



FAMILY BELIEFS AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: TOWARDS A COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

CREENCIAS FAMILIARES Y RENDIMIENTO ESCOLAR: HACIA UNA REESTRUCTURACIÓN COGNITIVA

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ABSTRACT:

Education throughout history has been part of the development of society. Every human being begins this path at birth and being part of the primary social group called the family, where stories that are internalized and probably modified or strengthened with subsequent social relations are attributed. This research seeks to determine the impact of family beliefs on the school development of students who are part of various Catholic educational communities of the canton Manta; through a qualitative and quantitative study that allowed to know the opinions of a finite population of 327 parents or legal representatives who together with the bibliographic review clarified the idea of generating changes in action; because, these thoughts or beliefs are in constant connection with the processes posed by Catholic centers whose goal is to provide educational services for children and adolescents. Because of this situation, it is analyzed to consolidate the relationships between the members of the educational community through the implementation of projects that motivate their interaction, with methodologies such as those proposed by Learning Communities.

Keywords: Cognitive Restructuring, Beliefs, Family, Learning.

RESUMEN:

La educación a lo largo de la historia ha formado parte del desarrollo de la sociedad. Todo ser humano, inicia este camino en el nacimiento y al formar parte del grupo social primario denominado familia, donde se atribuyen historias que son interiorizadas y probablemente modificadas o fortalecidas con las posteriores relaciones sociales. La presente investigación busca determinar la incidencia de las creencias familiares en el desarrollo escolar de los estudiantes que forman parte de diversas comunidades educativas católicas del cantón Manta; a través de un estudio cualitativo y cuantitativo que permitió conocer las opiniones de una población finita de 327 padres de familia o representantes legales que junto a la revisión bibliográfica esclarecieron la idea de generar cambios de actuación; debido a que, estos pensamientos o creencias están en constante relación con los procesos que plantean los centros católicos cuyo objetivo es ofrecer servicios educativos para niños, niñas y adolescentes. Por tal situación, se analiza consolidar las relaciones entre los miembros de la comunidad educativa a través, de la implementación de proyectos que motiven su interacción, con metodologías como las que propone Comunidades de Aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Reestructuración cognitiva, Creencias, Familia, Aprendizaje.





1. INTRODUCTION

Education can become a complex area of study based on the factors that influence it and essentially because it is the space where social interaction is facilitated; this attributes to it situations of resistance or conflict about which not much is mentioned, and there are the beliefs or family thoughts that instead of adding positive aspects, create discomfort in the educational community and, they need to be explored in depth to give necessary signs to the processes that are involved in it.

Several topics of investigative interest circulate around education and on this occasion, it has been looked to understand the role of family beliefs in the results that are achieved within the educational processes. To do this, the study of cognitive restructuring is included, as a basis of the beliefs or thoughts that direct the life of the human being. Starting from this premise, social imaginaries are emphasized as the set of material and political significations that allow the configuration and practical sense of society (Gómez, 2019). With this, the relevance of the path built under the diverse modes of social interaction and its influence on later thoughts and behaviors is denoted.

This formative base in values, ethical and moral principles with emotional brushstrokes imparted by the families make learning an experience desirable or not to be remembered. For this reason, education is located as a social phenomenon that is conferred to parents and teachers, who together with relevant organizations must respect and ensure its implementation (Castillo, Paredes, & Bou, 2016).

Currently and in Ecuador, there are several organisms responsible for ensuring the integral wellbeing of children and adolescents, an issue that should be led by the family, and followed by Educational Institutions, Education Districts, Cantonal Boards, and the Public Prosecutor's Office, under the support of government laws that protect the processes of protection.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the UN is reaffirmed in the educational proposal declared in the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, Section Five, Article 27, where it is mentioned that education must be centered in the framework of respect for human rights, which promotes gender equality, justice, solidarity, and peace; stimulating the



development of competencies and capacities to create and work (Constitution of Ecuador, 2008).

On this basis, the formative actions of human beings should be regulated; however, family realities or experiences often contribute to the violation of these rights through manifestations that attempt against them and that can transcend in the division of the family nucleus and the constitutional educational proposal due to the fact in which the following questions are raised: Who educates the children, the State or the family?

This questioning can be posed in Ecuador's reality, from the conflict of guarantees in education as evidenced by the campaign "with my children do not interfere" with a posture of opposition to policies against discrimination in the educational space, which is problematic if it is considered that education should promote respect, freedom, justice, peace and strengthen the soft skills that provide the necessary tools to respond to the demands of coexistence.

Therefore, it becomes impossible to think about education without including the family as a primary social group: Family

coexistence will determine the modes of relationship and integration with other groups in which the individual is integrated (García & Cruz, 2018).

Therefore, it is understandable that the family plays a facilitating role of internal and external resources that leave traces in the development of each individual's life, generating identification marks that will be shared in the activities of daily life. Under this perspective, it is pointed out that "it is important to training social skills, as long as the cultural codes of the social groups are respected" (Chica, 2017).

By referring to a social group, each human component is included that constitutes the areas of development of the human being, such as the home, educational institutions, religious centers, and places of relaxation or entertainment that contribute to the relational practices that take place in daily life. In other words, the sum of these experiences will be those that print the molds of learning.

This invites us to look at education from the perspective of generational chains of exclusion, by analyzing together the links



present in the production and reproduction of life in society (Kaplan, 2018).

In the educational field, it is appropriate to base the value that it takes on the development of the community, which is clarified by recognizing that learning is the condition that allows the knowledge and transformation of the world through the creation of new concepts that contribute to life, science and technology (Chica, 2017).

Consequently, the path of learning implies, first of all, making decisions about what parents or legal representatives would consider as the best educational institution to place the trust and task of imparting the curricular/scientific knowledge to the children. This decision will depend on the educational proposal offered by the centers and in the case of particular institutions with a religious tinge "appears as the spiritual platform that supports and allows the resolution of problems of living, feeling, expressing and transforming life (Naranjo & Moncada, 2019).

Under any educational proposal the goal would be to achieve the expected learning which has its beginnings in the experiences with the environment and implies the

participation of the primary social environment: "the understanding in a constructivist learning is supported by the previous knowledge, which are personal mental representations very rooted in the beliefs, customs and behaviors" (Chica, 2017).

Therefore, education and family are deeply intertwined.

Thus, Symeou maintains that when there is greater participation by families in the education of their children, there will be greater interest in learning. As a result, the effectiveness of learning is built in an environment of trust where the sense of belonging, motivation, and security are increased and the methodological achievement of the educational-formative process is guaranteed (Maldonado, 2018).

On the other hand, it refers to the fact that the joint work of family and school contributes to the strengthening of emotions which bring positive changes in the lives of children, unlike those which would be achieved if each one worked separately (Oros & Richaud, 2017).

In accordance with these positions and the continuous search of educational



institutions to involve parents in the educational process of their children, projects are created to obtain the goal which turns out to be more and more difficult. Maldonado proposes: "Classroom families", whose objective is to make the family conscious of the importance of school activities and achievements, which students can obtain through the knowledge of their approach, execution and difficulties (Maldonado, 2018).

This proposal is related to what is currently offered by the country's Ministry of Education: "Learning Communities", a pilot program whose objective is to create greater commitment from the educational communities and to highlight solidarity, the ability to dream and work for the wanted institution through consensus that benefits those involved. Through this program, parents or relatives are invited to be an active part of the academic dynamics in which the methodology is evident and allows the reduction of the conflictive centers that are probably created from subjectivity or irrational ideas that give instability to social relations, making them aware of the actions of those who direct and shape the educational institution. From this reference,

it is spoken of the metacognition as a learning process that is born in the motivation because it involves the emotions that allow the self-knowledge and the decision-making (Chica, 2017).

Being aware of the acts, emotional aspects and considering that education is not an exclusive task of educational institutions, families are motivated to get involved in the pleasant and satisfactory job of educating. In this way, Pozo affirms that understanding learning based on previous knowledge leads to a cognitive restructuring or re-elaboration of mental representations (Chica, 2017).

This clarifies the possibility of changing the subjective realities of families, in relation to the functions they must develop in the process of educating their children, because these would be limiting their participation and preventing the appearance of results that benefit children and adolescents through the formation of a more democratic and just society that guarantees integration and social change.

To talk about it, Gonzalez and Lopez define "cognitive restructuring as a technique used to produce a significant change, in the different ways of thinking before any



situation that is presented to an individual" (Mejicanos, S. D., 2016).

This definition is combined with the idea of the cognitive restructuring process being based on the identification, questioning and replacement of irrational ideas by others that reduce the emotional or behavioral disturbance with the help of a mediator (Engel & Villarreal, 2018).

Thus, cognitive restructuring seeks the modification of thoughts or beliefs that are part of human responses to perceived stimuli. In this way, the dyad cognition-behavior is included; allowing that when modifying the first one, the other one would do it by consequence.

In this context, it has been considered to look for answers to the question: is the cognitive restructuring of the family necessary for the effectiveness of the educational processes in the religious schools of the city of Manta? this question is based on the demands of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador.

Accordingly, this research focuses on studying cognitive restructuring based on the identification of socio-cultural beliefs acquired and shared by parents, allowing to

show the influence of these beliefs on the educational proposals offered by Catholic education centers. In addition, this research will deepen theoretical knowledge to describe restructuring forms that benefit family functionality in educational processes and offer a comprehensive view on the importance of assertive interaction between those involved in this dynamic, helping to raise awareness of the local and national population. In this sense, the results become important in the creation of a work methodology that allows to modify the family responses in the necessary and pertinent processes to develop an education of quality and warmth, which aims at the integrality of the children.

The methodology corresponds to a mixed approach since it involves a bibliographic search and statistical data obtained through digital surveys; simultaneously, a descriptive and explanatory research line is determined to describe the characteristics of the population and to analyze the variables that influence the problem. The previously mentioned, leaves in evidence the applicability and viability of the research process, demonstrating in the results the effectiveness of making parents participate



in the educational processes as a form of cognitive restructuring, generating conclusions about the methodology and challenges that this involves.

2. METHODOLOGY

a) Methodological design

This research has been designed in relation to the statement of the problem as a direct route to the search for answers that contribute socially and scientifically to the community, marking investigative interests of a mixed type or triangulation between methods since it involves the bibliographic search of studies related to the topic presented, as part of a qualitative and quantitative methodology because it includes statistical data that allow us to know the beliefs or thoughts that come up in families with respect to school life, in order to respond the effectiveness that this marks in the academic development of students.

b) Research participants

The population responds to a cluster sampling because the study involves families from the Educational Units that are part of the Fedec, in the city of Manta. There are a total of 327 families.

c) Study area

The research is based on the study of the beliefs presented by families in relation to their actions in the educational process. For this reason, it is important to have the opinions of the parents or legal representatives of the students who attend these educational institutions; geographically located in the city of Manta in the province of Manabí, Ecuador, in order to obtain truthful information about the social reality of the population.

d) Employed techniques

The data collection is based on the application of a digital survey of multiple selection that is directed to the parents of the particular educational institutions that belong to FEDEC (Federation of Catholic Educational Establishments), located in the city of Manta, to collaborate with new and better contributions in pro of the well-being and academic success of the students. In addition, a bibliographic review was carried out to determine the state of the art of the matter.

Responses to the survey were collected through a Google web form and then analyzed by the SPSS program. The analyses



and results were transcribed directly into the article.

e) Statistical analysis

It is determined a descriptive and explanatory research type that seeks to describe characteristics of the population and to analyze the variables through the theoretical foundation of epistemological or philosophical concepts of the immersed topics. Among them, it involves the study of beliefs and modes of interpretation present in parents and the educational process, based on the knowledge transmission that gives the individual essential skills for social interaction and their vital development within a community.

3. RESULTS

The surveys applied show that 51% of the surveyed persons agreed with the active participation of parents in the students' pedagogical activities, 41% agreed totally, another 23% disagreed and 1% disagreed totally. However, 59.6% also mention that one of the obstacles to participating in their children's education is working time, another group gives it to: Parents' age (11.3%), Parents' educational level (10.4%),

Parenting patterns (3.4%), all of the above (10.7%) and None (4.6%). According to this, when asked about the time per week they could dedicate to the participation of activities organized by the educational institution, 26% responded that they have 1 hour, 21% (2 hours), 18% (3 hours), 23% (4 hours) and 11% (more than 5 hours). Likewise, 90% of them consider that both parents should take the important decisions of the family; also 89% of those surveyed said that both parents should be responsible for the school activities.

Table 1. Reasons to choose a Catholic education

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Friend referral	22	6,7%	6,7%	6,7%
Family Tradition	81	24,8%	24,8%	31,5%
Only option	40	12,2%	12,2%	43,7%
Education al proposal	69	21,1%	21,1%	64,8%
Value formation	115	35,2%	35,2%	100%
Total	327	100%	100%	

Source: Parents of the Catholic Educational Institutions of Manta, 2020.



In table number 1 it can be seen that 35.2% of the population surveyed considers that the choice for a Catholic education is due to the proposal of formation in values, followed by 24.8% who make it by family tradition, 21.1% by the educational proposal, 12.2% because it was the only option and 6.7% reference of friends.

To the above result, it must be added that 82% of the parents consider that the Catholic education meets higher standards than those that can be offered by an institution run by lay people, 41% indicate that the educational plan and process provided by the educational institution is Good, 31% that it is excellent, 24% that it is regular and 1% that it is bad.

Table 2. Academic success habits

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Orderly and disciplined routine	137	41,9%	41,9%	41,9%
Parent involvement in homework	98	30,0%	30,0%	71,9%

Parent/educational institution linkage	77	23,5%	23,5%	95,4%
Parents' educational level	14	4,3%	4,3%	99,7%
Parent's age	1	,3%	,3%	100%
Total	327	100%	100%	

Source: Parents of the Catholic Educational Institutions of Manta, 2020

Table 2 reflects that 41.9% of parents believe that academic success is achieved through habits that consist of an orderly and disciplined routine, 30% that it is attributed to parental involvement in the completion of school tasks, 23.5% that it is a result of the link between parents and educational institutions, another 4.3% that it is due to the educational level of the parents and 0.3% that it is leaning towards the age of the parents.

Table 3. Ideas about the role of teachers in education

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Values	117	35,8%	35,8%	35,8%
Scientific knowledge	158	48,3%	48,3%	84,1%



Religion	24	7,3%	7,3%	91,4%
Human rights	10	3,1%	3,1%	94,5%
Prevention of social risks	12	3,7%	3,7%	98,2%
Others	6	1,8%	1,8%	100%
Total	327	100%	100%	

Source: Parents of the Catholic Educational Institutions of Manta, 2020

Table 3 shows that 48.3% of those surveyed said that in education the role of teachers is to impart scientific knowledge, 35.8% to teach values, 7.3% to educate in religion, 3.7% to prevent social risks, 3.1% to teach human rights and 1.8% to teach others. Additionally, when asked about the statement "children and adolescents should be educated as citizens who promote, respect, and comply with the Constitution of Ecuador" 49% of those surveyed said they strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 11% disagreed, and 2% totally disagreed.

Table 4. Meaning values for families

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Solidarity	152	14,5 %	15,5 %	15,5 %
Respect for diversity	144	13,8 %	14,7 %	30,2 %

Responsibility	228	21,8 %	23,2 %	53,4 %
Trust	138	13,2 %	14,1 %	67,5 %
Honesty	151	14,4 %	15,4 %	82,9 %
Gratitude	69	6,6%	7,0%	89,9 %
Will	30	2,9%	3,1%	93,0 %
Optimism	39	3,7%	4,0%	96,9 %
Patience	30	2,9%	3,1%	100%
Total	981	93,7 %	100%	

Source: Parents of the Catholic Educational Institutions of Manta, 2020

In table number 4 it is visible that, in families, the value of responsibility predominates in 23.2%, solidarity in 15.5%, honesty in 15.4%, respect for diversity in 14.7%, trust in 14.1%, gratitude in 7%, will in 4%, optimism in 3.1% and patience in the remaining 3.1%.

4. DISCUSSION

The investigative purpose is to determine the influence of family beliefs in the school development of students, whose intentionality has been evidenced in the positions or ideas shared by a total of 327 parents, leading to question the actions of each actor that makes possible the fact of



educating. Several are the authors who in their studies refer to the combined work that should exist between the school and the family, and this path begins with the preliminary choice of the educational institution, a decision based on several ideas acquired from the social circle to which they belong. As the population surveyed represents the parents of the Catholic educational institutions in the city of Manta, they consider that the decision for this type of education is established by the proposal of formation in values that these institutions promote, however, the idea of continuing with the family tradition is evident, giving value to the educational proposal from which probably strengthens the thought that Catholic education reaches higher standards compared to institutions that are run by lay people. From these positions could be questioned not only the differences between fiscal and private education, but also the variations and objectives of the curriculum and traditions between Catholic, Christian, evangelical and lay religious centers. In this process it is also fundamental to consider those habits that allow positive academic results by the students, where an orderly and disciplined routine must prevail,

that has schedules of specific activities that facilitate the fulfillment of the responsibilities, the participation of the parents in the accomplishment of the school tasks and the assertive entailment of them with the educational institutions allowing consolidated relations that invite to work directed to a common aim and under the premise to maintain an active and assertive communication that assures this success. These thoughts and actions lead us to think that whatever the option to achieve academic success, family participation is not excluded because it is the center or educational base of the children. This argument sounds encouraging as a way of reducing the learning difficulties that may be presented, but the social reality shows us that this participation is limited and often null due to the workload that must be respected to cover the basic needs of family members. Therefore, it is important to define what would be the appropriate challenges and plans for which society should work and demand their analysis from the corresponding Ministries so that the rights of human well-being are evaluated and considered.



As mentioned, education includes several actors as responsible actors; for this reason, the family, in spite of entrusting the education of the children to Catholic institutions, does not expect the teachers to train in religion but in scientific knowledge. Making it clear that the formation in values must be led by the family and this argument is contradictory because the majority opts for this type of education due to the proposal of formation in values, probably because society perceives the loss of them. However, with respect to human rights education, it is a topic that deserves much analysis because, despite agreeing with it, in everyday life and under the experience of working with parents and students, resistance to certain themes can be noted. Another detail that stands out is the idea that the task is not exclusive to mom or dad, on the contrary, it belongs to both parents, who together must make decisions for and to ensure family wellness, a situation that is questionable because through observation it denotes the participatory leadership that mothers adopt in the activities planned by the educational institutions (meetings to deliver reports, Olympics, competitions, cultural weeks, etc).

Within this line of education in values and rights, it is interesting to analyze that the most representative value for families is the responsibility that can be related to the idea of having "perfect children", who are not wrong, who are productive and who meet the social demands imposed, without considering the sense of freedom in making decisions about what they want and closing the possibility of learning under the dynamics of trial and error.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The bibliographic analysis and the results of the surveys have made it possible to clarify the theory established in this research process, where it is alleged that family beliefs influence the process or activities proposed by the educational institutions. For this reason, the proposal of family cognitive restructuring is an interesting invitation to involve the community in decision-making, which is an important position in any process that is designed. This issue would begin with the evocation of feelings and interiorization of realities of all actors involved in education, through the implementation of projects such as families in classrooms and learning communities, combining the



observance of ministerial and constitutional guidelines that guarantee the responsibility and fulfillment of citizens' rights for the formation of integral human beings.

Given the answers, there is a family consideration that the accompaniment of parents during school activities generates academic success in students, which is transcribed in that there will be acceptance and participation in inviting them to be part of this process; however, the workload is presented as a limitation for this.

In addition, the cognitive restructuring approach is shown as a possibility to introduce values that are relegated by families and that are fundamental in strengthening the skills that promote just beings under human and/or legal precepts.

This approach is a complex process, whoever considers applying it must start from an internal work and then replicate it in the community, in order to obtain an objective look, without prejudices and labels that allow to understand the past, history and social roles that accompany each human being. The above mentioned, leads to rethink and propose a different approach to education, prioritizing family formation to

generate significant changes in children and adolescents where there is the intervention of professionals in the social area that, making use of participant observation, psychological interviews, student surveys, suggestion boxes, etc., achieve to mediate and accompany the process.

It is important to reaffirm the importance of educational institutions having adequate spaces to provide active listening and feedback of family and school processes so they can jointly create improvement plans that will contribute not only to the evolutionary development of students, but also help the institution to lower the percentage of conflicting events.

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