role as guides to learning, offering direction and support, while children interact with each other and their environment, enabling them to develop their understanding of the world through hands-on, collaborative experiences.

One of the important characteristics of social constructivist learning is its emphasis on the co-construction of meaning through negotiation and discussion among peers. Children learn not only from their interactions with the teacher, but also from their peers, as each individual brings his or her own wealth of experiences and knowledge to the learning process.

Socio-constructivist approaches to the teaching-learning process promote the development of critical thinking, which is characterized by the child's ability to make deliberate and self-regulated judgments, interpretations, analyses, evaluations and inferences. This is facilitated by involving the student in educational situations where the understanding of content occurs while he acts as the protagonist of his own learning process, explaining evidence, concepts, methods, criteria and contextual considerations (Sarmiento et al., 2021).

For the constructivist approach, the existence of interaction between teacher and students, it is a dialectical exchange between the knowledge of the teacher and the child, so that a productive synthesis can be reached for both and, consequently, that the contents are reviewed to achieve meaningful learning (Ortiz, 2015).

Learning Environments in Early Childhood Education

Learning environments in early education refer to the physical and social environments specifically designed to facilitate the integral development of children in their first years of life. They are spaces where children integrate, interact and communicate with their peers,

teachers and the entire educational community, which allows them to stimulate their motor, cognitive, emotional and social development.

In early childhood education, environments should include spaces such as classrooms, play areas, rest corners, feeding areas, as well as outdoor spaces such as playgrounds and gardens. These places are organized so that they are safe, accessible and stimulating for children, offering a variety of materials, resources and activities adapted to their needs and developmental levels. These environments should be carefully planned to stimulate learning and growth in all areas of child development.

Following Gavilanez (2022) line of thought, the need for adequate resources to facilitate the development and improvement of children's skills and abilities is highlighted. The purpose is to offer spaces that favor their growth, with accessible materials that allow them to participate in activities that combine play and learning, adapted to their individual interests and respecting their pace, abilities and needs.

Learning Environments and Creativity

Learning environments are enriching spaces that foster children's development, a learning environment is much more than just physical places; they are true scenarios in which the magic of growth and exploration unfolds for children. From the classroom to the play corners to the areas designated for care routines, each space is meticulously designed to nurture the curiosity and holistic development of little ones.

These environments are created with the purpose of inspiring imagination and active learning. In the classroom, for example, the exchange of ideas and discovery is encouraged through didactic resources and structured activities. Meanwhile, in the play spaces, children have the opportunity to experiment, collaborate and develop fundamental social and emotional skills.

It is important to highlight the value of outdoor environments, where nature becomes the perfect setting for play and sensory exploration. These spaces offer unique opportunities to connect with the environment, stimulate the senses and foster a sense of appreciation for the world around them.

Well-organized and appropriately guided learning environments not only facilitate children's cognitive, physical, emotional and social development, but also cultivate a love of learning that will last throughout their lives.

Creativity shapes children's personalities and prepares them for a dynamic world, where solving problems and contributing relevant knowledge in diverse contexts will be essential (Medina et al., 2017).

What is Integral Development in Infants?

Comprehensive development in infants encompasses the progressive maturation and growth of children, considering physical, cognitive, emotional, social and linguistic aspects. During the crucial stages from birth to early childhood, children experience a dynamic process in which they acquire motor skills, explore their environment, develop language and establish meaningful social bonds. It is a pivotal period in which the foundations are laid for their holistic development and long-term well-being.

Comprehensive development in infants encompasses emotional, social and cognitive skills, in addition to physical ones, requiring an enriched environment that promotes meaningful interactions with adults and peers for optimal growth.

It is essential to create safe and stimulating environments that encourage exploration, play and learning, along with emotional and affectionate support, so that they can reach their full potential and flourish as confident, competent and happy individuals.

According to research by Ponce (2010), the complete development of children involves physical, linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional aspects, requiring favorable conditions in nutrition, health, safety and education to ensure optimal development throughout their lives.

Development of cognitive, affective and motor skills in creative learning environments

During the first five years, children experience their most crucial stage of development, learning cognitive, linguistic, social and motor skills. The development of affective and motor skills in creative environments contributes to creative expression and the generation of innovative ideas.

Fostering creative learning environments is critical to the optimal development of these skills by providing children with the necessary tools to face challenges, be innovative, understand themselves and others, and participate effectively in society and later in the workplace. Creative learning thus becomes a key driver for personal and professional growth in a rapidly changing world; cognitive, affective and motor skills are essential to prepare students to be competent and adaptive citizens in the 21st century.

Optimal child development is crucial for individual growth and the advancement of society as a whole. Early stimulation has proven to have significant positive effects in this regard. By investing in the strengthening of these skills from an early stage, a solid foundation is laid for the comprehensive development of individuals, which in turn has an impact on improvements in various areas of society (Niño, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out using a quali-quantitative approach that combined the deepening of information through qualities and characteristics of the facts with an objective vision of reality. The research is of a descriptive, field and bibliographic nature, and was carried out in four Early Education Centers of District 13D01 of the City of Portoviejo, Manabí, Ecuador, which house a population of 164 children and 28 teachers. The sample was taken at the discretion of the researcher considering all the children and 12 teachers. In addition, the survey was applied to all the teachers.

For the collection of information, the techniques used were observation of children and teachers, surveys of teachers and interviews with experts.

The surveys were validated by experts in the area of early education. The analysis of the results was carried out through triangulation, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to strengthen the validity and understanding of the phenomenon studied.

RESULTS

Teacher survey results

Table 1

How do you rate the learning environments in your classroom?

N.	Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
1	Pleasant	28	100%
2	Not very pleasant	0	0,0%
3	In the process of improvement	0	0,0%
TOTAL		28	100%

Source: own elaboration

In relation to Table 1, 100% of the teachers surveyed rate the learning environments in their classrooms as pleasant. This is related to what is referred to in the guidelines for the organization of learning environments in early education, according to the Ministry of Education (2023):

It provokes joy and amazement in children, encouraging their curiosity, stimulating them to comply with the activities designed by teachers for the development of skills, it is important that these environments are welcoming, pleasant and provide children with confidence and security for quality learning. (p. 3).

All teachers report having pleasant learning environments, which ensures the comprehensive and equitable development of children, since a positive environment promotes emotional, social and cognitive well-being, and lays the foundation for meaningful and lasting learning during the crucial formative years of childhood.

Table 2

Do you have fully adequate learning spaces?

N.	Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	20	71,4%
2	No	5	17,9%
3	To some extent	3	10,7%
TOTAL		28	100%

Source: own elaboration

In Table 2, according to the results obtained, 71.4% of teachers respond that they have completely adequate learning spaces. However, it is clear that there is a need for improvement. In this regard, the early education curriculum (Ministerio de Educación, 2014b) mentions that:

There is a great diversity of usable infrastructure in educational institutions; therefore, the work team of each institution must analyze the available spaces, equipment and materials to organize and adapt them in a functional way, thinking above all about the safety and comfort of the children. Clean, orderly and adequate spaces are true learning environments (p. 16).

Table 3

In your opinion, what competencies should an early childhood teacher possess in order to promote the integral development of children?

N.	Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
1	Empathy	25	89,3%
2	Permissiveness	0	0,0%
3	Guiding	13	46,4%
4	Creative and innovative	24	85,7%
5	Captivating	1	3,6%
6	Critical capacity and conflict resolution	14	50,0%
7	Strict	0	0,0%
8	Flexible	14	50,0%
9	Affective warmth	22	78,6%
10	Innovative	10	35,7%
11	Inclusive	24	85,7%
12	Tolerant	11	39,3%
TOTAL		28	100%

Source: own elaboration

In relation to Table 3, the results obtained show that the teachers consulted are aware of the competencies that an early education teacher should possess, among which are empathy (89.3%), followed by creative and innovative (85.7%), inclusive (85.7%) and warmth of

affection (78.6%). It is inferred that there is a good knowledge of the competencies that allow guiding children in the first years of education, and that those that allow closeness and attachment with the students prevail, ensuring a full childhood and development.

According to Alcívar Ormaza and Baquero Macuy (2022), the competencies of the creative teacher are elemental to facilitate meaningful learning, involving training that fosters innovative strategies, considering the individual capabilities and needs of students. Continuous training is essential to strengthen these competencies and adapt to changes in traditional education.

Table 4

What activities do you carry out to promote the integral development of children during the day?

No	Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
1	Dialogue	24	85,7%
2	Songs	26	92,9%
3	Symbolic games	18	64,3%
4	Reading stories	20	71,4%
5	Creating stories	12	42,9%
6	Scientific experiments	8	28,6%
7	Body expression exercises	18	64,3%
TOTAL		28	100%

Source: own elaboration

In Table 4, within the results obtained, teachers express that among the activities that prevail to enhance the integral development of children are songs with 92.9% and dialogue with 85.7%. Dorado (2018), emphasizes that the combination of music and play establishes a perfect synergy to foster creativity and contribute to the integral development of individuals. Therefore, it is the responsibility of teachers to enhance the innate creative capacity of children, allowing them to explore their abilities to the maximum in order to achieve full development.

The research shows that the teachers surveyed tend to use songs and dialogue to a great extent, as part of a variety of pedagogical strategies to provide children with a comprehensive and enriching educational experience. The combination of songs, dialogues, stories,

experiments and other practical activities contribute significantly to the comprehensive development of children in early childhood.

Table 5

Do you keep a complete record that indicates children's level of skill attainment?

No	Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
1	Always	27	96,4%
2	Sometimes	1	3,6%
3	Never	0	0,0%
TOTAL		28	100%

Source: own elaboration

Table 5 shows that 96.4% of teachers keep a complete record of skills progress. According to the Ministry of Education (2014a), indicators are observable parameters that make it possible to identify progress in the development of specific skills. Given that early education curriculum skills are usually broad, the determination of indicators is essential to effectively evaluate the gradual progress of each skill. Complete mastery of a skill often requires an extended period of time. Therefore, the teacher must monitor children's progress in all curriculum skills and design activities that encourage the development of those skills that require more attention.

The data show that teachers are aware of the importance of keeping a record of the progress of the skills that children achieve, which provides a quality education and contributes to comprehensive and equitable development. This process is fundamental to ensure that each child receives the necessary reinforcement and guidance to reach his or her maximum potential during the early formative years.

Results of observation applied to teachers

Table 6

Use of learning environments to enhance skills in children in early childhood education.

Aspects	Always	Sometimes	Never
The classroom has creative learning environments.	33,30%	41,70%	25%
Uses play in the development of the learning experience.	41,70	50%	8,30%

It has the necessary resources to execute the activity	100%	0,0%	0,0%
Uses creativity in the activities developed	41,70%	41,70%	16,60%
Implements the learning environments in the activity to be executed	33,30%	41,70	25,0%
Gives attention to the individuality of the children in the group	58,40%	25,0%	16,6 %
Adjusts to the time to develop the learning experience.	75,00%	25,0%	0,00%
Assertive competencies are evidenced in the teacher when developing the work day.	41,70%	50,0%	8,30%
After developing the activity, evaluates the children's skills and has a means of verification where the evaluation is recorded.	0,0%	0,0%	100%

Source: own elaboration

Table 6 shows the results of the observation of teachers on the use of learning environments to enhance skills in early childhood education. The results indicate that the criteria: “The classroom has creative learning environments”, “Uses play in the development of the learning experience”, “Uses creativity in the activities developed”, “Implements learning environments in the activity to be executed”, “Gives attention to the individuality of the children in the group” and “Assertive competencies are evidenced in the teacher when developing the work day”, obtained a valuation ranging between 33% and 42%, with ranges of “always” and “sometimes”. It is also noted that the criteria: “Has the necessary resources to carry out the activity” is always fulfilled by 100% and “Adjusts to the time to develop the learning experience”, is always fulfilled by 75%.

According to the results obtained, few classrooms are adequate according to the creativity guidelines required in today's education. The observed context is far from the conditions that children need to learn in a fun way; it is necessary to strengthen the development of learning experiences with elements that attract the attention and amazement of infants, which will allow learning to be pleasurable and captivating. On the other hand, the assertive competencies observed in the teacher during the workday do not meet the required level of satisfaction.

As can be inferred from the words of Hernández et al. (2022), a learning environment is the environment that surrounds the student in the classroom, centered both on the child and the

content. The interaction with this environment can positively or negatively influence the student, as it is composed of four dimensions: physical, functional, temporal, and relational.

In agreement with Vera (2018) analysis in the preschool phase, it is a priority to offer innovative and creative activities, adapted to the need of each child, focusing on the stimulation of fine as well as gross motor skills. It is important to remember that the development of fine motor control progresses with the maturation of the neurological system, improving the mastery acquired in gross motor skills.

In relation to the profile and role of the teacher, we agree with Criollo Vargas (2018) who argues that the educator requires a combination of qualities, such as positivity, enthusiasm, authenticity, commitment, organization, impartiality, motivation, care, flexibility, creativity, patience and inspirational capacity. Families place their trust in those who assume the education of their children, which requires teachers to reflect on their vocation and respond to the challenges of a constantly changing society.

The observation of teachers also highlights the result of the criterion “After developing the activity, evaluates the child's skills and has a means of verification where the evaluation is recorded” where there is no evidence of compliance, a situation that is unfavorable for monitoring the development of skills in children, although the early education curriculum indicates as evaluation tools the anecdotes, checklists, estimation scales or qualitative table of skills to keep track of the progress of each student. In this regard, the evaluation application instructions updated by the Ministerio de Educación (2016), indicates that the evaluation of children's progress is necessary to identify warning signs of possible delays and deficits in their development. This allows early intervention to address these spatial needs more effectively and equitably compared to other students.

Expert interview results

The selected experts answered each question in depth, based on their knowledge and experience in teaching at the early childhood level.

Regarding the question “What is the role of learning environments in the process of developing children's skills? They argued that the role of learning environments lies in the

teacher's ability to adapt these spaces in an effective and creative way, providing the corresponding use to enhance skills, which contributes to the comprehensive development of children. According to what has been published and following the line of reasoning of the Ministerio de Educación (2014a), educational environments combine physical space with interactions among participants, generating meaningful learning experiences for children. These environments, designed for specific educational purposes, are valuable resources that stimulate active learning by providing opportunities for children to explore, experiment, play and create.

On the question What aspects or conditions should be taken into account to design creative learning environments? They agree that designing creative learning environments involves creating an enriching environment that encourages exploration, experimentation and personal expression. These environments should be designed to inspire creativity, promote curiosity, and allow children to develop problem-solving and innovation skills. Flexibility and adaptability are key to responding to the changing needs of infants and toddlers, and opportunities for creativity. It is critical to create environments that foster learning, which requires the teacher to set up the classroom with a clear pedagogical purpose that encourages exploration, autonomy, collaboration, and creativity for each child. In this environment, every opportunity for interaction becomes an opportunity to play and learn. The pedagogical strategies used by the teacher and the experiences lived by the children will positively or negatively influence their learning and development (Balmaceda et al., 2019).

In relation to the question “What type of resources are necessary for the implementation of learning environments? They agree that in order to implement a learning environment or learning corner it is enough with the creativity of the teacher to elaborate recyclable or reusable didactic material and thus provide means that contribute to the environments, another resource that they consider elementary to complete the good use of these spaces and achieve the desired objective, Another resource that they consider elementary to complete the good use of these spaces and achieve the desired objective is to plan the learning experiences that are related to these spaces and finally that the teacher makes use of a tool such as the checklist to record the individual progress of each child, which can be daily or

weekly, only in this way will it be possible to really measure the progress of the skills that contribute to the integral development of the children. From the perspective of Esteves et al. (2018), physical resources, environment, equipment, educational materials, procedures and pedagogical strategies constitute the material basis that supports and facilitates the teaching and learning process.

As for the question “How can we stimulate children's creativity through the use of learning environments?”, they emphasize that teachers are the ones who guide the process, provide the resources and, based on the children's tastes and needs, create learning environments so that they can give free rein to their imagination and creativity. Play plays a fundamental role in children's world. Through play, children explore, experience and understand their environment, as well as the characteristics and limitations of their age and culture, and through this learning process they are motivated and creativity is encouraged (Maceda, 2023).

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The research process addresses the inappropriate use of learning environments and their influence on the integral development of children in early education centers. The main findings of the survey are based on the teachers' answers, where 71.4% respond that they have completely adequate learning spaces (Table 2). Table 3 shows that teachers are aware of the competencies that an early childhood educator should possess. Among these competencies, empathy (89.3%), creativity and innovation (85.7%), inclusion (85.7%) and affective warmth (78.6%) stand out.

Table 4 shows that the most prevalent activities for promoting children's integral development are songs (92.9%) and dialogue (85.7%). According to Table 5, 96.4% of the teachers keep a complete record of the children's skill progress. However, the results of Table 6, which correspond to the observation of teachers, show that only 33.3% of their classrooms have creative learning environments. In addition, 33.3% use the learning environment

effectively in the activities, and 100% of the teachers never record the progress of the children's skills, nor do they have any means of verification after developing the activities.

As for the experts interviewed, they emphasize the importance of creating and using effective learning environments in early education, since it is fundamental for the development of children, because it is in these spaces where they develop integrally and express their creativity in a free and meaningful way, highlighting that each child is unique, so it is important to adapt the activities and the environment to individual needs and interests, indicating that fostering creativity in early education is a continuous process that requires patience and constant support from teachers. They also mention the need to monitor and evaluate children's skills, recommending the use of a checklist complemented by other forms of evaluation and observation.

These findings reflect a problem that should be addressed and confronted by developing the teacher's capabilities, the objective should be the improvement of pedagogical practices, providing opportunities for teachers to participate in workshops, online courses or conferences related to the creation of effective learning environments and the development of didactic skills to enhance comprehensive child development.

The results are similar to the study by Hernández et al. (2022), who mentions that for children to acquire skills and abilities, it is essential that teachers create a conducive learning environment and provide them with the necessary resources for their comprehensive development during early childhood, since this is a key stage in their maturation and growth.

Regarding the limitations encountered in the research process, it is important to point out that the Ministry of Education, specifically the Zonal Coordination and the Education District, should have been included in the study. It would have been essential to have key information on the actions they have taken to train, provide support and follow up on the implementation of the early education curriculum. This includes how learning environments are implemented and how these spaces are used in learning experiences. It would also be relevant to know if there is a system in which teachers record the progress of children's skills over time, in order to guarantee the integral development necessary at these ages. It is suggested that a future study should investigate the verifiable results of the application of the early education

curriculum guidelines, analyzing the effects evidenced since their implementation in 2014 to the present.

CONCLUSIONS

The research process has identified shortcomings in the early education environments of Circuit 03 in the city of Portoviejo, since they are not fully implemented or adequate with learning environments, which is a significant limitation that can have short and long term repercussions on the integral development of children.

According to the survey results, teachers recognize the importance of learning environments; however, in practice they lack the necessary resources, such as didactic materials and pedagogical strategies that allow them to implement effective and affective practices. Some teachers, accustomed to traditional teaching methods, may show resistance to change and to the adoption of more creative and child-centered approaches.

It is based on the importance of the integral development of children at the early childhood level, as the second childhood stage is a critical period for the formation of cognitive, emotional and social skills that will serve as the basis for their academic and personal future. In addition, integral development promotes resilience and adaptability, which allows them to face challenges effectively, fostering self-esteem and self-confidence, contributing to emotional well-being and the establishment of healthy relationships.

According to the results of the survey and the observation form applied to the teachers of Circuit 03 of the city of Portoviejo, it is evident that educators understand the importance of learning environments to enhance the development of skills of children in early childhood education. However, in practice, a considerable percentage of teachers do not reflect this attitude, which reveals a gap between theory and practice in teaching. Possibly this is mainly due to the lack of capacity building in terms of pedagogical strategies that promote creativity and integral development in early education. In addition, the lack of supervision or monitoring of teaching practices in the classrooms by superiors limits, to a certain extent, the

feedback of the processes in these spaces. In general, it is observed that there is no congruence between what teachers express and what they implement in practice.

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