

ASSESSMENT OF THE PERCEPTION OF THE CULTURE OF PEACE, CASE STUDY: EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS

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Abstract

The study aimed to analyse the perception of the culture of peace among future teachers. It was conducted using a qualitative approach, using a questionnaire and analyzing open-ended responses from undergraduate education and pedagogy students at the Pedagogical University of the State of Sinaloa. The findings show that 85.8% of the participants do not have prior encounters with culture of peace, suggesting a lack in their training about the content. However, when experiences were acknowledged, they reflected communication, inclusivity, peaceful conflict resolution and respect for diversity. In the discursive space between values discourse and practices in teacher education, a gap was also identified. The research concludes that it is required to reinforce the teaching of culture of peace in training teachers through didactic strategies for its implementation in school. Future research is recommended on the integration of a culture of peace and service-learning into curricula, as well as evaluating the impact of peace culture training on school coexistence and student well-being.

Keywords: Culture of Peace. Conflict Resolution. Teacher Training.

Resumo

O estudo teve como objetivo analisar a percepção da cultura da paz entre futuros professores. Foi conduzido utilizando uma abordagem qualitativa, por meio de questionário e análise de respostas abertas de estudantes de licenciatura em Pedagogia da Universidade Pedagógica do Estado de Sinaloa. Os resultados mostram que 85,8% dos participantes não têm experiências prévias com a cultura da paz, sugerindo uma lacuna em sua formação sobre o tema. No entanto, quando experiências foram relatadas, refletiram comunicação, inclusão, resolução pacífica de conflitos e respeito à diversidade. No espaço discursivo entre o discurso de valores e as práticas na formação de professores, também foi identificada uma lacuna. A pesquisa conclui que é necessário reforçar o ensino da cultura da paz na formação de professores por meio de estratégias didáticas para sua implementação na escola. Recomenda-se que pesquisas futuras abordem a integração da cultura da paz e da aprendizagem-serviço nos currículos, bem como a avaliação do impacto da formação em cultura da paz na convivência escolar e no bem-estar dos alunos.

Palavras-chave: Cultura da Paz. Resolução de Conflitos. Formação de Professores.



1 INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of contemporary social complexities, it is imperative to rethink and reframe peace education to confront the network of interrelated challenges. Increasing urbanization, cultural diversity, socio-economic tensions and global crises have created an environment conducive to the emergence and perpetuation of conflicts, exacerbating demands on essential public services.

As of the United Nations (2018), 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas and the statistic is predicted to rise to 68% by 2050.

The management of peace is one of the major problems for human interaction, and nowadays it encounters several challenges. The absence of specific educational updated programs and interdisciplinary approaches means that no leaders and citizens have the tools they need to solve conflicts in a proper way, but only for opposing them. As corroborated by the World Bank (2022), throughout the pandemic, more than 70 million people were classified as impoverished and nearly 1 billion students were deprived of formal education for an entire year. The findings illustrate the losses in education, which in turn affect social disintegration and the ability of societies to manage and resolve conflicts.

Consider the School Social Cohesion programmed, which aimed to address family inclusion, socio-educational inclusion and promote social integration in specific urban areas with families who have children aged 3 to 12, carried out in the Spanish city of Alicante (Alicante City Council, 2020). Some educational initiatives, such as this one, certainly have the capacity to change the socio-educational landscape of a community for the better. However, shortcomings, such as a lack of care and promotion of social realities, remain prevalent.

The lack of academic programs focused on peace management and efficient public services leaves students without the skills and perspectives necessary to effectively address the problems they will face in practice. According to World Bank (2023), it is necessary to ensure equitable and inclusive education in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to provide education for sustainable development that promotes environmental awareness, human rights and peace.

The lack of educational programs that combine theory and practice in vital areas weakens students' preparation to effectively address current problems. Higher education

institutions have failed to affirm education for a culture of peace in their academic programs, which conveys a gap in the training of experts who can manage conflict and peace in their communities (Maldonado & Benavides, 2018).

The weakening of society's capacity to address various emerging challenges because of the disconnect between educational theory and practical application. For UNESCO (2021), education viewed as a public service warrants the participation of actors in the educational context, and the lack of regulation of educational provision and the management of efficient public service delivery leads to education without a solid foundation.

In a fluid and challenging world, fraught with disorder due to complex social interrelationships and increasing global interdependence, the question to be answered is what peace educators perceive about their own role. They are seeking to innovate in the field of peace management paradigms by combining the essence of academic training with the quality of service within the education system. For García *et al.* (2023), the culture of peace in schools should promote: social values such as respect for human rights, tolerance, justice, dialogue and solidarity; curricular and pedagogical strategies in conflict resolution methods; active teaching methodologies, including those that promote participation and collaborative work.

Thus, in this particular context, teachers' perceptions of peace management, social pedagogy, and service learning will be the key element around which this investigation will revolve. The overall objective is to analyse students' perceptions of teachers' management of experiences related to a culture of peace, peaceful conflict resolution, and their repercussions among the actors in the educational institution.

Despite institutional efforts to promote a culture of peace, questions remain about how students perceive teachers' management of these strategies and the influence of these practices on interactions between educational actors. This gives rise to the following research questions: What is the student body's perception of how teachers manage experiences related to a culture of peace and peaceful conflict resolution, and what are the repercussions of these practices among the institution's educational actors? What is the students' perception of the educational institution's management of the culture of peace? What is the students' perception of the manifestations of experiences in the culture of peace? What is the students' perception of the role of educational institutions in the peaceful resolution of conflicts between educational actors, as well as its repercussions?

The impact, beneficiaries and contribution of this research can be viewed and analysed in various ways academically, as part of the development of a culture of peace and conflict resolution in education and culture, as well as providing an analysis of students' perceptions. In terms of education, the research evaluates the impact of strategies adopted by teachers to promote peaceful coexistence and a culture of peace in schools.

The case study helps to broaden knowledge about reconciliation in social settings, providing evidence of the importance of peace processing in the social dimensions of the institution responsible for developing policies and programs in the school curriculum. In the political-institutional domain, the research aims to provide relevant information for the development of peace education policies that will form part of the curriculum and institutional governance integrated into peace.

Early reviews will provide students with direct access to positive learning environments, which will foster complex growth. As for teachers, the aim is to provide them with materials and a vision for conflict resolution, as well as the concept of teaching for peace.

Furthermore, it seeks to make a theoretical contribution through a comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes towards the culture of peace, adding to previous studies with a focus on those involved in education. It will also offer concrete recommendations for teachers, institutions and policy makers on improving educational practices aimed at peaceful coexistence.

Given the above, the objectives of this research are to analyse students' perceptions of teachers' management of experiences in the culture of peace and peaceful conflict resolution, and the repercussions of these practices among the educational actors in the institution. To understand students' perceptions of the educational institution's management of the culture of peace. To categories students' perceptions of manifestations of experiences in the culture of peace among educational actors.

2 PRINCIPLE LEARNER PARTICIPATION

Given population growth and the resulting degradation of the ecosystem, the Earth Charter was created. According to the National Secretariat of the Earth Charter & Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (2007), this charter aims to guide equitable and sustainable development through a declaration of principles that guide

humanity towards a sustainable future based on a framework of global actions appropriate for addressing environmental, economic and social challenges, highlighting the need to care for the planet based on the recognition of the relationship between nature and human beings.

The Earth Charter presents eleven principles: Ecological Integrity, Democracy, Respect and Care for the Community of Life, Social and Economic Justice, Non-Violence and Peace, Earth, Our Home, Universal Responsibility, Respect for Life, Education and Training, Care for the Environment, Solidarity, Citizen Participation, and Towards a Sustainable Future.

The principle of Respect and Care for the community of life expresses the recognition of protecting biodiversity and caring for the earth by promoting respect for all forms of life; Ecological Integrity recognizes that human actions impact the environment and suggests acting responsibly; Social and economic justice is governed by combating poverty and inequality by promoting peace and development; Democracy, non-violence and peace promote peaceful conflict resolution through education, dialogue and collaboration; Universal responsibility calls for the promotion of actions that contribute to justice, well-being and the sustainability of the planet; Respect for life seeks to protect all forms of life by recognizing the interdependence between all living beings (Earth Charter International, 2020).

Other principles such as Education and Training consider the empowerment of communities and the promotion of justice through knowledge to be essential; Care for the Environment seeks collective decisions that generate change in the environment; Solidarity expresses support for vulnerable communities in facing challenges; Citizen Participation invites collective action in promoting socialized and shared collaboration; and Towards a Sustainable Future aims to protect resources and act to ensure social and ecological justice (Earth Charter International, 2020).

3 SERVICE LEARNING

Social pedagogy envisages a way of promoting peace, especially at a time when social conflicts have grown and become prevalent.

Emerging as a branch of pedagogy, Service Learning (SL) has focused on the comprehensive development of the individual, promoting personal growth and the ability

to transform the environment, prioritizing education as a collective right and duty, and fostering social cohesion, peace and justice (Spanish Volunteering Platform, 2020)

The ApS methodology integrates academic learning and community service to promote theoretical knowledge and practical skills in solving social problems among participants. It has also established itself as an educational methodology that combines learning with community service, enabling the acquisition of knowledge in the practice of problem solving in their environment (Spanish Volunteering Platform, 2020).

For Battle (2010), cooperation between organizations and educational centers enables the success of ApS, allowing students to connect with the realities of their environment and work to improve social conditions.

4 PARTICIPATION PEACE MANAGEMENT

The concept of peace has two aspects: negative peace, defined as the absence of conflict and violence (overcoming physical violence and war), and positive peace, defined as the reality of a more just society, with social equity and a sustainable outlook that seeks to promote personal development (overcoming structural violence) (Vidal, 2023).

Other concepts include cultural peace, which is the set of principles, beliefs, values, and traditions that promote peaceful coexistence and is seen as overcoming cultural violence; and gender peace, which seeks to overcome inequality, social justice, discrimination, and gender-based violence (Álvarez, 2017).

Education and its purpose in relation to the culture of peace is to educate for democracy, human rights, citizenship, promoting values and behaviors that seek peace, appreciation for freedom, autonomy and responsibility, developing the ability to recognize and accept diversity in individuals, peoples, cultures and, above all, the ability to cooperate in a pluralistic and multicultural society (Álvarez, 2017).

Education and training strategies for peace management require the development of skills that enable the overcoming or reduction of direct violence in all spheres (macro, meso and micro), in all conflicts (political, social, interpersonal) and its management in a legal, negotiated, concerted manner or with the support of others, and the elimination of social, economic, gender, ethnic or territorial exclusion and discrimination; including a supportive, altruistic, generous, i.e. non-violent attitude (Álvarez, 2017).

Peace-oriented teaching management considers elements related to all actors involved in the educational process, focusing on analyzing the actions, tools, and technical resources of peace promoters in order to encourage the exchange of experiences (Vidal, 2023). For Romero-Ayala (1998, cited by Vidal, 2023), learning must achieve respect by prioritizing peacebuilding in any social environment.

5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This study revisits the research of Rufin *et al.* (2023), who argue that, based on the literature reviewed, on the topic of education for a culture of peace, academic training, and ethics in different educational institutions, the role of the student body as an agent of change for the promotion of dialogue, tolerance, and treatment of others is emphasized, since this research concludes that diverse local and disciplinary primary data are sometimes cited to emphasize the similarity of problems and findings.

For their part, Morales & González (2004) point to the need for improvement in conflict management through restorative justice; likewise, Cabezudo & Haavelsrud (2010) having a reflective method that allows students to understand the power dynamics in their environment. Furthermore, Del Pozo *et al.* (2017) y Del Pozo *et al.* (2018) point out that the role of pedagogy and education in their social approach contributes to education as a key instrument for peace, highlighting the importance of including it in school curricula (Bahajin, 2018) and exploring the integration of technologies in teaching strategies to strengthen coexistence and peace, identifying limitations in their application (Vargas & Boco, 2023).

Similarly, Rufin *et al.* (2023), they question educational guidelines for promoting a culture of peace based on theoretical and legal frameworks; considering a qualitative methodology for reviewing scientific articles on the development of a culture of peace in universities, they found that a culture of peace should be promoted academically and ethically in these institutions through dialogue and values of respect and tolerance, encouraging students to play their role as agents of change.

Morales & González (2004) respondents were able to identify areas requiring more focused attention, such as conflict resolution and the promotion of a culture of peace in any environment. With the aim of identifying and understanding common types of conflict, analyzing conflict resolution mechanisms and developing strategies for peaceful

coexistence, respondents undertook extensive desk research. They employed qualitative research techniques and collected data through case studies and interviews. They encountered numerous instances in which restorative justice is underutilized, leading them to realize that there is a gap in the systematic incorporation of peace education into the school curriculum.

Cabezudo & Haavelsrud, (2010) start from the premise that there is currently a lack of educational practices that reflect the challenges of violence and oppression in order to mitigate inequality and structural violence. They propose an approach based on dialogue and reflection, in which students recognize the power dynamics that influence daily life. In their research, they used a qualitative approach and group dialogue method; they conclude that students must be active agents of change in their community to contribute to the construction of a culture of peace.

For their part, Del Pozo *et al.* (2017) present the problems of the school and community communities in the Colombian Caribbean region, a population with high levels of violence, poverty and social inequality; their objective was to carry out an intervention, with a focus on the active participation of society, promoting a culture of peace. Using a mixed methodological approach Del Pozo *et al.* (2017), they included interviews, surveys and focus groups and concluded that it is necessary to involve the entire educational community in supporting the process, highlighting that social pedagogy is a tool for mitigating conflicts in vulnerable environments.

As part of a second study Del Pozo *et al.* (2018), they consider that social pedagogy (SP) and social education (SE) are necessary for peacebuilding in Colombia. Their study, conducted using a qualitative approach and action research methods, highlights that SP and SE enable peacebuilding by addressing the need for active community participation.

In another sense Bahajin (2018), it considers education to be the key tool in building a culture of peace, prioritizing an educational approach that promotes fundamental human values as well as technical knowledge. Based on a review of educational programs that integrate the culture of peace, it identifies that the formation of citizens committed to peace is achieved by integrating such training into educational curricula.

With regard to research that integrates technology into teaching strategies for studying coexistence and the culture of peace, Vargas & Boco (2023) was found, which starts from the objective of identifying effective teaching strategies that teachers can

implement to integrate technologies in this area; it uses a qualitative, descriptive and interpretative approach with multiple case studies.

The strategies analysed by Vargas & Boco (2023) were: TAC for peaceful conflict resolution, EMOTIC (observing, feeling and reflecting on my emotions), and the strategy on Citizen Competencies of the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN, 2004) based on digital games. They conclude that the strategies contribute to promoting a culture of peace, but that there are limitations.

6 METHODOLOGY

Educational research is a dynamic and inherently diverse field, constantly nourished by a wide spectrum of methodological approaches. Each of these approaches provides a unique perspective, a particular lens through which the complex process of teaching and learning can be explored and understood in depth.

As stated in (Hernández, 2014), which points out that, within educational research, different ways of approaching and understanding reality converge, each of these methodologies provides specific perspectives that, taken together, seek to broaden the comprehensiveness and depth of the analysis generated for a given topic.

Likewise, participatory research was chosen as the method, since the investigation is carried out with the involvement of the subjects themselves, using a tool or questionnaire.

To this end, the following tool was chosen: the questionnaire, which contributed to the collection of data, allowing for the achievement of specific data for descriptive purposes. For this research, a questionnaire was used that combines reliability and validity and consists of 31 questions addressed to trainee teachers in three groups, students at the Pedagogical University of the State of Sinaloa, in the Culiacan and Mazatlán units.

7 EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Personal experience in the culture of peace

The results obtained reveal a picture of future teachers' experiences related to the culture of peace. Some 85.8% of respondents (58 out of 68 people) say they do not know or have not had any experiences related to the culture of peace, suggesting a possible lack of familiarity with the concept of the culture of peace or a lack of opportunities for its application in the classroom; A relatively low number, 13.2% of respondents (9 out of 68 people), said they had had experiences related to the culture of peace. For Del Pozo *et al.* (2017) y Del Pozo *et al.* (2018), it is necessary to involve the educational community in promoting a culture of peace. Although future teachers may be exposed to issues of peace culture, the lack of practical experience in their training may be a factor that limits their understanding and ability to apply them in real contexts.

This highlights the high proportion of teachers who have not experienced or identified practices related to the culture of peace. Although education in values is a recurring theme, its implementation remains limited. The lack of explicit experiences may be due to the absence of training in this field and the lack of programmes that promote teaching strategies geared towards peace. For Morales y González (2004), the lack of strategies for conflict resolution and the implementation of educational programs on peace is one of the factors related to the lack of tools for addressing issues of violence and the culture of peace in practice. This may be a mitigating factor in the high proportion of respondents who have not had experiences related to the culture of peace.

7.2 Manifestation of the experience in the culture of peace

In relation to the responses regarding when and how experiences of a culture of peace have manifested themselves, it was found that students identify them in communication activities, class topics, inclusion practices, conferences, values practices, and peaceful conflict resolution.

Table 1 shows the figures for the variable: manifestation.

Table 1

Descriptive analysis of the variable: manifestation.

Manifestation	Representative Quote
Communication	"When our teachers or parents talk to us about values, how we should act so that they are not lost."
Class topics	"Topics we discuss about creating a better society, values, respect, a better school environment and work."
Inclusion practices	"Teachers should include all students, and they do, because they always ask if you agree..." "Teachers include all of us in every activity, without judging anyone."
Conferences	"In secondary school, when they gave us talks, and we had to perform an act of humanity in order to achieve it..."
Practice and values	"The staff in the cafeteria are very friendly and when you go in they greet you and say ' r good morning', and the teachers too..." "Respect for the gender I identify with."
Peaceful resolution of disagreements	"During a disagreement, they talked to each other and reached an agreement without violence." "When they talk about autism, it makes many people angry, but they make it clear that it is not meant in a bad way..."

The responses reflect those values are fundamental pillars in personal and social development. “How can we be sure that they will not be ignored when our mentors or parents talk to us about values?” Values must be practiced daily to ensure that they are not forgotten. The constant practice of the values taught to participants by parents and teachers is noticed by everyone present.

We need to promote values that help people live together in harmony, “In the topics we discussed about having a better society, values, respect, a better school and work environment,” and in that quote, I feel that the people speaking recognize that values are not just about thinking about an ideal world, but that values can change the way people interact socially with each other, and that is very important.

Rufin (2004) emphasize the need to promote a culture of peace in educational institutions, based on dialogue and respect. The constant practice of values, mentioned by the participants, is key to ensuring their intergenerational transmission, something that is reflected in the educational proposals of Rufin (2004), which highlight the educational function as a driver of social change through reflection and ethics.

Similarly, there is a positive perception of teachers who involve all students in activities and take their ideas into account, as can be seen in the response "Teachers should include all students, and if they do so, as they always ask if they agree and if they understood and involve them in their ideas," which highlights that active participation as a strategy to promote inclusion and a sense of belonging in the school environment favors

the integration of all students. For Del Pozo *et al.* (2017) y Del Pozo *et al.* (2018), demonstrate how active participation and inclusion can contribute to the transformation of communities affected by violence. In this case, the inclusion of all students and attention to their ideas and needs is perceived as an effective strategy for creating an equitable and safe learning environment, as proposed by the participatory methodologies of social pedagogy.

On the subject of values such as solidarity and empathy, students express their desire to recover experiences of a culture of peace based on the following responses: "In secondary school, when we were given talks, we had to perform an act of humanity to pass, such as helping our classmates," "The staff in the cafeteria are very friendly and when you go in, they greet you and say good morning, and the teachers are also very friendly," "Respect for the gender I identify with." Friendly treatment creates a welcoming and humane environment, which has a significant impact on students' perception of the school environment. Morales y González (2004), propose restorative justice as a strategy to improve coexistence, understanding empathy as a central principle for conflict resolution.

The culture of peace is also manifested in equality and non-discrimination in school activities, when teachers do not judge and treat all students equally, highlighting the value of equity in the educational environment. "Teachers include us all in any activity, without judging anyone," "Respect for the gender with which I identify." The above actions reinforce the creation of safe and respectful environments where students actively participate without fear of rejection. According to Earth Charter International, (2020), equity and social justice resonated with students' comments highlighting "neutrality and non-judgmental treatment of students" as the basis for a positive and supportive classroom climate.

Undoubtedly, the use of dialogue to resolve violent conflicts, as in the comment "In a fight, they talked to each other and reached a conclusion without fighting", is indicative of the value of discourse. In defending a given position, communication coupled with empathy will serve to achieve non-violent and respectful outcomes. Vidal (2023) frames non-violent disagreement and mutual concession as integrative strategies in the context of negotiation. Furthermore, what Cabezudo & Haavelsrud (2010) refers to as "realistic and conversational strategies towards justice" encourages an understanding of dispute resolution based on reciprocity and respect.

Critical social change and the well-being of school and work systems stem from values, empathy, inclusivity, and inclusion, as the responses show. The responses also show how important both teachers and coworkers are in promoting positive and equitable social attitudes. Principles that include the soft issues of diversity and respect for diversity show the way to greater harmony, that is, greater social responsibility.

7.3 Perception

The data collected reveals a varied perception of the school environment in relation to the culture of peace. According to respondents, 1.5% consider it conflictive, 16.2% very conflictive, 39.7% peaceful, and 42.6% neutral. When analyzing these results, it can be seen that the perception of a peaceful school environment (39.7%) together with the neutral group (42.6%) adds up to 82.3% of students who, in general, do not consider the school environment to be conflictive or very conflictive.

Table 2 shows the figures for the c level variable.

Table 2

Analysis of the variable: Level of culture of peace.

Type of Conflict Observed	Description	Emotional/Academic Impact	Common Patterns Identified
Lack of Inclusion, Bullying, and Cyberbullying	Conflicts related to exclusion, bullying, or cyberbullying in the school environment.	Significant emotional distress, discomfort, direct emotional impact.	- Distress due to conflict in the school environment. - Frustration due to lack of resolution.
Emotional Distress Due to Conflicts	Conflict generates discomfort and tension.	It directly affects students' comfort and emotional well-being.	- Conflicts as a source of tension and discomfort. - Direct emotional impact of personal conflicts.
Lack of Conflict Resolution	Frustration due to the lack of conflict resolution.	Feeling of helplessness and confusion due to lack of empathy and communication.	- Dissatisfaction due to the lack of solutions and empathy. - Frustration due to the inability to resolve conflicts.
Obstacle to Academic Performance	Conflict affects concentration and social integration.	It hinders focus on academic tasks and the sense of belonging.	- Difficulty concentrating on studies. - Social disintegration due to conflicts.
Tension and Lack of Respect	Conflicts that generate aggression and disrespect in the classroom.	Creation of a negative environment that damages interpersonal relationships.	- Lack of mutual respect. - Verbal aggression and lack of cordiality.

Need for Conflict Resolution	The desire to find a solution to avoid ongoing negative effects.	Seeking to restore order and improve the school environment.	- Need for immediate resolution. - Seeking harmony in the school environment.
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Table 2 shows how conflicts affect both the emotional well-being of students and their academic performance.

Many college students think that the school environment is generally quite relaxed and safe. This vibe of ‘safety’ that the school emits could show that kids don't really care about the culture of peace and probably don't care much about school. Since they don't care about school, they probably just think that peace programs are not useful to them. Because of all this, universities need to work on promoting a culture of peace that is about much more than just the absence of conflict.

In the same questionnaire, 16.2% of students felt that the environment was ‘very conflictive’. Although this minority group is small, it still represents a group that experiences the school environment negatively, which has a direct impact on their emotional well-being. However, the performance, personal development, and coexistence of other students are also affected academically. "School violence is a complex and multifactorial phenomenon that requires comprehensive attention" (UNESCO, 2019). López *et al.*, (2021) argue that the impacts of these events are high, as they can cause students to suffer consequences in terms of their self-esteem and their ability to interact with others in a healthy way. Therefore, educational institutions must have effective strategies to combat this phenomenon, as only under this paradigm will all trainee teachers learn in an environment that allows them to develop safely.

Following the above reasoning, the assertion of neutrality made by 42.6% of respondents could potentially indicate some degree of apathy among trainee teachers or at least a lack of total commitment to the possibilities of promoting peace in education. It could provide evidence that the approaches currently in use are not effective enough to achieve the desired results.

In this regard, they must implement strategies to promote a culture of peace, involving the entire educational community and addressing the specific needs of trainee teachers who perceive their environment as conflictive.

7.4 Perception

The type of conflict observed stems from a lack of inclusion, bullying, cyberbullying or similar issues.

The participants' responses to the questionnaire reflect various ways in which conflicts affect individuals in a school context. The following is an articulation of responses that attempts to identify abnormalities, filtering through enigmas, the emotions that student's face and how they adjust to their environment with such anomalies.

Many responses show that conflict brings emotional pain. In response to conflict, one person said, 'Living in conflict is no life, especially in a school where we are supposed to teach nonviolent values.' This shows that conflict in school is harmful to mental health and also deeply contradicts the values that educational institutions are supposed to uphold. Responses such as: 'I felt uncomfortable,' 'It becomes a scenario of tension and discomfort,' and 'It affects me emotionally if it is against me personally' show how conflicts affect students' well-being both emotionally and mentally.

Emotional well-being influences conflict resolution, and if students are not in a favorable state, they will not be able to make decisions in a thoughtful manner where the best resolution to a conflict is discussed or agreed upon.

Based on participant feedback, a lack of empathy and effective communication leads to poorly managed conflict. 'You feel dissatisfied when you cannot find a solution to conflicts due to a lack of communication and empathy from others or for other reasons' demonstrates some of the inherent tensions that arise when individuals find themselves unable to reach a solution, a condition that. The mere absence of resolutions is destined to lead to a loss of agency and clarity, which affects students' mental wellbeing and their disposition towards the educational ecosystem. A pedagogy of tolerance is key to forming individuals capable of living together peacefully. In addition, it is necessary to create opportunities for dialogue where students can express their ideas and learn to listen to each other (García *et al.*, 2023).

Conflict is also perceived as a barrier to educational achievement and social integration. 'Not being able to concentrate or integrate properly' and 'It would affect me personally because if I don't look for the problem, I wouldn't have to deal with it' show that conflicts are destabilizing on both a personal and academic level. Focusing on school and having a sense of belonging in the educational community is difficult when there is

a conflict situation. This indicates that such a situation can negatively affect the learning process and social cohesion of the group, as evidenced.

According to Fernández (n.d.), teachers must decide how to act in the face of conflict in order to preserve the rights of all and how to promote the establishment of rules.

In each case, an educational approach to conflict can be found, and it is not always easy. Difficulties arise if values are at stake or if the educator must review their own attitudes.

Conflict resolution is as educational as the development of curricular topics.

Conflict creates an atmosphere charged with tension and disrespect, as can be seen in responses such as "There is a lot of disrespect," "Let them be rude," and "I felt uncomfortable." The responses highlight how mutual disrespect and aggression become immediate consequences of conflict, damaging interpersonal relationships and affecting the school climate. Teachers must intervene in conflicts to prevent them from escalating, to prevent verbal aggression from turning into physical violence, and to analyse the cause of the conflict from a broad perspective, covering all the contexts and people that could influence it (Fernández, n.d.).

Some responses recognize the need to find a solution to the conflict in order to avoid its ongoing negative effects. 'Solving the problem' is a key response that reflects a resolution-oriented approach, seeking to restore order and harmony in the school environment.

7.5 Discussion

After analyzing the results obtained, it can be asserted that although 85.8% of participants have not had previous explicit experiences related to the culture of peace, there is a gap between teachers' discourse and their educational practice; This coincides with Rufin *et al.* (2004) who consider it necessary to promote ethical training in university students based on normative frameworks and real experiences of tolerance, respect, and dialogue. For their part, Morales & González (2004) the scarce practices of a culture of peace reported by teacher training students are based on the limited implementation of restorative justice in the school environment.

Although the results show shortcomings in experiences of a culture of peace, there is evidence of activities promoting inclusion, respect for diversity, communication and peaceful conflict resolution, values that are promoted in the educational environment. This highlights the point made by Bahajin (2018), for whom education allows for the promotion of values in educational spaces, considering that social pedagogy and active participation in peacebuilding are necessary areas of study in teacher training Del Pozo *et al.* (2017) y Del Pozo *et al.* (2018).

One contribution was the identification of the perception of neutrality in a significant percentage of participants, which introduces an intermediate category that has been little explored in the literature.

In the studies reviewed, a prevalence of conceptual frameworks related to the absence of a culture of peace and its effective presence was identified (Cabezudo & Haavelsrud, 2010); Del Pozo *et al.* (2017); however, the findings presented in this report show a state of institutional apathy and indifference, demanding further theoretical analysis. On the other hand, the research broadens the analytical spectrum proposed by Rufin *et al.* (2004) and Bahajin (2018), when it points out that the neutrality perceived by students constitutes an intermediate category that has been scarcely explored in the literature and should be linked to other categories related to peace management and values education.

Another category raised was that of the reflective role of students in recognizing structural violence and power dynamics. Cabezudo & Haavelsrud (2010) propose that neutrality can be a form of disconnection from such dynamics. Similarly, tensions were found between the local reality and programs that have achieved success, such as the Social Cohesion from School programmed in Alicante (2023), demonstrating the possibility of integrating a culture of peace through curricular strategies. However, in the context studied, reference is made to limited institutional policies and insufficient support, confirming the findings of UNESCO (2021), who mentions that the lack of regulation and effective participation by educational actors leads to the inefficient management of educational provision as a public service.

On another note, Vargas & Boco (2023) consider that identifying the potential of technology-mediated teaching strategies strengthens school coexistence, while the findings of this study corroborate these limitations, given that the use of technological

resources in the culture of peace is not reported, reinforcing the need to design projects based on digital service learning (Batlle, (2010) & Vidal, (2023)).

Although literature has documented topics based on the implementation of a culture of peace—from social pedagogy to curricular and technological integration—there remains a gap between theory and practice in the academic context of teacher training students, confirming both shortcomings and new categories, such as the perception of neutrality, thereby enriching the analysis in educational institutions on the topic of a culture of peace.

8 CONCLUSION

Research into the culture of peace in teacher training reveals information about how this concept is viewed and experienced by future teachers as they immerse themselves in academia. Furthermore, the findings illustrate the need to integrate the culture of peace in a timely manner into educational programs, with the support of participatory and reflective methodological approaches when it comes to teaching young people to be ethical.

In detail, the highlighted data indicate that a considerable portion of students within the study have not interacted with the concept of the culture of peace, indicating a gap in exposure to the concept or a lack of trained professionals. Furthermore, when the term cultural mediation for peace is understood, it is related to phenomena of affirmative and conscious communication, inclusion and appreciation of diversity, constructive conflict resolution, and positive practices in the context of system security and well-being.

At the same time, the results support the initial research claims, which postulate the need for greater integration of the culture of peace into teacher education. The analysis indicates that, although values education is a ubiquitous topic in educational discourse, its implementation is sporadic, as demonstrated by the lack of practical experience and practical preparation in the field.

All of the above highlight three aspects: the need for training, the need for more reliable and specific training on the culture of peace for future teachers. In turn, these three aspects are necessary for teachers and anyone involved to understand the concept, its implications, and how to put it into daily practice. The lack of support and limited experiences point to a lack of institutional support or resources to implement culture of

peace initiatives in schools and to build learning environments where teachers feel confident about incorporating peace approaches into both the classroom and lesson planning.

This proposal is conceived as a learning opportunity based on and through their practices, which can then be shared in different spaces with the rest of the educational community. Workshops, talks, spaces for exchange to disseminate their knowledge and strategies: creation of networks with other teachers interested in culture of peace, exchange of experiences, resources and strategies. The implementation of teacher training programs in the culture of peace can provide the necessary support for teachers to implement peace culture initiatives in the classroom, including resources, time and recognition.

Based on these results, future research is proposed to explore in greater depth how specific conflict resolution strategies and the implementation of peace-focused educational programs can transform teaching practices. Furthermore, it is necessary to analyse the effectiveness of integrating a culture of peace into the curricula of teacher training colleges, focusing on the implementation of participatory educational approaches that strengthen reflective practice and the active participation of trainee teachers.

Based on the findings, it can be suggested, first of all, to strengthen teacher training in the culture of peace, considering both discursive and practical experiences. Likewise, it is advisable to integrate topics related to community practices, service learning, and restorative justice strategies into higher education programs in order to experience peaceful conflict management, respect for diversity, and inclusion. Similarly, it is necessary to consider educational policies that seek to guarantee a culture of peace in order to move from neutrality to systematic and assessable training actions. Finally, it is suggested that the use of Information and Communication Technologies be considered as complementary tools and strategies in strengthening academic participation and building democratic and peaceful contexts.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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