

Pedagogical Environments, A Bet on the Construction of Knowledge in Initial Education

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Abstract

This research reports on the analysis of the understanding of the early childhood teachers of the Hogar Infantil Muchachitos in the city of Cali about the pedagogical environments in early education, where the value they attach to them in the construction of children's knowledge is investigated. The research was of a mixed nature, using various tools for data collection, such as a survey using a Likert scale, a semi-structured interview, and a non-participant observation form. The results allowed the identification of the value given to the pedagogical environments, achieving a deconstruction from the discourse analyzed by the information provided by the teachers, where similarities and contradictions are identified from the contributions offered by the new school for the understanding of the environments with pedagogies such as Reggio Emilia, Montessori, among others. The conceptualization of the following variables, pedagogical environments, arrangement of materials in the classroom and construction of knowledge, was also achieved.

Keywords: *Pedagogical environments, provision of materials, construction of knowledge and new school.*

INTRODUCTION

This introduction will address studies that highlight the importance of pedagogical environments in the face of the learning processes that are developed in initial education, reviewing research at the international, national and regional levels, providing the place it deserves in the educational processes of early childhood, being a topic in vogue the proposals that the arrival of the new school has generated, which establishes a preponderant place to pedagogical environments from initial education.

As a starting point, the importance that pedagogical environments have gained currently, in relation to their implementation, is addressed, because many studies sought to highlight how they have been a pillar for the significant learning of the child. In this sense, the study carried out by Lázaro (2015) states that "the environment is a reflection of what children can become by themselves, since it will allow each child to discover themselves as a person" (p.16). This contribution allows us to understand and guide the importance of pedagogical environments on the skills that children can develop in their daily interactions with available materials, so as to stimulate logical thinking, creativity, the

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ability to experiment among others; therefore, it is imperative to understand that learning environments are open systems that accept experimentation and manipulation so that it contributes to the student's capacity for autonomy and training in processes of understanding and cognitive development (Lázaro, 2015). This shows the influence that pedagogical environments have in relation to the processes of construction of significant knowledge that the child weaves through his interactions with the materials arranged in the environments oriented by the teachers.

Other studies propose a look at enriched and diverse environments for early childhood, where they provide tools to teachers and establish the transformation of the curriculum, because these aspects are fundamental to reflect on the educational purposes provided to children, in addition to the pedagogical responsibility that teachers have in having environments of active interaction that promote learning, as stated by García (2014) when he states that:

Curriculum and learning content refers to educational purposes; It is planned from the child's learning process, which the educator discusses, reflects and makes decisions to address a certain content and not another. (p.35)

Also, the United Nations Fund for Early Childhood (UNICEF) has made different contributions to the transformation of the curriculum, thought from the particularities of the territories as highlighted by Moss (as cited in UNICEF, 2020), when he states that from the processes at the international level they are in a commitment to propose a curriculum and flexible pedagogical approaches, that can be adjusted to the different realities of the context, and not follow in an educational scheme that is understood from the hegemonic discourses. Therefore, it is between said that from the institutionality it is necessary to think about this curricular transformation and from which to make pedagogical of the teachers, reflect environment on their role in the disposition of the environments in the initial education.

Establishing that, initial education teachers contain the responsibility to reflect on the provision in the classroom of intentional materials to generate or promote meaningful learning in children, they must be aware that these scenarios must be intentional, as provided by the research carried out by Vargas (2018) mentioning that "so that teachers must reflect on the social and cognitive function that these materials fulfill in the life of the infant" (p.11).

In this way, the important place that pedagogical environments keep is configured and highlighting the role played by teachers as they are the ones who have the responsibility to tend them objectively in educational processes, in this sense, they must understand the functionality of these to understand, why should teachers address them in their teaching processes?, which, leads the conception and intention as a fundamental implication of pedagogical environments, which must be recognized to set learning goals, taking into account that cognitive demand as well as cultural aspects, must be tools of teachers and therefore have it according to the development of children (Otalora, 2010).

For this reason, it was essential to contextualize the pedagogical environments and their relationship in the curricular processes, since they are directly correlated, as exposed by Gamboa and Sandoval (2013) the curricular scenarios are the organization of the training activities and the teaching-learning process, which involve the pedagogical strategies, which lead to the didactic strategies and these are transferred to the design of environments for learning or construction. of knowledge. These scenarios must be guaranteed in their design by the teachers, who must organize and accompany the learning process in the child.

In this order of ideas, the connection between pedagogical environments and curricular processes is recognized, since the latter facilitates reflection to think about the transformations that the techniques of setting have been developing, but that have not

achieved the positioning of a quality in the initial education of children from zero to six years. For this reason, the curriculum becomes the main source to keep in mind in the improvement of the pedagogical environment, because, as García (2014) points out, "the learning environment is based on the processes and specific characteristics of the group, as well as on the nature of the contents and processes required for learning. It is designed with conditions that positively impact their learning process" (p.32).

In this way, at the national level, organizations such as the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) recognize that enriched scenarios are a fundamental basis for integral development in early childhood, a process that had its beginnings with the arrival of self-structuring models, as presented by Peralta and Fujimoto (1998) in the face of the reception that was evidenced by Froebel's theories and his curriculum proposal. which were adopted in the countries of Latin America and of course in Colombia, this being fundamental, because it brought with it a pedagogical look at the intervention of children, where attention is transferred under the hygienist model reduced to the actions of care, health and nutrition to turn it into a pedagogical process. Years later, Law 1804 (2016) is established, instituting the State Policy for the Integral Development of Early Childhood from Zero to Always, guaranteeing integrality and quality in initial education, where the construction of the pedagogical project is prioritized, attributing great importance to the creation of enriched environments, as expressed by Pineda et al. (2015) in their research when they point out that "from the pedagogical project it is sought to enrich the environments of child development that is integrated into family and community life" (p.269).

Therefore, it is observed from the curricular and pedagogical proposal the realization of a commitment in the transformation of spaces that contribute to significant learning and the recognition of the importance of initial education scenarios. But it is important to point out why there are shortcomings in these processes when they are measured, as highlighted by Ordoñez et al. (2020) in their study carried out during the years 2017 to 2018, on the quality of initial education services, where pedagogical environments were valued on a scale of 4 (High) to 1 (Low), evidencing low levels of quality with scores of one which reflects that the classrooms do not present pedagogical processes or understanding of the natural world, among other actions that contribute to cognitive development that allow the development of logical thinking and scientific exploration.

In the research of Valverde (2015) in Chile he found that the measurements of quality in early childhood, that is, in initial education also the affected variables were related to the environments, as he highlights, "the focus would be focused on learning and, therefore, the variables linked to the environment reviewed in this paper would reveal, among others, ways to seek quality improvement" (p. 149). This suggests that, at the time of reviewing the environments, the need to improve them was manifested to focus quality on learning, which suggests that learning and environments are closely related to the improvement of quality in initial education. For this reason, the importance of the pedagogical setting from the curricular processes for early childhood must be kept in mind.

While it is true that the curriculum seeks to create changes in the contents to address the learning processes in a better way, it is also true that it is governed by a scheme that has been determined for the approach of initial education in Colombia. The document that has determined this is called The Curricular Bases which gave the technical lines to develop the pedagogical processes and is not constantly updated, this could be generating that, apparently it is flexible but intrinsically manages rigidity by the guidelines it contains, turning it into a hegemonic discourse, as presented by Quiceno (2019), When it expresses that if it is observed well, it is crossed by technicalities and thought from linear processes that since its inception has been based on a first document as a fundamental axis to establish the curriculum and pedagogy. These technicalities can affect the progress of transformation processes and improvements, such as deepening the importance of

pedagogical environments that have proven to be favorable in the development of children, as Urrea (2014) provides when he states that "a special mention has been found on the value of autonomy in the development of possible learning environments favorable to the development of children, where it refers to the influence of the teacher on the autonomy of children" (p.19).

On the other hand, it is important to highlight the guidelines established by the Ministry of National Education (Mineducación, 2014) such as *The Sense of Initial Education* built in 2014 that in its good sense, seeks the offer of a high educational quality, which without wishing to fall into indications, have neglected key elements such as, thinking about the provision of a flexible curriculum that invites research and experiential training processes that encourage pedagogical reflections in teachers of initial education, because these processes become a substantial part in the activities to improve educational quality as expressed by Zubiría (2015) when he argues that "without continuous and permanent training of teachers, without research and without external advice, no institution can be required to comply with the improvement plan. This does not even lead to competition, much less excellence" (p.27).

Based on the ideas exposed, Carvajal and Díaz (2016) who affirm that

It seeks to recognize the importance of receiving a quality education in the development of human beings and much more when that education is provided from the earliest years, when the child is in a process of exploration of the world, when everything that surrounds them can be a new learning and where the environment and people can be decisive favorers in their conception of life, relationships and learning. (p.55)

This reaffirms that teachers of initial education must be prepared for the offer of spaces where meaningful learning is the pillar in a quality education, therefore, the environment becomes a fundamental axis in these processes of improvement of educational quality, as highlighted by Cortés and García (2017)

The environment is considered as a tool that the teacher can make use to promote learning, it is an important factor when carrying out a teaching-learning process, so teachers must favor a space where the student through observation and the natural environment significantly affects the daily work of learning. (p.4)

Other documents from the Ministry of Education (2018) strengthen the value of pedagogical environments and their disposition on stage, seeing them as "a facilitator of new discoveries, ideas, knowledge, experiences and interactions that are not reduced only to the dimensions of a room" (p. 7). This is how it emphasizes that the quality in initial education must be accompanied by a comprehensive process that addresses factors such as the pedagogical environment, teacher training and training, continuous improvement of pedagogical projects and maintenance of a flexible curriculum, which is susceptible to transformation and change from the dynamics that arise in initial education. It should be noted that this can be configured assertively if there is a faculty prepared for the different actions, as Córdoba and Arrieta (2017) contribute when they state that "likewise, promote enriched environments for learning, and above all prepare teachers on the different forms of pedagogical action, the characteristics of development in initial and later stages and on the training processes developed with children" (p. 162). In this way, the contributions made by the different authors in their research have established the close relationship of environments and quality in initial education.

Other authors contribute and highlight, as the pedagogical environments designed for childhood are configuring reflective pedagogical scenarios, where the child has the freedom to think about his actions and emotions, the interactions and relationships he weaves with others, as Díaz and Vargas (2019) contribute when they point out that "in this environment it is generated to be aware of the confluence of all beings, It reflects on emotions, thinking, acting in relation to oneself and others in the daily life of learning

environments" (p. 91). This dialogue clarifies that the pedagogical spaces do not only affect the provision of physical materials in a harmonious and intentional way, but it is also a fabric of relationships that involve the child perceiving, feeling, smelling and observing the world around him, and that, in the hands of the teachers is generating significant learning and an integral education through these scenarios.

For this reason, initial education gains strength in the study of pedagogical environments, because it allows such interactions with the world, with others and with everything that surrounds the child, which promotes autonomous learning and discovery as these interactions are woven, it is there, where it can be established that significant learning occurs as provided by Balaguer et al. (2019) when it says that "learning by discovery should be the axis of teaching. Heuristics are key to his pedagogy: The personal experience of discovery is imperative for meaningful learning" (p. 53). This perspective indicates that the teacher plays an important role as a mediator, since he is the one who has environments, experiences, interactions, among others, so that the child builds his knowledge in a meaningful way. The same authors comment that educators provide the indispensable platform for the student to build knowledge, however, the teacher must take into account the progress of the students by contributing and withdrawing material according to the requirements, so that the teaching-learning process is effective according to their development (Balaguer et al, 2019).

Consequently, the task of teachers can be highlighted and dignified, as they are mediators of children's learning, who must overcome challenges such as leaving aside the teaching that is transmitted to turn it into a construction of the child autonomously and where he is the protagonist, as Balaguer et al (2019) points out when he expresses the words of Bruner "the child as the protagonist of the learning process. Education should not be based on the transmission of knowledge, but on helping the child to discover and build; to integrate and relate concepts based on their own experience" (p. 58). Here come the characteristics contained in the traditional school, where many teachers continue to reproduce schemes such as the transmission of knowledge, however, the pedagogical environments are shaped from the perspective of the new school, which seeks meaningful learning through enriched environments contributing to the work of teachers against breaking the schemes of said traditional school, because it reproduces logics such as the transmission of knowledge as stated by Espíndola and Granillo (2021) when it states that

The traditional school, the teacher transmits knowledge unilaterally, so it does not necessarily lead to learning, issues around short and long-term memory were reinforced, but in most cases, the student did not achieve significant learning. (p. 31)

The foregoing allows us to say that, currently, significant progress has been made in the face of learning processes in initial education, however, there are many challenges in the face of curricular and pedagogical transformations that make it possible to think from a multidimensional perspective the pedagogical environments, this with the consequent purpose of betting on an educational quality from the beginning promulgated by the UNICEF contributed from Hartwig (2020) when they state that, "Ensure that children in diverse learning environments have a curriculum and have access to materials that stimulate their development and respond to their individual and cultural characteristics" (p. 10). In this way, it can be stated that it is a responsibility from initial education, to continue betting on an evolution of pedagogical environments, which seek to enhance the social, physical, cognitive, affective development of the child, making it necessary for education to become and promote pedagogical practice, providing students with elements that stimulate the development of life skills (Caballero and García, 2020).

Finally, the research presented allows the establishment of pedagogical environments from a comprehensive and reflective perspective, which contributes significantly to the quality of initial education, leaving aside all traditional forms of learning.

Theoretical foundation

The different conceptualizations are presented, which allowed to give clarity of the horizon of the investigation, in this sense, the following concepts were landed; Traditional school versus new school, pedagogical environments and knowledge construction. However, it was considered important for the purposes of the research to start with a brief outline on the traditional school versus new school, because this allows the analysis of how the notion of knowledge construction has changed and the importance of pedagogical environments is rescued.

Traditional school versus new school.

Based on these concepts, it is important to observe the transformation that the traditional school has had when implementing another look such as the new school, in front of the dynamics inside the pedagogical spaces. For this, it is important to expose that, the traditional school is conceived as a place that acquires knowledge, as provided by the authors (Cirigliano and Villaverde, as cited in Díaz, 2017) where they state that "it is seen as the universal place to acquire knowledge, it is a controlled and rigid space, where students are constantly monitored. The groups are classified by age and sex" (p.55). This vision of the traditional school has been a paradigm that prevails today despite the changes that have emerged in different contexts. For the line is still drawn from the student as a receiver of knowledge and the teacher as a transmitter of encyclopedic content accumulated for centuries (Díaz, 2017).

Therefore, this envisions the traditional school as the place where there is no talk of knowledge construction from rescuing the interests and particularities of each child, but of the transmission of knowledge that the teacher has to offer. However, the new school enters with fundamental contributions in the learning processes, providing a humanized view of teaching, taking into account the interests and abilities of children, that is, it becomes a pleasant environment, recognizing the child as a subject of rights and interests, the school becomes a space for play and participation. (Zubiría, 2008). All this becomes a fundamental element that invigorates the idea of empowerment of the child in his or her learning process, as explained (Jiménez, 2009 as cited in Lázaro, 2015) "it is conceived that the child has the ability to educate himself; For this reason, the New School privileges experimentation, workshop, spontaneous activity; The teacher is only a mediator in the pedagogical process" (p. 50).

Pedagogical environments.

To address the present concept it is necessary to start from the definition that the Reggio Emilia pedagogy since its consolidation in 1994 has conceived within its experience, where it attributes the environment as the third teacher, as shown by Correa and Estrella (2011) when they point out that "the environment is the third teacher, it is an expression used by the teachers of the schools of Reggio, The environment supports the work and interests of children without the need for guidance or the constant intervention of adults" (p. 18), this highlights the importance of pedagogical environments in the construction of children's knowledge.

Therefore, to glimpse the environment as a potentiator of knowledge, is to rescue the meaning that it must have in front of the disposition of the material, to the dynamics and interactions that arise in the space where ideas, attitudes and people are reflected, as stated by Malaguzzi as quoted in Herrero (2013) "the Infant classroom should be a kind of transparent aquarium where ideas will be reflected, attitudes and people" (p.13), because the environment appears as a seductive sensitive to the gaze of curious eyes that seek to learn and experience their ideas.

In this field, Froebel made significant contributions to the provision of materials in early childhood education highlighting the importance of play and teaching materials, which were called by him gifts or gifts as Díaz (2017) provides when he presents that "Froebel

in addition to his Kindergarden, devised didactic materials, where he focused children's attention on play as the main methodological procedure, creating specific materials in order to transmit knowledge, which he calls "gifts" (p.117).

In addition to contributing to the importance of creating teaching materials, he also highlighted the value of the child having a natural environment in his school, where he will express himself freely, with a balanced love in relation to things and people, right with his age and growth (Díaz, 2017). The contribution made by Froebel bases the interactions that can occur in environments, in similarity to the materials that are available in it, especially the relationships that the child weaves with others, reaching the point where the environment remains a substantial element for the development of children's abilities and skills at a social and cognitive level.

As already mentioned above, the environment is rescued as a provocateur and potentiator of skills that are fundamental in learning processes, as also provided by the Montessori model, this highlights Zúñiga (1998) that "is flexible and fundamentally consists of the environment (materials and pedagogical exercises) and the teachers who prepare it. This environment is characterized by: freedom, structure, order, beauty, emphasis on nature and reality" (p. 30). This view allows us to conceive the environment as a fundamental structure in the learning processes of children that incorporates key elements to arrange material in the different spaces of the classrooms, where teachers or educational agents are mediators in the preparation of these.

However, it is important to highlight that the concept of pedagogical environments covers a number of different connotations that have historically been topics of discussion in order to improve teaching-learning processes, as García (2014) exposes when he highlights a conglomerate of authors who have contributed to this concept throughout history.

If we look at the linguistic use of the term, we can find that there are as many concepts of environment as authors and historical periods are consulted, being subject to the conception of sensory physical elements (Husen and Postlethwaite, 1994), to an educational agent (Pablo and Trueba 1994), to an environment arranged by the teacher (Loughlin and Suina, 1994). to a place or space (González and Flores, 1999), to everything that surrounds man (Iglesias, 2008), to what is formed by the set of perceptions of a group (Villalobos 2006) and to a space of interactions and communication that give rise to learning (SEP, 2011). (p. 1)

Therefore, the look that directs this concept with this research is precise, giving clarity for its understanding. In this sense, Otorola (2010) addresses pedagogical learning environments as "

A knowledge construction scenario in which a teacher intentionally generates a set of activities and actions aimed at ensuring the achievement of a broad learning objective that is relevant to the development of competencies in one or more domains of knowledge. (p. 17)

In this order of ideas, the importance played by the teacher in the arrangement of these spaces can be considered, because they depend on whether they are intentional and that their objective points to the generation of knowledge in an autonomous and meaningful way for children.

Therefore, glimpsing the physical spaces enriched with knowledge, allows us to understand that it is a tool that invites, motivates and inspires children to project significant learning, which are mediated and accompanied by teachers, which does not allude to the decoration of the space, on the contrary, it is where they have the opportunity to appreciate the daily interactions with children, and also establishes the possibility for families and the community to visualize the processes developed within each environment, finding a direct connection with their context, that is, for the Schools

Reggio Emilia is an environment that goes beyond the simple arrangement of materials, it is where the child connects experiences and exchanges relationships with adults and everything surrounds (Correa and Estrella, 2011).

Construction of knowledge.

Faced with this concept, the author Molina (1994) provides that "the model of knowledge proposed by Piaget is based on the notion that knowledge is a phenomenon constructed by the human being when interacting with the environment" (p. 224), in this sense, the author gives a glimpse of how the construction of knowledge is linked to the interaction with the environment, where from it a whole world of meanings and learning that each child elaborates is woven, it is there where knowledge arises, as taught by Campos (2005) when he explains that "constructivism states that knowledge and learning are constructions that each subject elaborates. Its name refers to edification through experiences and reflections accumulated by each person" (p.131).

It is also significant to note that the interactions that occur in pedagogical environments result in the freedom to explore from the previous knowledge that children possess, as Zubiría (2014) explains when he points out the Ausubelian theory, "learning can be repetitive or significant depending on what is learned is arbitrarily or substantially related to the cognitive structure. We will thus speak of meaningful learning when new knowledge is clearly and stably linked to previous knowledge" (p. 166); it is something that the new school rescues and that is of great value for constructivist theory and self-structuring models, since it focuses on the construction of knowledge from these connections that will be decisive in terms of leaving aside repetitive learning and generating meaningful learning, and that, Ausubel points out (1983, as cited in Zubiría, 2014) "should be the essential intention of the school, the search for this meaningful learning" (p. 167). It should be noted that this search is mediated by the interests and needs that the child has built with his previous knowledge and that these are consolidated as he interacts with the environment, where it is highlighted that the objects or environments that allow the construction of knowledge is related to the pre knowledge of the child, which suggests that it will serve to the extent that they interact and relate their own knowledge according to their stage of development (Molina, 1994).

Therefore, the construction of knowledge frames a close and direct relationship between the individual and his interaction with the environment, since, from there, the child is the protagonist in the construction of their learning, as provided by Aranque (2012, as cited in Acevedo et al., 2018) "it is required that pedagogical experiences that tend towards integrality in child development be shared. In Colombia, the educational agents teachers are the people who interact with the child agency their development" (p. 29); consequently, they must ensure pedagogical environments that stimulate their skills and learning that lead to the autonomy and construction of critical subjects that develop decision-making and freedom of choice of life and fulfillment (Córdoba and Arrieta, 2017).

Now, to enclose the context of the research problem, it should be mentioned that pedagogical environments in initial education must have an important place in the learning processes of children as already mentioned, because they become a fundamental element of pedagogical practice because it allows interactions rich in relationships and significant experiences with what is in the environment, from listening, feeling and observing, as provided by the book *Environments to inspire* led by the Ministry of Education (2019):

Pedagogical environments are the envelope of pedagogical practices and interactions that are sustained in everyday life, so deepening them contributes to creating much more relevant and coherent initiatives with the recognition of girls and boys as agents of their own development and learning. (p.3)

In this order of ideas, teachers assume a valuable commitment in early childhood educational processes, from accompaniment, to understanding the importance of pedagogical environments and their willingness to generate a significant knowledge construction in early childhood. According to Otálora (2010, as cited in García and Murillo, 2017) learning environments have been used in a scarce way in initial education, where they are not given the importance they deserve, because they have spaces that are sometimes not optimal for learning processes in children. Since you can find classrooms with little aesthetics, with available material that do not reflect pedagogical intentions, which disfavors their value in the search for their knowledge. Otálora (2010) points out that, "for them to really be learning scenarios they must be generators of multiple experiences for those who participate in it, favoring the construction of new knowledge" (p.20); therefore, it was intended to seek information to answer the question: what is the understanding of teachers working in early childhood, about the pedagogical environments of the Muchachitos Children's Home of the City of Cali?

This research arose from the need to approach the significant learning processes that children achieve through interaction with pedagogical environments, highlighting the stimulation at an early age for the development of critical thinking and the construction of knowledge in an autonomous and intentional way, promoting enriching experiences from living the game, Explore the medium, enjoy art and literature. In the words of Díaz and Vargas (2019) quoting Malaguzzi (2001) "the child learns by interacting with his environment, actively transforming his relationships with the world of adults, things, events and, in an original way" (p. 28).

Given the current need to meet the demands of quality in initial education and recognizing that this must occur in an integral manner, it is necessary that educational agents as mediators, provide adequate tools for the optimal development of capacities in children, promoting the construction of knowledge and exploration. According to Zapata and Ceballos (2010) "the educator today has the challenge of accompanying, guiding and guiding children, promoting through their practice a change" (p. 33). For this reason, it is necessary that early childhood teachers assume the challenge of new work methodologies in the face of the arrangement of scenarios, understanding pedagogical environments as a fundamental strategy that promotes enriched spaces that benefit children when interacting with the various materials available. In this perspective, the research proposes an understanding of pedagogical environments and their importance in the construction of knowledge in initial education.

METHOD

This research was inscribed to the mixed research studies, because it allowed the analysis, comparison and contrast between the information collected from the qualitative and the quantitative, as provided by Hernández-Sampieri (2013) when he cites Tashakkori and Taddlie (2009; 2003) who state that "mixed methods constitute an investigation, which uses quantitative and qualitative approaches in the types of questions, information collection and inference procedures and analytical procedures" (p. 2). Its design was inscribed within a descriptive study to better understand the information provided from both approaches, Hernández et al. (2003) states in this regard that "it consists of reporting situations, events and facts. That is, to say how a certain phenomenon manifests itself" (p. 6). Therefore, it is intended to describe through the understandings and reflections made by the teachers of the Muchachitos Children's Home the pedagogical environments, where these representations were analyzed and a contrast was made by the data thrown from the quantitative.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight that the group of key informants was obtained after the application of non-probability sampling, where the following inclusion criteria were considered: a) Human talent working for the Colombian Institute of Family

Welfare, belonging to the institutional modality of Children's Home service; (b) Teachers with a bachelor's degree in pre-school education, early childhood education or early childhood education; (c) To be teachers belonging to the Muchachitos Children's Home in the city of Cali. Under these criteria, a group of six teachers (M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6) was formed who worked in the following courses: walkers (one teacher), pre-kindergarten (one teacher), nursery and kindergarten (two teachers in each grade).

The research integrated data collection techniques and instruments from both approaches. A survey composed of 16 items measured on a Likert scale was used, which was validated through a pilot test that yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.817. Additionally, a semi-structured interview composed of ten open questions was applied and its validation was through expert judgment together with the non-participant observation sheet. For the survey and interview, three categories of analysis were proposed: concept of pedagogical environments, provision of materials in the classroom and the construction of knowledge. While in the case of participant observation, the following categories were considered: type of material, usual materials, frequently used materials, disposition of the material in the classrooms, significant learning, construction of pedagogical tools with materials from the environment and setting vs. decoration. Finally, with respect to the non-participant observation sheet, it was applied in two moments in each group with a duration of 45 minutes at each moment. For the analysis of the data collected in each of the techniques used, we proceeded to digitize them in each case to be subsequently processed according to the convenience software between SPSS or Atlas Ti.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The processes of pedagogical setting in initial education, turns out to be a topic of current discussion and debate, which day by day becomes more important in the learning processes in the child, as conceived by Reggio Emilia schools, the environment as the third teacher. Figure 1 shows the total of the categories of analysis.



Figure 1. Network map of the analysis categories.

Note: Result of the analysis based on the three categories, carried out in the Atlas Tic program.

Understanding the diverse perspectives of pedagogical environments

The results obtained against the perception and understanding of the teachers on the pedagogical environment, is closely linked to the provision of materials that can be left within reach of children, referring to teaching materials such as puzzles, cards, plasticine and stories, as evidenced in this fragment "... I understand by pedagogical learning environments that are suitable for children, that they must be at their height that they must have the facility to have access to the materials ..." (M1) "... pedagogical environments I understand as what we have so we deliver to children to set our pedagogical space ..." (M4) "... I consider that it is this provision of both material and tools constructions that are made so that children reinforce or strengthen their knowledge ..." (M6). This finding shows that pedagogical environments are limited to the provision of specific materials and is not understood from the harmonic, the aesthetic and from the offer of various experiences as expressed by Eslava (2014) "an approach to the aesthetic from the complexity appearing key terms such as osmosis, epigenesis, morbid, haptic ... prioritizing, in short, the multisensory creating contexts where the chromatic, tactile, sound comes into play in our aesthetic approach to learning environments" (p.72).

These findings showed that the perceptions and understandings perceived by teachers in pedagogical environments may contain a limited vision of the true scope and potential that this concept covers, because they prioritized the provision of materials available to children, where they did not highlight, the links, interactions with the adult, with their peers and with everything that surrounds them. Also, in the understanding of pedagogical environments that was identified by the group of teachers who, focuses their attention on the importance of the development of skills and potentialities for the lives of children, where they highlight the need for interactions such as, exploration processes, development of daily experiences, easy access to the material and that it is at its height, to promote the construction of knowledge, as can be seen in the analysis of the interviews, in the category concepts of pedagogical environments of Figure 2.

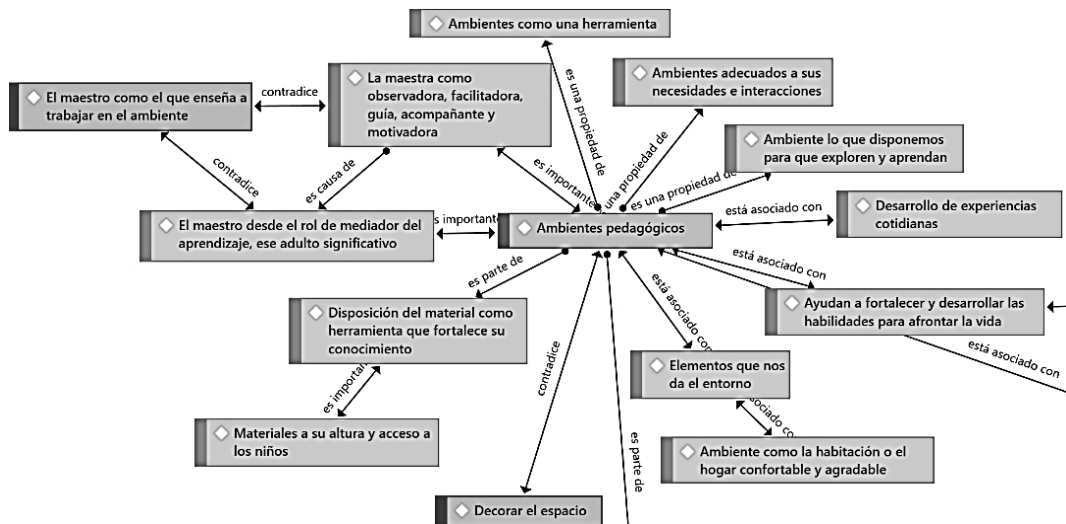


Figure 2. Concept of pedagogical environments

However, it is curious that, from the second category of analysis disposition of materials in the classroom, little naming of the various natural and recycled materials has been found, in addition to the prioritization of didactic material such as puzzles, assembly cards, plasticine among others, which are only part of a small fragment of the universe comprised by pedagogical environments. Figure 2 shows important aspects such as the work of the teacher from practices that conceive the active school as fundamental for the

child's learning where critical, autonomous, purposeful and emancipated subjects are generated as Córdoba and Arrieta (2017) point out when they express that "from initial education it should be oriented to an emancipatory education in the construction of critical subjects, participatory and autonomous free to choose the life they want in their realization as people" (p. 6). Because the teachers are identified from a role of mediators, observers, facilitators, companions and motivators of the processes. Although, in this understanding a contradiction was found, the teacher as the one who helps to work the environment, it is clear that the environment is a set that encompasses the whole, relationships, interactions, smells, sound, touch and everything that invites to live an experience, as outlined by Díaz and Vargas (2019) when they quote Malaguzzi (2001) "the child learns by interacting with his environment, actively transforming their relationships with the world, adults, things and events. In this sense she participates in the construction of her self and in the construction of others" (p. 96), that is, the teacher as the one who helps to work the environment can be conceived as the one who coheres or directs the construction of identity in the child, which may be contrary to the premise of initial education as one that seeks the emancipation of the subject.

Faced with the comparative process between the survey and the interview, it was found that in the survey natural, recycled, didactic materials and the entire environment itself were placed in an important place unlike the interviews where their relevance was not denoted much, evidencing aspects such as the third category construction of knowledge, established as a close and direct relationship with the disposition of pedagogical environments, where significant aspects for learning stand out, such as the disposition and valuation of the creations made by children, the material arranged from a pedagogical intentionality, that is, that challenges the child to the realization of comparisons, similarities, questions, exploration and the art of continuing to investigate, as Eslava (2014) reflects, "space, bearer of messages, appeals to action saying: cross me, hide, reach me and exploit me, hide yourself, look out or contemplate me and rest ..." (p. 64). Also, the environment was found to be susceptible to decoration, which may contradict the position that is proposed in the present study on pedagogical environments such as those that enable the construction of knowledge in initial education, as evidenced in Table 1.

Table 1. Operationalization of Likert scale survey variables

Categories	Analysis
Concept of pedagogical environments.	The teachers state that they are clear about the concept of learning environments, evidencing that they relate them highly to the provision of didactic material, recycled, natural and to an organized and clean environment.
Provision of materials in the classroom.	The respondents highlight as very important the use of recycled material, such as plastic bottles, cardboard, among others; and natural material such as seeds, leaves, sticks among others. While structured teaching material such as index cards, breaks heads, among others; They are moderately important.
Construction of knowledge.	The respondents indicate that in the construction of the child's knowledge it is important to have an organized space, from shapes, colors, figures, materials, among others; that leads to challenge their abilities, that promotes decision-making and conflict resolution, where the creations of children are valued. But they also put as important the decoration of the space.

Environments and interactions that build knowledge

From the non-participant observation processes carried out, significant results were obtained for the research, where the organization of the pedagogical environments designed by the teachers were exposed from a descriptive way, while it was possible to identify the interactions and significant learning that allow the construction of knowledge from initial education.

In this order of ideas, it is stated that the observation sheets in relation to the layout of the environments designed by the teachers allowed to find from the first category of analysis types of materials that are recognized the following: didactic materials such as assembly cards, puzzles, building blocks, crayons, colors, plasticine, cardboard and texture mat. Natural material, such as leaves, sticks, soil, seeds, stones, among others. The recyclable material, where the reuse of things such as plastic bottles, toilet paper cylinders, cardboard boxes, among others, is highlighted; highlighting that these materials are part of what Malaguzzi called the multisensory. However, from the analysis of the usual and frequently used material categories, it was found that the disposition of these in the classroom is concentrated in those of didactic type, since, in most of the groups such as walkers and toddlers, chips, head breakers and texture mats were identified; while those of natural and recycled type were found with greater disposition only in a garden group. However, in the pre-kindergarten and garden groups the material identified was little, which corresponded to the didactic type, this is a significant result and susceptible to reflection, since it is important to establish that the materials that are available in the environment are the basis of learning in the child, as García (2014) emphasizes when he cites Montessori (1979) "the sensory material is the basis of the child's learning. Therefore, it suggests that the material be an auxiliary of the child in the task of forming himself with characteristics according to his development process" (p. 68).

In the category disposition of these materials, it was possible to find that in a garden group permanently available in its space of recycled and didactic material organized, classified by shape, color and size, which was attractive for children's games, since it is configured from an intentional sense for the construction of knowledge, as provided by Froebel who highlighted the importance of play and didactic materials called by gifts or gifts as provided by Díaz (2017) when he presents that, "Froebel in addition to his Kindergarten, devised didactic materials, where he focused the attention of children on play as the main methodological procedure, creating specific materials in order to build knowledge, which he calls gifts or gifts" (p. 117). Well, it was observed that they interacted with the material making a relationship according to their color or similarities, that is, they always looked for similarities on the shapes, sizes and colors that were available. While in the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten groups little interaction was observed, because the didactic material was delivered during the development of the pedagogical experience, leaving the environment without any material that provoked the children other types of interactions. During the experiences, it was noted that the walking and toddler groups had recycled material in the realization of a craft, however, it is a material that is not accessible to children, since it was only delivered at the time of carrying out this activity.

Another of the significant findings within the observation process is related to the concept of the setting, it seems that this is related to the decoration of the space, where the boy or girl, observes his beautiful environment, with billboards and striking and colorful images, making it a scenario that looks pleasant and beautiful, but that does not refer to what is included in this study on pedagogical setting, as stated by Correa and Estrella (2011):

The quality of the space and the environment: The most common thing is that when talking about the classroom environment it is believed that it is about the decoration of the place to feel comfortable and willing to learn. In this case, it's about something else. (p. 29)

It is that the environment invites the child to make similarities, to explore, to want to investigate, to reflect, to challenge him to many other issues such as developing skills from logical thinking, such as classifying, identifying, analyzing shapes, sizes, colors, that interactions and relationships with himself and others are generated, which strengthen his socio-affective part, its language and the way in which it conceives its world and its uniqueness, all this so that learning is meaningful

In summary, the result of the observation process was environments with little disposition of the different materials (natural, recycled and didactic), where the very meaning of the pedagogical environment was not perceived, which leads to reflect on the need to focus efforts on the training of teachers, to enrich pedagogical environments. Another of the relevant results revolved around the identification of the little or almost no exhibition of the creations of children, which is important, in the processes of initial education, as this contributes to the recognition of their identity and uniqueness, but above all to the strengthening of their self-esteem and sensitivity, as described by the Ministry of Education (1998 in its book Curricular Guidelines Series), "exposing the creations contributes to the aesthetic sense of the environment, since children give meaning to their symbolic representations and are sensitive and authentic in what they do" (p. 88).

Deconstructing the concept of pedagogical environments

For the present discussion, a comparative analysis of the significant results in the application of the three instruments is proposed, for the deconstruction of the concept of pedagogical environments from the information collected, exposed in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Comparative analysis of significant results

Categories	Conceptualization of categories	Similar findings	Conflicting findings
Concept of pedagogical environments	They are defined as, the set of elements that allow to establish connections, interactions and learning, to the extent that they provoke or invite play, exploration, experimentation, the capacity for wonder, multisensory experiences and especially research, thus understanding the pedagogical environment from a holistic view that integrates the whole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pedagogical environment that generates learning. • They contribute to the strengthening of the abilities and skills in the child the girl. • The atmosphere as welcoming, comfortable with a sense of home that generates interactions, relationships, connections and bonds. • The teacher as a guide, mediator, facilitator and motivator in the arrangement of pedagogical environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher, as the one who teaches to work the environment, conceives the space as a transmission of knowledge and not as a construction of knowledge. • Arrangement of clip art, which does not understand an intentionality in its pedagogical sense of the environment. • The decorated space designed from the striking and beautiful and not from the very sense of the pedagogical setting.
Arrangement of materials in the classroom	They are defined as all real estate that must be easily accessible and high to children, where there are diverse materials, such as didactic, natural, recycled and creations or works of art built by themselves, capable of generating experiences, which provoke and lead to the search for experimentation, connections, relationships and interactions that allow the construction of their knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of didactic, recycled and natural material. • They highlight the importance of organized material, classified, by shape, color, size, texture, sensory among others. • Recognition of the material to the easy access and height of the children. • The material as a provocateur and generator of experiences. • Assignment of value to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material arranged in an unclassified way, by its shape, size, color, texture among others. • Little material available to children. • Decorated space, with clip art and elaborate images. • Little exposure of the creations and productions of children. • Making crafts and decorative objects in the classroom without pedagogical intention.

		the creations and productions made by children.	
Knowledge construction	It is defined as the development and strengthening of the skills, potentialities that forge individuality and its construction of the self in the child, through interactions with the environment, seeking from initial education a free, emancipatory education, with subjects of critical thinking, propositional, reflective, participatory, creative, transforming reality and capable of resolving conflicts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions that are developed from the material arranged, which lead to generate connections. • The environment and its arrangement of material that provokes the discovery and development of logical thinking. • Fabric of relationships that contribute to the construction of their self. • Recognition of their skills and abilities, where they tend to meaningful learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little interaction with the arranged scenarios. • Review of activities carried out. • Transmission of knowledge.

Table 2 presents a compilation of the results of the research, where from the generated analysis it was possible to establish definitions to the categories of analysis studied. It is important to clarify that these definitions are the result of the findings of the interviews, the application of the surveys and the process of non-participant observation, which allowed to rescue the value of pedagogical environments in initial education and their commitment to the construction of knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS

It is important to leave by way of reflection that the processes of initial education advance with great transformations thanks to the pedagogical models proposed from the active school such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Kindergarten, among others; who have highlighted the pedagogical environment as a fundamental process in the development, strengthening and empowerment of the child in his construction of knowledge through meaningful learning, placing them as protagonists in the search for their knowledge, where the teacher is a guide, a meter, a motivator and an observer who accompanies the very action of educating.

However, even when there are other pedagogies that provide fundamental elements and theories for the transformation of pedagogical processes as in the case of environments, many of the teachers continue to replicate the basic care of the hygienist model, a model created to provide actions of food, health and protection to children, which is important. but that does not call for educational processes from the reflection, autonomy and participation of the child ... that motivates them to ask challenging questions that incite or provoke the spirit of the art of investigating the why? and what for? of things among many other issues, as the pedagogue Loris Malaguzzi exposes in his poem the hundred languages of children, where he states that adults took away ninety-nine of the hundred languages that children possess.

It could be concluded that this is a reflection of what has left the traditional model, which continues to adsorb learning processes from early childhood, but it is worth asking where is the ethical responsibility from the reflection of the pedagogical practice of the role of the teacher in initial education? Where is the responsibility of the family in the very action of accompanying learning? And finally, where is the responsibility of the State in trying to improve training processes, provision of pedagogical environments in initial

education and above all to seek curricular research? These are questions that will be the subject of future research in order to achieve a high educational quality in initial education.

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