

Pedagogical Support and its Impact on the Performance of Students in a State of Vulnerability

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This study aims to evaluate the influence of pedagogical support on the academic performance of vulnerable students of the “Abdón Calderón” School Grade Educational Unit during the period 2019-2020. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative approach methods, information was collected through surveys of teachers and students, interviews with management, and documentary analysis. The results indicate that 85% of teachers and students believe that pedagogical support is important in academic achievement; in addition, 92% prefer individual support. However, only 54% of teachers showed they had had any training in specific strategies to help vulnerable people when speaking. This study emphasizes the need for greater professional development for teachers and proposes the implementation of pedagogical techniques and strategies that allow better guidance to promote the academic and personal development of vulnerable students.

1. Introduction

In a dynamic society like the current one, educational quality has become a fundamental requirement. Therefore, it is pertinent that teachers train continuously, participating in training related to their area of specialization. This training must promote essential characteristics such as reflection and flexibility in pedagogical practice, aspects closely linked to the concept of pedagogical support.

The Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI, 2018) conceives pedagogical support as a continuous advisory process. This process is materialized through technical assistance strategies and actions, through which a specialized team permanently visits, supports and advises the teacher and the director on relevant issues of their practice. Calvo and Toala (2018) In essence, accompanying schools involve helping them comply with the guidelines and purposes of educational policy, based on their specific realities and potentialities.

At the level of Latin America and the Caribbean, the educational system has experienced

constant transformations. These changes range from the curricular structure to the infrastructure of educational spaces, including the implementation of workshops, projects and teacher training (Sevilla, 2017). These initiatives have been strengthened by the impulse given by the United Nations Cultural, Scientific and Educational Organization (UNESCO, 2003) at the Intergovernmental meeting of the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean 2002-2017, then to examine the deficiencies of the educational system at the regional level.

However, despite these efforts, a constant characteristic persists: the deficit in students' academic performance. Studies carried out in Peru indicate that poor academic performance is influenced by various factors, among which the geographical location (rural or urban), the type of school management (public or private), schools (single-teacher multigrade, multi-teacher multigrade) stand out. and complete), the mother tongue of the students and the level of vulnerability (Rodríguez et al., 2016).

In Ecuador, there have also been significant changes in the educational system, particularly because of the Curricular Reform of 2010. This reform proposed the improvement of educational quality as its main objective, establishing the maximum satisfaction of the educational community as its primary mission. Subsequently, in 2016, a readjustment was made to the curricular proposal, whose main characteristics include the organization by educational areas and levels, as well as a compendium of basic content of skills with performance criteria, appropriate to the requirements of contemporary society.

However, despite these modifications in the National Educational System, the problem of poor academic performance among students persists. This phenomenon is motivated by different factors, both external (educational institution, family and community) and internal (control of emotions, self-esteem), which in some cases turn the student into a focus of vulnerability.

Consequently, the need to have resilient, empathetic and professionally updated teachers, capable of providing quality care and overcoming the visible problems in the educational environment, is that many teachers limit themselves to teaching their classes in an expository manner, forgetting the participation of the students and thus limiting the development of capabilities that allow them to apply what they have learned.

In this context, the need arises for pedagogical support which, according to the study carried out by Puerta (2016), argues that "it allows the student not only to build knowledge, but also to develop and enhance capabilities that help them function as a person in different scenarios." in which it must interact" (p. 3).

It is crucial to recognize that, in Ecuador, not all individuals who carry out the work of teaching are qualified for this field. According to records made by Antamba (2015) and published by the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, s. f.), 5% of the teaching staff are high school graduates, while 18% do not have a degree in the field of teaching or pedagogy. (p. 9). These percentages show a very big problem in the exercise of teaching in Ecuador, which will also be interpreted, that they are unaware of the strategies that should be used in relation to the accompaniment and the age range of the students. Given this situation, it is essential to explore previous studies of solutions that allow strengthening teaching capabilities, especially in the field of pedagogical support, which can have a direct impact on the comprehensive

development of students.

Therefore, research has been reviewed in physical and virtual libraries that are related and like the topic of this study, which analyzes the impact of pedagogical support on student performance. Although this work shares points in common with said research, it differs by focusing specifically on students in vulnerable situations. Below are some relevant investigations:

Puerta (2016), in his research on educational accompaniment as a strategy to promote student learning, conceptualizes accompaniment as a process of intentional pedagogical mediation. According to the author, this process implies that the teacher accompanies the student in their different stages of learning, promoting their capacity for personal construction and understanding of the world around them. Thus, it emphasizes the fundamental role of the teacher in the teaching-learning process, presenting pedagogical support as an action that humanizes learning and allows the student to develop from their own essence and in relation to their environment.

In their work on the influence of the teaching role in pedagogical recovery, Calvopiña and Toala (2016) address the concept of pedagogical tutoring. The authors describe them as a process aimed at developing aptitudes and abilities in students who face learning difficulties. This process is supported by various pedagogical means designed to stimulate the comprehensive development of the student. Their research, which combined qualitative and quantitative methods, concluded that it is imperative for teachers to constantly update their knowledge. This update is key to providing quality educational care and achieving effective pedagogical support.

Guerrero (2018), in his study on academic reinforcement and cognitive independence in higher basic education students, offers a vision of academic reinforcement as a comprehensive set of strategies. According to the author, these strategies are designed to implement, consolidate and enrich regular educational action. They materialize in the adoption of measures to address diversity, which are carefully designed by the teacher and specifically addressed to the needs of the students. Guerrero emphasizes the importance of teachers implementing active and innovative strategies, with the aim of promoting the development of student capabilities and motivating the construction of new knowledge that is truly significant.

Finally, Calucho (2018), in his research on pedagogical reinforcement as a tool to improve learning, highlights the significant impact that the pedagogical action of reinforcement has. The author maintains that this action is essential for students to achieve academic achievements, develop emotional and social skills, and be able to monitor their own learning processes. This contribution is relevant to the present research, since it conceptualizes pedagogical reinforcement as a support action aimed at specific groups of students. These groups include those with special educational needs, at risk, or facing socioeconomic and cultural problems.

Based on these premises, this study addressed the following question: How does pedagogical support influence the performance of students in a state of vulnerability at the "Abdón Calderón" Basic Education Educational Unit in the year 2019-2020? The main objective of which was to determine the influence of pedagogical support on the performance of students

in a state of vulnerability, to propose innovative pedagogical strategies that support teaching work, thus promoting better academic performance in students.

To theoretically support this work, pedagogical and psychological paradigms are used that underpin pedagogical support. Constructivism, established by Piaget (1950) and Vygotsky (1978) (as cited in Montealegre, 2016) establish that learning is an active process and that knowledge is built through interaction. According to Vygotsky, scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) are key elements that the teacher must use to facilitate the student's ability to understand by themselves the levels that they could not reach otherwise. In this sense, pedagogical support is key, since the teacher acts as a mediator who helps the child obtain meaningful learning (Scott, S. (2011).

Rogers (1961) and Maslow (1954), humanistic psychologists, emphasize the importance of establishing an environment for the student that facilitates the full growth and development of the individual in a free manner. According to Rogers, adequate learning occurs in a climate of empathy, authenticity and complete acceptance (Barceló, 2012). Therefore, pedagogical support based on humanistic psychology implies supporting the student in all their emotional and academic facets or needs, which is essential for students in vulnerable situations.

Therefore, in this study, pedagogical accompaniment is an educational practice that seeks to support students in their learning process, recognizing their individual needs and learning styles. This concept is related to the idea of "sharing bread" according to Gómez de Silva (2008) and the action of accompanying, as defined by the Royal Spanish Academy.

Puerta (2016) describes pedagogical accompaniment as an intentional educational action based on closeness and the willingness to influence and be influenced by others, with the aim of enhancing their capabilities. In this process, the teacher acts as a mediator between the content and the constructive activity of the students. The teacher's attitude is crucial, since it influences the interaction with the student and academic performance.

Pedagogical accompaniment is characterized by being carried out within the classroom or during extracurricular hours, and can be individual or group, whose main purpose is to reinforce skills and abilities, promote optimal academic performance and stimulate the acquisition of skills with performance criteria. Among its functions are meeting the needs of students, developing academic strategies and implementing curricular adaptations.

The pedagogical support process includes observing and detecting educational needs, diagnosing and prioritizing, planning activities and strategies, establishing objectives and goals, and carrying out continuous evaluations. Two main types of support can be distinguished: external or managerial (which includes the relationship between mentor teacher and novice or classroom teacher) and internal or pedagogical (which covers the teacher-student and student tutor-student relationship).

In this context, the Organic Law of Intercultural Education of Ecuador (2015) reinforces the importance of these practices by highlighting the need for academic reinforcement, especially in situations where the student presents poor performance. This law establishes that academic reinforcement processes must be immediately implemented when continuous evaluation determines low results in the learning processes, which is aligned with the objectives and functions of pedagogical support mentioned above.

The pedagogical criteria that must be considered include the beneficiaries (mainly the students), the setting (which can be inside the classroom, outside the classroom, at home or in the support classroom) and the moments (before, during and after a teaching unit). In this way, pedagogical support seeks to improve the academic performance of students, adapting to their individual needs and promoting meaningful learning.

To better understand pedagogical support regarding the performance of students in a state of vulnerability, it is important to delve deeper into the second variable. Performance, according to the Royal Spanish Academy (2019), is defined as the act of fulfilling an obligation or activity, exercising the responsibilities inherent to a profession, position or trade. In the educational context, performance focuses on the actions that the student performs during the acquisition of skills.

Vargas (2017) considers performance in this academic case as the set of competencies that the student acquires through the assimilation of learning, which are demonstrated in their development and when they are evaluated through instruments that provide qualitative and quantitative results. It is important to distinguish between performance and academic achievement: performance refers to the learning process, while achievement is the result of this process.

Academic performance is characterized by being dynamic and static at the same time (Vargas, 2017). The dynamic part depends on the personality and attitude of the students, while the static part is subject to value judgments by the educational community. A good level of academic performance is reflected in the student's ability to apply what they have learned in their daily lives, solve problems strategically, and actively participate in and out of the classroom.

Ordoñez (2004), cited by the Ministry of Education (2011), highlights that academic performance is built from real contexts of daily life and different disciplines, depending on the stimuli of the environment and the student's level of assimilation. The objective is to promote comprehensive development that encompasses the pillars of education: knowing, knowing how to do in life and for life, knowing how to be, and knowing how to undertake.

Several types of academic performance are identified: individual, general, specific and social. Individual performance focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities. The general is based on the parameters established by the educational institution. The specific is developed in the student's immediate context, including their interpersonal relationships. Social performance is based on the influence of the student's environment on the acquisition of skills.

Regarding states of vulnerability, the Organic Law of Intercultural Education (2015) identifies several situations that can affect the academic performance of students. These include human mobility, sexual, physical and psychological violence, labor and economic exploitation, human trafficking and smuggling, begging, irregular migration, being minor offenders or children of people deprived of liberty, teenage pregnancy, addictions and special educational needs.

These situations of vulnerability can significantly impact students' academic performance. For example, the children of migrants face double vulnerability due to their age and immigration

status (International Organization for Migrants, 2016). Pregnant minors face risks such as out of school and poverty (Ministry of Education, 2017). Special educational needs, whether and not associated with a disability, require greater attention and preparation on the part of the teacher to guarantee adequate academic performance (Argüello, 2013).

In conclusion, it is highlighted that the performance of students in a state of vulnerability is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence their learning process and academic development. It is crucial that educational institutions and teachers are prepared to address these situations and provide the necessary support to ensure optimal academic performance in all students, regardless of their vulnerable status.

2. Methodology

The methodology used in this research about pedagogical support and its impact on the performance of vulnerable students was a mixed approach, using quantitative and qualitative methods in combination. The study design was non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014).

The work field was the Basic Education Center No. 18 “Abdón Calderón” with a population of 285 participants, including 271 students, 13 teachers and 1 director. Analysis-synthesis and inductive-deductive methods were systematically applied to examine the variables and construct an overview of the problem.

The techniques used for data collection were surveys, with closed-ended questionnaires for teachers with 10 items and students with 9 items; structured open interview with the director of the institution; and documentary analysis, reviewing cases of students with special educational needs. To validate the instrument, descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the quantitative data with the help of SPSS and content analysis for the qualitative data with the help of Atlas.ti, using methodological triangulation. The instruments used in the research were validated with pilot testing and expert judgment as suggested (Denzin, 1970; Escobar-Pérez & Cuervo-Martínez, 2008). Ethical aspects involve informed consent and data confidentiality. The selected methodological approach allowed the comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon, using different and varied sources of information and perspectives.

3. Results and discussion

The results presented below show the perceptions of the teachers and students who participated, in such a way that the relevance of teacher training, the use of appropriate strategies and pedagogical support are once again emphasized, determining elements that influence in motivation and in improving academic performance, especially in those cases that are in vulnerable situations.

Table 1: Pedagogical Support and Performance of Vulnerable Students

Indicator	Totally agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Totally disagree	Total
Accompaniment and academic progress	62% (8)	38% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (13)
Preference for individual support over group support	92% (12)	0% (0)	8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (13)
Accompaniment for vulnerable students	62% (8)	38% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (13)
Need for support	31% (4)	46% (6)	15% (2)	8% (1)	0% (0)	100% (13)
Knowledge of strategies for vulnerable students	0% (0)	54% (7)	23% (3)	8% (1)	15% (2)	100% (13)
Manual improves classes and teaching-learning	54% (7)	46% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (13)

Source: Basic Education Center No. 18 “Abdón Calderón”

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Table 2: Student perception; support and performance.

Indicator	Totally agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Totally disagree	Total
Clearly presents the topic and resolves the student’s doubts during class	51% (142)	34% (91)	9% (23)	4% (11)	5% (13)	100% (271)
Accompaniment and collaborative activities in class	40% (109)	27% (73)	20% (55)	6% (17)	6% (17)	100% (271)
Importance of attending hours of pedagogical accompaniment	67% (182)	15% (42)	8% (23)	1% (3)	8% (21)	100% (271)
Teamwork generates interest in the learning process	44% (119)	28% (76)	14% (38)	10% (27)	4% (11)	100% (271)
Use of stimuli and pedagogical strategies by the teacher	42% (113)	31% (83)	14% (39)	8% (22)	5% (14)	100% (271)
Strategies for students with difficulties	24% (64)	31% (83)	19% (53)	14% (37)	12% (34)	100% (271)
Need for teacher training in pedagogical strategies	56% (151)	32% (88)	5% (13)	4% (11)	3% (8)	100% (271)

Source: Basic Education Center No. 18 “Abdón Calderón”

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The findings found in this research reveal significant aspects about the relationship between orientation in obtaining skills that students in vulnerable situations have not achieved. The analysis of the perceptions, of both teachers and students and the director of the institution allows to establish several relevant points of discussion.

Firstly, a high level of consensus is evident among teachers regarding the importance of pedagogical support, with 100% (adding "totally agree" and "agree") recognizing its positive impact on academic progress. This finding aligns with what was proposed by Puerta Gil (2016), who emphasizes the role of accompaniment as an intentional educational action that enhances the abilities of students.

A particularly relevant piece of information is the marked preference of teachers for individual accompaniment over group support (92% totally agree), which suggests a recognition of the need for personalized attention, especially in cases of vulnerability. This preference corresponds to the approaches of Rogers' (1961) humanistic psychology, which emphasizes the importance of establishing an environment that facilitates the student's individual development.

However, significant gaps are identified in teacher preparation to serve vulnerable students. Only 54% of teachers indicate that they "agree" regarding their knowledge of specific strategies for these cases, while a worrying 23% are indifferent and 23% disagree or totally disagree. This situation reflects the problem pointed out by Antamba (2015) about the lack of pedagogical preparation in the Ecuadorian educational system and even more so in the direction of comprehensive support.

From the student perspective, the results show a positive assessment of pedagogical accompaniment, with 82% (totally agree and agree) recognizing the importance of the hours of accompaniment. However, only 55% indicate that specific strategies are implemented for students with difficulties, suggesting a gap between the recognized need and the effective implementation of support measures.

It is significant that 88% of students consider greater teacher training in pedagogical strategies necessary. This data, combined with the teacher's perception of their own knowledge of strategies, indicates a critical area for improvement in professional training, aligning with what was proposed by Calvopiña and Toala (2016) about the need for constant updating of teachers.

Collaborative activities and teamwork show moderately positive results (67% and 72% approval respectively), suggesting that these strategies are valued, but could be strengthened, especially considering Vygotsky's sociocultural theory on the priority of interaction in training. cultural.

Collaborative activities and teamwork show moderately positive results (67% and 72% approval respectively), suggesting that these strategies are valued, but could be strengthened, especially considering Vygotsky's sociocultural theory on the priority of interaction in training. cultural.

These results indicate that, although the importance of pedagogical support is widely recognized, significant challenges persist in its effective implementation, particularly

regarding the concern of students in vulnerable situations. The gap between awareness of this need and current capacity to address it points to an urgent need to improve teacher training on specific strategies in supporting vulnerable groups.

It includes developing resources and pedagogical tools that support teaching work in these contexts, implementing systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of pedagogical support, and promoting spaces for sharing experiences and those practices that give good results. These measures could contribute to closing the gaps identified and improving the effectiveness of pedagogical support as a tool for the academic development of students in vulnerable situations.

The theoretical framework reinforces the importance of pedagogical support as an educational practice that, in addition to academic aspects, must address the emotional needs of students. This comprehensive approach is essential for students in a state of vulnerability, who require not only guidance in their learning process, but also affective and emotional support that allows them to overcome external barriers that affect their performance.

Finally, both teachers and students recognize the importance of pedagogical support, but they also reveal an urgent need for training so that teachers can implement effective strategies consistently. 56% of students consider that teachers need more training in pedagogical strategies, which underlines the importance of investing in continuous training, as proposed by constructivist theory and current educational legislation.

4. Conclusion

In summary, the triangulation of the results with the theoretical framework demonstrates that pedagogical support, based on constructivist and humanist principles, is a powerful tool to improve the academic performance of vulnerable students. However, for this process to be effective, it is essential that teachers receive continuous and specialized training, as suggested by the theories of Vygotsky, Piaget, Rogers and Maslow, as well as Ecuadorian educational regulations.

The pedagogical approach must be individualized and adaptive, recognizing the cognitive and emotional needs of students. The cases of students with learning difficulties and emotional problems documented in the institution highlight the urgency of implementing specific and personalized support strategies that allow these students to progress both academically and emotionally.

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