

DIFFERENCES BY SEX, AGE AND GRADE IN SOCIALIZATION IN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to establish the differences in the socialization profile according to sex, age and school grade in school children in the municipality of Sincelejo, Colombia. A quantitative research was carried out with a non-experimental cross-sectional research design, and with a descriptive-comparative scope. The sample was made up of 101 children aged between 6 and 14. The instrument used was the BAS 1 socialization battery. The results obtained showed that there are differences between men and women in the dimensions of social sensitivity, respect - self-control and aggressiveness - stubbornness. In terms of school grade, there are differences between groups in the dimensions of leadership, social sensitivity, joviality, aggressiveness- stubbornness and apathy-withdrawal. The study reiterates the need to address the socialization process of children under a differential approach, promoting pedagogical-educational strategies that enable their treatment.

Keywords: Childhood, socialization, sociodemographic characteristics

Diferenças por sexo, idade e nível escolar na socialização de crianças

RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo estabelecer as diferenças no perfil de socialização de acordo com o sexo, idade e nível escolar de crianças em idade escolar no município de Sincelejo, Colômbia. Foi realizada uma investigação quantitativa com um desenho de investigação transversal não experimental, e com um âmbito descritivo-comparativo. A amostra consistiu em 101 crianças com idades compreendidas entre os 6 e 14 anos. O instrumento utilizado foi a bateria de socialização BAS 1. Os resultados obtidos mostraram que existem diferenças entre homens e mulheres nas dimensões de sensibilidade social, respeito - auto-controlo e agressividade - teimosia. Em termos de nível escolar, existem diferenças entre grupos nas dimensões de liderança, sensibilidade social, jovialidade, agressividade - firmeza e apatia - retenção. O estudo reitera a necessidade de abordar o processo de socialização das crianças sob uma abordagem diferencial, promovendo estratégias pedagógico-educativas que permitam o seu tratamento.

Palavras-chave: Infância, socialização, características sociodemográficas

Diferencias por sexo, edad y grado escolar en la socialización en niños

RESUMEN

El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo establecer las diferencias en el perfil de socialización según sexo, edad y grado escolar en niños escolares del municipio de Sincelejo, Colombia. Se realizó una investigación cuantitativa con diseño de investigación no experimental de corte transversal, y con alcance descriptivo-comparativo. La muestra estuvo constituida por 101 niños con edades entre 6 y 14 años. El instrumento aplicado fue la batería de socialización BAS 1. En los resultados obtenidos se evidenció que existen diferencias entre hombres y mujeres en las dimensiones sensibilidad social, respeto - autocontrol y agresividad - terquedad. En cuanto al grado escolar, existen diferencias entre grupos en las dimensiones liderazgo, sensibilidad social, jovialidad, agresividad-terquedad y apatía-retraimiento. A partir del estudio se reitera la necesidad de abordar el proceso de socialización de los niños bajo un enfoque diferencial, promoviendo estrategias pedagógico-didácticas que posibiliten su tratamiento.

Palabras clave: Niñez, socialización, características sociodemográficas

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INTRODUCTION

The human being is a social being by nature; various studies from anthropology, sociology and psychology coincide with this statement, although they differ in terms of their motives, theoretical explanations or causes. Since its inception, man has lived in a complex social network that depends to some extent on the culture and environment in which he is immersed, where socialization constitutes a fundamental process to enable him to develop as an autonomous being, independent and capable of adjusting correctly to the social rules in which it operates (Quesada, 2014).

However, the difficulties in this social reality arise when in the interactions the child is subjected to lack of filial networks, neglect, mistreatment, loneliness, abuse, indifference or exclusion. In these cases, not only the personal image deteriorates, but also the self-concept, self-esteem and the idea of family, society and community, causing negative feelings in the infant, internalizing or externalizing symptoms, which can lead to completely change the trajectory of his/her development. life (Mieles & García, 2010).

In the school setting, children may encounter difficulties that hinder the learning process. These problems could be due to multiple factors and are manifested mainly in cognitive, instrumental and curricular aspects, in addition they are usually related to problems of self-concept, personality and sociability, and can appear throughout the life cycle (Santiuste & González-Pérez, 2005). Education and socialization are inseparable, since both variables imply the absolute need and capacity within the learning process, just as education is a reality of all times that is part of a social fact and that together with society creates being social; the new man who lives with others and in groups, for this reason "education is the socialization of the new generation" (Durkheim, 1975).

A longitudinal study using sociometric interviews and teacher's reports showed that peer rejection is associated with an increase in aggressive behavior in children (Dodge et al., 2003). Buckley, Winkel, and Leary (2004) showed that rejection or bullying behavior by peers evokes negative emotional feelings, such as anger and sadness, in children, which in turn can lead to aggressive, withdrawn or even apathetic behavior. (Buckley et al., 2004).

It is important to highlight that children who are of school age from the beginning face social judgments by their peers that imply acceptance or rejection at the social level (Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982). It is very important to take into account the hypothesis of social belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), where the acceptance that children receive from their peers is important for their development and for the conformation of the socialization profile. When infants

experience negative social situations at an early age it has a great impact on mental health, stress levels and the way they solve problems in everyday life (Lereya, Copeland, Costello & Wolke, 2015; Newman, Holder & Delville 2011).

In Colombia, one in every five children who is studying primary school has been the victim of bullying in one of its different manifestations, a situation that is worrying because this problem represents a greater boom in regions that have been hit by violence and armed conflict. This taking into account that the figures for school violence that occur in Colombia surpass those evidenced in Latin America and in world averages (Chaux, 2003).

In the city of Sincelejo, it is recorded that, in a population of children and young people between the sixth and eleventh grade, 50.85% of the children have suffered insults by their peers in the school environment, 68.07% have been ridiculed in the classroom and 29.42% of the studied population has suffered physical aggression by their peers in the school classroom (Clareth et al., 2015). In this sense, an investigation carried out by Herrera-Lozano, Vergara-Álvarez and Meza-Cueto (2018) with Sincelejo schoolchildren, estimated that 89% of elementary school students have been recognized as victims of attacks by their classmates. In addition, 81% of school-age children have been generators of aggressive behaviors at school, 16% ignored by their peers and 2.2% rejected. These circumstances are part of the reality that exists within educational institutions and that causes multiple effects on a personal and social level in this population (Ayala-Carrillo, 2015), both in early ages and in adulthood (UNESCO, 2017).

The foregoing allows us to realize that externalizing manifestations represent a very popular problem and that it constitutes a threat to the correct social adaptation of children to different contexts and therefore to the socialization process (Chen, Chen, Wang, & Liu, 2002; Murray-Close & Ostrov, 2009; Valles & Knutson, 2008; Yu, Shi, Huang, & Wang, 2006). However, in some situations socialization is also strengthened through its facilitating scales such as leadership, joviality, social sensitivity and respect-self-control (Silva & Martorell, 2010).

Differences in the socialization of children according to sex, age and school grade

Various studies have found differences between men and women in some dimensions of their socialization. A study carried out by Retuerto (2004), showed when studying a significant sample of Spanish adolescents, that women presented higher levels of empathic concern than men; similarly, differences were found in age, indicating that the older the age, the greater the

empathy. However, Silva and Martorell (2010) found in their study that in samples of Andalusian, Canarian and Valencian children there were no differences in the socialization scales according to age or school grade, however, they argue that these data arise from a transactional method with limitations so they should not be taken in an evolutionary way.

For their part, Romero, Cuevas, Parra and Sierra (2018) in their research with Colombian children, concluded that men present higher levels of victimization and aggressiveness compared to women. This same finding has been obtained in other studies carried out in various contexts (Redondo and Guevara, 2012; Martínez, Rojas, Duque, Tovar, & Klevens, 2008; Muñoz, Jiménez, & Moreno, 2008; Castro & Gaviria, 2006; Chen and cols, 2002; Cerezo, 2001; Kochanska, Murray, & Coy, 1997).

Other research suggests differences in school groups according to their learning condition. Herrera-Lozano et al. (2018) found when studying prosocial behaviors in Sincelejo children, that groups made up of children with learning difficulties are often victimized, rejected and ignored by their peers. This finding has been proven in previous studies (García, Sureda, & Monjas, 2008), so that the scientific literature supports that these types of students are generally separated and excluded from peer activities and lose the possibility of being immersed in the social learning (García, Martín, Monjas, & Sanchiz, 2014).

Considering the above, the present study aimed to address the differences according to sex, age and school grade in elementary school children in Sincelejo Colombia, in their socialization profile from facilitating dimensions such as social sensitivity, respect-self-control, leadership and joviality, and disturbing as aggressiveness-stubbornness, anxiety-shyness and apathy-withdrawal. Regarding school grade, these dimensions will also be studied considering in a special way a group made up of children with learning difficulties.

The relevance of this research lies in the need for an approach under a differential approach that will allow the establishment of adequate educational measures that enhance the socialization process in children during their first school years (Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013). This, considering that all the dimensions positively associated with socialization, support mental health in age and strengthen prosocial behaviors that strongly enhance social ties (Auné, Blum, Abal, Lozzia, & Horacio, 2014).

METHOD

Design and participants

The present study was of a quantitative approach, with a non-experimental cross-sectional design and a descriptive-comparative scope (Hernández, Fernández,

& Baptista, 2014). Through an intentional sampling, 101 students who were in the first and second grade of elementary school at the La Peñata Rural Educational Institution in Sincelejo, Colombia were selected.

This sample, 56.4% were male and 43.6% female, and their age ranged between 6 and 14 years, where 69.3% were between 6 and 8 years old, 19.9% between 9 and 11 years old and 11% between 12 and 14 years old. Regarding school grade, 46.6% of this population sample was in the first grade of elementary school and their age ranges were between 6 and 8 years old, 40.6% were in second grade and had age ranges between 9 and 13 years old and 16.8% belonged to the GEMPA group (Group of students enrolled with learning disabilities), who were also in second grade and had an age range between 9 and 14 years.

Instruments

The instrument used was the BAS 1 Socialization battery (Silva & Martorell, 2010) applied to teachers, who reported the social behaviors of students in the school context. The instrument obtained internal consistency through Cronbach's alpha of 0.91, allowing the determination of the socialization profile in children from the facilitating and positive scales defined below:

- Social sensitivity: It is related to the concern, empathy and consideration of the individual towards other people
- Joviality: represents an element within extraversion and has a connotation in relation to correct socialization, good spirits, optimism, vital joy and a cordial attitude.
- Respect-self-control: it is related to the observance of regulations of social order and rules, which facilitate coexistence and respect among peers.
- Leadership: Skills that allow children to influence their peers to lead them to achieve shared goals.

In addition, the following dimensions of inhibitory or disturbing aspects:

- Anxiety-shyness: it is related to the presence of anxiety, shyness, nervousness, shame and shyness in the establishment of interpersonal relationships.
- Aggression-stubbornness: It refers to tax, negative and antisocial behaviors, in addition to showing disobedience and poor compliance with school and social standards.
- Apathy-withdrawal: It has to do with social withdrawal, introversion and in terms of cases evidenced in social behaviors with isolation

RESULTS

The data analysis was carried out through SPSS software. 24, by means of an analysis of variance to determine the presence of statistically significant differences among the scales of the socialization profile and sex, age and school grade.

The results visible in table 1 show differences between boys and girls in terms of the social sensitivity dimension, finding a higher mean in female subjects ($F = 7.993$, $p = 0.006$), which indicates that girls would show greater concern, empathy and consideration for other people. Another dimension that shows a high variation according to sex is respect-self-control ($F = 16,253$, $p = 0.000$), finding that girls would have greater compliance with social order norms and rules, which would facilitate their coexistence and a healthy peer relationship. Regarding the disturbing scales, significant differences were found between sex and the disturbing scale of socialization, aggressiveness-stubbornness ($F = 7.993$, $p = 0.006$), being the children who obtained a higher mean in this dimension presenting negative behaviors of the type tax and antisocial, as well as disobedience and poor compliance with school and social rules.

Finally, no significant differences were obtained between sex and the leadership, joviality, apathy-withdrawal and anxiety-shyness scales.

As shown in Table 2, second-grade students obtained higher levels on the facilitating leadership scales ($F = 13.409$, $p = 0.000$), social sensitivity ($F = 32.371$, $p = 0.000$) and joviality ($F = 25.443$, $p = 0.000$). This last scale indicates that second grade children show indicators of extraversion, correct socialization, good spirits, optimism, vital joy and a cordial attitude.

However, differences are also observed between school grade and the disturbing aggressiveness-stubbornness scale ($F = 5.025$, $p = 0.008$), with second grade children being the ones who could present more

aggressive behaviors.

When comparing the socialization profile of children in the GEMPA group with the other groups, it was observed that there are significant differences in the apathy-withdrawal scale ($F = 3.147$, $p = 0.047$), finding introversion and social isolation behaviors.

Finally, no differences were found in the respect-self-control and anxiety-shyness scales according to school grade. In this sense, there are no differences in the socialization profile of the children according to their age.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to determine the existence of significant differences in the socialization profile of schoolchildren according to sex, age and school grade. The results showed differences between men and women regarding the social sensitivity dimension, indicating that the latter are more empathetic, considerate and concerned about others, a finding that is consistent with previous studies (Rivera, Arratia, Zamorano, & Narvez, 2011; Bindu & Thomas, 2006; Goldenberg, Matheson, & Mantler, 2006; Austin, Evans, Goldwater, & Potter, 2005; Baron-Cohen, 2005; Van Rooy, Alonso, & Viswesvaran, 2005; Harrod & Scheer, 2005; Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004; Carvajal, Miranda, Martinac, Garca, & Cumsille, 2004; Pandey & Tripathi, 2004; Retuerto, 2004; Silveri, Tzilos, Pimentel, & Yurgelun-Todd, 2004; Mestre et al., 2004, 2002, 2001). These differences have been explained by some biological theories that suggest an innate tendency in women to be empathetic, nurturing, and prosocial from an early age (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, Wagner, & Chapman, 1992).

In another sense, it is evidenced that women obtained a higher mean in respect-self-control compared to men, which indicates that they are more receptive to social rules and demonstrate greater self-control, a

Table 1. Analysis of variance between the dimensions of the socialization profile and sex.

		N	Mean	Typical deviation	F	Sig.
Social sensitivity	Men	57	31,40	7,849	7,993	,006
	Women	44	34,66	7,304		
	Total	101	32,82	7,750		
Respect-self-control	Men	57	40,02	8,560	16,622	,000
	Women	44	47,11	8,819		
	Total	101	43,11	9,326		
Aggressiveness-stubbornness	Men	57	33,72	13,505	7,993	,006
	Women	44	27,02	9,123		
	Total	101	30,80	12,209		

Source: Made by the authors.

Table 2. Analysis of variance between socialization profile and school grade.

		N	Mean	Typical deviation	F	Sig.
Leadership	1st grade	43	38,74	10,351	13,409	,000
	2nd grade	41	47,44	11,718		
	GEMPA	17	33,29	6,430		
	Total	101	41,36	11,649		
Joviality	1st grade	43	37,05	5,984	25,443	,000
	2nd grade	41	42,90	6,324		
	Jenga	17	31,24	4,535		
	Total	101	38,45	7,221		
Social Sensitivity	1st grade	43	29,58	6,839	32,371	,000
	2nd grade	41	38,61	5,239		
	GEMPA	17	27,06	5,889		
	Total	101	32,82	7,750		
Aggressiveness-stubbornness	1st grade	43	30,93	12,372	5,025	,008
	2nd grade	41	33,85	13,051		
	GEMPA	17	23,12	4,167		
	Total	101	30,80	12,209		

Table 3. Variance analysis of socialization profile in children with and without learning difficulties.

		N	Mean	Typical deviation	F	Sig.
Apathy-withdrawal	1st grade	43	23,84	8,917	3,147	,047
	2nd grade	41	24,51	6,193		
	GEMPA group	17	30,88	18,034		
	Total	101	25,30	10,356		

Source: Made by the authors.

result consistent with other studies in which female sex showed greater inhibitory control and complacency in the face of authority figures (Etxebarria, Apodaca, Eceiza, Fuentes, & Ortiz, 2003; Cowan & Avants, 1988). Also, differences were found between men and women with respect to the aggressiveness-stubbornness scale, being male subjects who demonstrate more taxing, antisocial and avoidance behaviors, as found in previous studies (Redondo and Guevara, 2012; Martinez, Rojas, Duque, Tovar & Kleven, 2008; Muñoz, Jimenez & Moreno, 2008; Castro & Gaviria, 2005; Chen et al., 2002; Cerezo, 2001; Kochanska, Murray, & Coy, 1997), and according to some theories for hormonal changes in men, which can generate increased aggressiveness and irritability, inhibiting the tendency to be prosocial (Connolly, Paikoff, & Buchanan, 1966; Petersen, 1987). Other theories explain these differences from cultural patterns and upbringing guidelines, since boys are encouraged to

competitive-aggressive behavior and girls are taught to be reserved in their opinions and inhibit their desires, internalizing prosocial cognitive structures (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Mirón, Otero, & Luengo, 1989).

However, as with previous findings, no differences were found between men and women in the scales of leadership, joviality and apathy-withdrawal (Molina, Samper, & Mayoral, 2013; Coronel, Levin, & Mejain, 2011; Contini, Coronel, Levin, & Hormigo, 2010; Silva & Martorell, 2001; Sánchez & González, 1998). Regarding the anxiety-shyness scale, no differences were found according to sex, which is consistent with some previous studies (Monjas, 2014), but differs from other studies in which it has been found that women present higher levels of anxiety than men (Coronel, Levin & Mejain, 2011; Contini, Coronel, Levin, & Hormigo, 2010; Silva & Martorell, 2001). This discrepancy in results suggests continuing to study these differences in more

representative samples and from different contexts.

On the other hand, the results indicate differences between school grades, since the second grade of elementary school obtained higher means of leadership, joviality and social sensitivity than the first grade. This finding is contrary to what was found in a research carried out by Silva and Martorell (2010), where statistically significant differences were not shown among school grades, however, they consider approaching these results with caution.

The differences between first and second grade children in some dimensions that facilitate socialization could be explained from the adaptation and transition process in which the first group finds itself. According to Coulon (1990), when children go from initial education to primary education, an affiliation process must occur which implies their insertion into the new context and mastery of the institutional language, this being a guarantor of evolutionary success. However, studies show that in a significant sample of first-grade children the affiliation processes are not achieved even throughout the school year, which is why this group tends to present difficulties in their emotional and behavioral development, which is evidenced in their relationship with the school and with their peers (León, 2011). Some studies conclude that, during the first grade of primary school, schoolchildren could experience high levels of stress which would generate alterations in their behavior specifically in relation to aggressiveness and frustration (Loredo, Mejía, Jiménez, & Matus, 2009), so this would be an interesting topic to continue investigating.

However, it is also found that second grade children obtained a higher average of aggressiveness-stubbornness compared to first grade, a finding that differs from other studies (Silva & Martorell, 2010), which suggests continuing to address this problem in more representative samples, considering different socioeconomic levels and contextual characteristics, also studying variables such as personality, family, motivation and cognitive, volitional and affective elements (Garaigordobil, 2014; Marín, 2009; Vásquez, 2017).

It is striking that the second grade obtained the highest average in aggressiveness-stubbornness, but also in leadership, joviality and social sensitivity. Consistent with this, some studies have shown that bullies obtain high scores in leadership, also showing high self-esteem, assertiveness and empathy, which allows them to have control and dominance over the weakest (Cerezo, 2001). Regarding the presence of social sensitivity and aggressiveness in the same population group, the result goes in the opposite direction of other investigations in which it is indicated that to be prosocial inhibits aggressiveness, therefore it would be a

protective factor against it. (Mestre et al. 2006; Mestre, Frías, & Samper, 2004; Mestre, Frías, Samper & Nacher, 2003; Loudin, Loukas, & Robinson, 2003; Broidy et al., 2003; Mestre, Samper, & Frías, 2002 ; Sobral, Romero, Luengo, & Marzoa, 2000). However, a study carried out by Herrera-Lozano, Vergara-Álvarez and Meza-Cueto (2018) in Sincelejo children, showed hybrid profiles of aggressiveness-prosocial behavior, showing that the scores of both variables are not inversely proportional. An explanation attributed to this finding could be the presence of the so-called instrumental aggressiveness, which is reflected through behaviors of social competence and leadership (Oliver, Bautista, Galiana, Descalzo, Terreros, & Bustos, 2015), however, this issue it should be addressed in depth in subsequent studies.

Another result of the study shows differences between school grades in the apathy-withdrawal dimension among school grades, where the GEMPA group obtained the highest mean. This finding is consistent with that obtained by another study carried out with the same population group, in which these children obtained high levels of victimization, with a higher number of students rejected and ignored by their peers (Herrera-Lozano, Vergara-Álvarez & Meza-Cueto, 2018). This confirms what has been found in previous research, which indicates that children with learning difficulties and lagging behind due to the need for educational support, tend to feel rejected, excluded and victimized by their peers, in addition to perceiving themselves as less competent than they are leads to demonstrating isolation and withdrawal behaviors (Monjas, Martín-Antón, García-Bacete, & Sanchiz, 2014; Frostad & Pijl, 2007; Norwich & Kelly, 2004).

Various studies show that children with learning difficulties have a negative image of themselves compared to their peers, which makes them perceive themselves less socially competent and show disinterest in the social approval of their peers (Vaughn, Elbaum, Schumm, & Hughes, 1998; Haager & Vaughn, 1995; Kloomok & Cosden, 1994; Licht & Dweck, 1984). Considering this, in future studies, self-esteem and self-concept could be addressed as variables associated with apathy or withdrawal behaviors in groups with similar characteristics.

Finally, the present study did not show differences in the socialization profile according to age, which is consistent with previous studies (Silva & Martorell, 2010). However, other studies should be carried out with different age groups and in different evolutionary stages, also with more representative samples.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The present study found significant differences between boys and girls in their socialization profile

specifically in relation to the dimensions of social sensitivity, respect-self-control, and aggressiveness-stubbornness. In addition, differences were found among school grades in the scales of leadership, joviality, social sensitivity, aggressiveness-stubbornness and apathy-withdrawal, but no differences were found according to age. From the analysis of the results, the continuity of studies in the same line is suggested, which consider more representative samples, in diverse contexts and possibly associated variables such as personality, cultural characteristics, and family dynamics, structure and functioning. In addition, it is suggested to continue researching the socialization profile of children with learning difficulties, addressing possibly related variables such as self-esteem and self-concept. Finally, this study highlights its contribution to the knowledge of the socio-emotional processes that underlie the teaching-learning process, so that differential aspects of the socialization of children are considered for the establishment of pedagogical-didactic strategies that promote social skills in the school context.

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