

Children'S Play and Psychological Development of Social Skills in the First Years of Basic, In an Educational Unit in Ecuador

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Abstract

The objective of this work was to determine the correlation that exists between children's play and social skills in students in the first years of Basic of an Educational Unit in Ecuador. The study had a quantitative approach, of a basic, descriptive type. Its design was non-experimental, cross-correlational. The sample was intentionally non-probabilistic, taking 100 children from the Educational Unit in question, to whom two questionnaires were applied with the help of their parents and teachers. An adaptation of the "Knox Preschool Play Scale" was used for children's play and for social skills the "Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale". Using Spearman, it was determined that there is a significant correlation between the variables. It was concluded that there is a correlation between children's play and the development of social skills because the game motivates them and drives them to interact with their peers, stimulating them to innovate and be dynamic.

Keywords: *Children's game, social skills, interaction.*

INTRODUCTION

Technology and long working hours in today's globalized world have caused the breakdown of family relationships. (Guzmán, 2018).

In Mexico, the game is essential in the formation of the capacities of the students, it allows them to know, analyze and learn what the world offers. (Gómez, 2020).

In Ecuador, the capacities of children are enhanced through playful activities. (Bathrobe, 2019). In Peru according to departments, Puno has a 27.5% level below average, Cajamarca 30% at low levels, in Huancavelica 55.6% of students present unfavorable levels, in Lima 23.3% have low levels and in Tarapoto 30% have low levels. low social skills (Mamani, 2017; Perez, 2019; Huamán and Mendoza, 2018; Iñapi and Grández, 2019). In Ecuador, the skills of: Creativity, Criticality, Communication and Cooperation are promoted. (Martinez, 2021).

The following question was formulated: What relationship exists between children's play and the development of social skills in students of the first years in an Educational Unit of Ecuador, 2021.?

The justification was based on the requirement to promote social relations in students of an Educational Unit of Ecuador, 2021 through play, because it is at this school stage that children acquire greater socialization skills.

The general objective was to determine the correlation between children's play and the development of social skills in students of the first years in an Educational Unit in Ecuador, 2021. And as specific objectives: i) Identify the level of children's play presented by students using the "Knox Preschool Play Scale" test; (ii) Identify the level of social skills presented by students through the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale; (iii) Determine the relationship between the handling of materials and the development of social skills in students; (iv) Determine the relationship between the intended symbolism and the development of social skills in students; v) Determine the relationship between participation and the development of social skills in students.

The hypothesis is the following, there is a significant relationship between children's play and the development of social skills in students of the first years of an Educational Unit in Ecuador, 2021.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Among the theories related to children's play can be mentioned:

Among the theories related to children's play we can mention:

Sigmund Freud's game theory, who said that: "A child plays not only to repeat pleasant situations, but also to elaborate those that are painful or traumatic", through play he expresses emotions that he is not able to demonstrate naturally, his imagination molds different characters that allow him to externalize those repressed feelings. (Gómez, J., 2018)

Piaget's theory of the interpretation of the game in 1945, mentions that the cognitive development of the child is closely related to the forms that their games adopt throughout their childhood development, their mental structures are reflected in the different types of games that range from appearing. The game favors the establishment and development of the different mental structures, allows a predominance of the assimilation stage to achieve the accommodation of the information obtained (Gallardo-López & Gallardo Vázquez, 2018)

Henri Wallon's game theory where it is considered that the game was an endless purpose and that at the moment of limiting it, it lost attraction and its main characteristics such as freedom, spontaneity and pleasure (Meneses & Monge, 2001)

Regarding social skills, some of the theories can be mentioned.

Theories of social learning, also known as the theory of learning by observation, proposed by Albert Bandura, Most of our behaviors and what we know is related to our social circle, that is, our family and those friendships that we are reaping throughout of our life. (Bandura, 1987)

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, proposed that the cognitive development of the child is closely related to the interactions that occur with the individuals in their environment and each of the tools that are provided to them so that they can consolidate their knowledge and ideas. (Bañales López & Lares Zúñiga, 2014)

According to Gómez (2018), "children's play is defined as a pleasant, free and spontaneous activity, without a specific purpose, but very useful for the development of the child".

Social skills according to Flores, et al., (2016) implies a set of learned behaviors and the social, contributes the impersonal.

METHODOLOGY

It is of a basic and descriptive type, the study approach is quantitative because by analyzing the data numerically it is about determining the level of correlation that may exist between the variables. (Maldonado, 2015). Its design is non-experimental, cross-correlational, as Hernández Sampieri (2014) proposes, are those investigations where the variables are not intentionally manipulated, therefore, events are observed as they occur in their natural environment.

The research design and its respective interpretation can be observed:

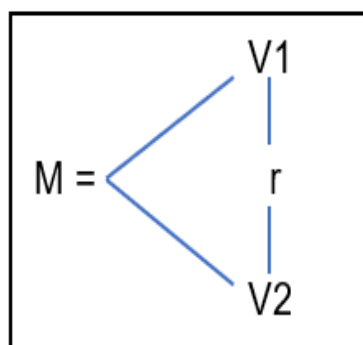


Figure 1. Representation of the research design.

M= Sample

V1= Children's game

V2= Development of Social Skills

r= Relationship between the variables

The research

For the operationalization of the Child Play variable, three dimensions considered by Susan Konx in her instrument "Knox Preschool Play Scale" for children from 0 to 6 years old were taken into account. (Cardemil et al., 2014). The three dimensions correspond to: handling of materials, intended symbolism and participation.

For the operationalization of the social skills variable, the Merrell instrument was used, adapted by Reyna and Brussino (2009), in which three dimensions are presented and these are: Social Cooperation, Social Interaction and Social Independence.

For this work, 100 students who study in the morning were included. All children in the first Years of Basic were included.

All children not present at the time of application of the instruments were excluded. The sample consisted of the students of the population.

The sampling was intentional or non-probabilistic, that is, the law of chance was not used. Therefore, we worked with 100 students from an Educational Unit.

Table 1
Sample under study

Gender N°	Students
Male	54
Female	46
Total	100

Source: Data from the student payroll of an Educational Unit.

The technique and the instruments are considered as tools that allow the collection of data for the investigative work. (Ñaupas et al., 2014)

The validity of the instruments was carried out by expert judgment.

To determine the reliability of the two instruments used, Cronbach's Alpha was used. In the children's game instrument, a coefficient of 0.940 was achieved and in the social skills instrument, 0.9548 was achieved.

The data was ordered according to the study variables and the distribution of frequencies and graphic representations were carried out. When identifying the existing correlation between the variables, we worked with the SPSS Statistics program.

Four major ethical aspects must be taken into account in the research process: Confidentiality, Anonymity, Legality, Professionalism (Niño, 2011)

IV.RESULTS

Specific objective 1: Identify the level of children's play presented by the students of the first two years through a test. To obtain the data, an adaptation of the "Knox Preschool Play Scale" test was used.

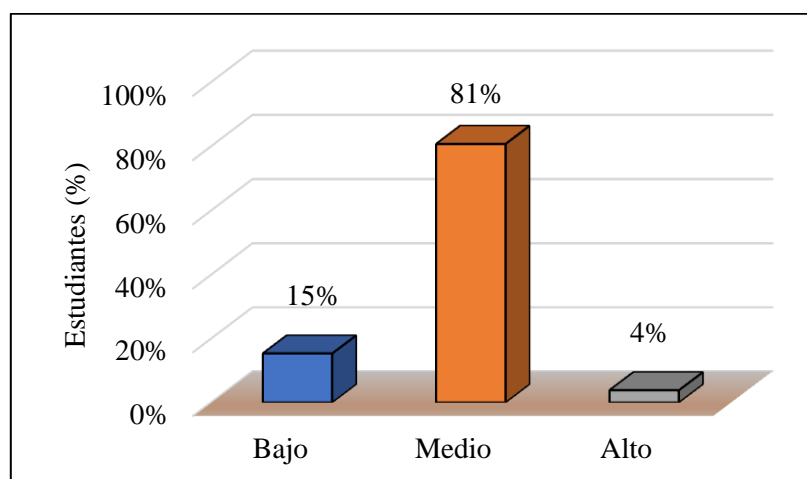


Figure 2. Children's game level

It is observed that 81% of the students present a medium level in terms of children's play, which implies that there are still different aspects to be developed, such as the intended symbolism and participation.

Summary of the dimensions of the Child Play variable

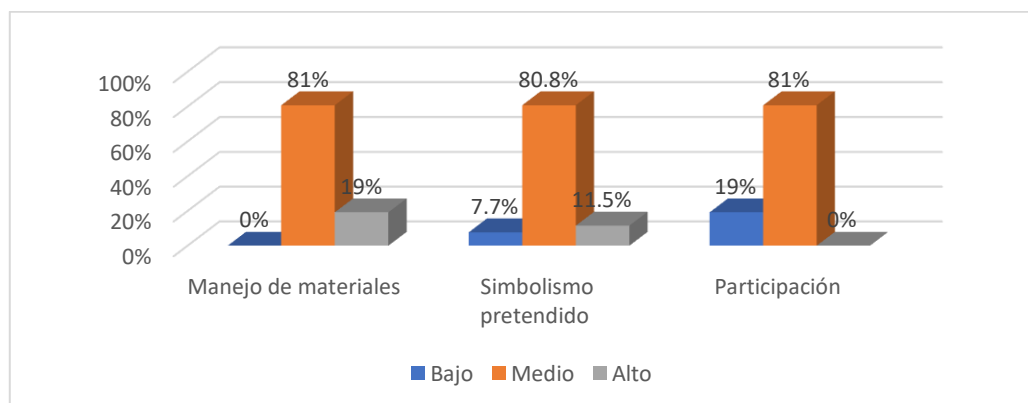


Figure 3. Level of the dimensions of the children's game

Specific objective 2: To identify the level of social skills presented by Second Year students through a test.

To obtain the data, the Merrell test was used, adapted by Reyna and Brussino (2009) called "Preschool and kindergarten behavior scale".

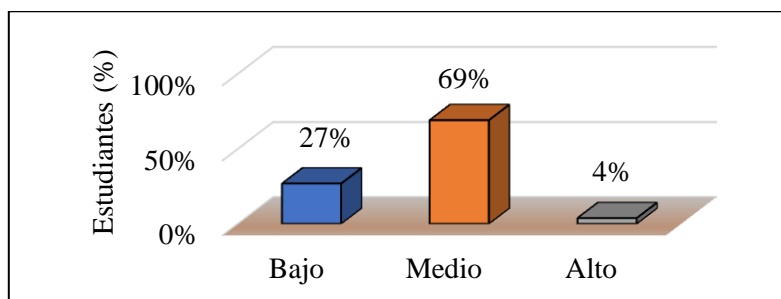


Figure 4. Level of social skills

In the present figure they show that 65% of the sample presents a medium level in terms of social skills, it must be taken into account that the majority of students have difficulties with social independence.

For the social skills variable, we worked with three dimensions, obtaining the following results

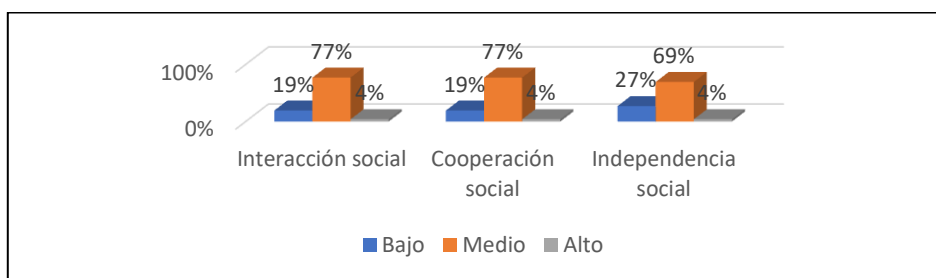


Figure 5. Level of the social skills dimensions

Similar percentages were presented between the interaction and social cooperation dimensions, where 77% of the children were at a medium level.

After analyzing the levels of children's play and social skills of children in the first two years of Basic, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was performed to determine what type of correlation should be used in the analysis of the dimensions of the child play variable (management of materials, intended symbolism and participation) and social skills.

Table 1

Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

	Statistical	G1	Gis.
Children's game	,916	100	,035
Interpersonal skills	,925	100	,059

Source: SPSS Statistics.

According to the results of the Shapiro – Wilk normality test shown in Table 7, it was found that the data of the children's play variable did not present a normal behavior because the degree of significance was less than 0.05, instead the data obtained in the social skills variable showed a level of significance greater than 0.05, therefore, they were considered normal

Specific objective 3: To determine the relationship between material handling and the development of social skills

Applying Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient yielded the following:

Table 2
Correlation between material handling and social skills

			<i>Material handling</i>	<i>Social skills</i>
Spearman's Rho	Material Handling	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,498**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	0,010
		N	100	100
	Interpersonal skills	Correlation coefficient	,498**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	0,010	.
		N	100	100

** . The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).
 Source: SPSS Statistics.

The table shows that there is a correlation of 0.498 between the dimension handling of materials and social skills, according to Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient, which is considered moderate, therefore, the handling of materials within children's play provides certain benefits to improve social skills,

Specific objective 4: To determine the relationship between the intended symbolism and the development of social skills in children of the first years of Basic of an Educational Unit of Ecuador, 2021.

Applying Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient yielded the following:

Table 3
Correlation between purported symbolism and social skills

			<i>Intended symbolism</i>	<i>Interpersonal skills</i>
Spearman's Rho	Intended symbolism	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,761**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	100	100
	Interpersonal skills	Correlation coefficient	,761**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	100	100

** . The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).
 Source: SPSS Statistics.

According to the data in Table 9, there is a correlation of 0.761 between the intended symbolism dimension and social skills, according to Spearman's Rho coefficient, which indicates that it is high.

Specific objective 5: To determine the relationship between participation and the development of social skills in students

The correlation of the results obtained through the survey is shown:

Table 4
Correlation between participation and social skills

			<i>Participation</i>	<i>Interpersonal skills</i>
Spearman's Rho	Participation	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,827**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	100	100
	Interpersonal skills	Correlation coefficient	,827**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	100	100

** . The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).

Source: SPSS Statistics.

When observing the table, it is found that there is a correlation of 0.827 between the dimension participation and social skills, according to Spearman's Rho coefficient. This indicates a high correlation between the two study variables and therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

A analysis of the general objective: To determine the correlation between infant youth and social skills in children in the first year of Basic of an Educational Unit of Ecuador, 2021.

Table 5
Correlation between children's play and social skills

			<i>Children's game</i>	<i>Interpersonal skills</i>
Spearman's Rho	Children's game	Correlation coefficient	1,000	,811**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	,000
		N	100	100
	Interpersonal skills	Correlation coefficient	,811**	1,000
		Sig. (bilateral)	,000	.
		N	100	100

** . The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).

Source: SPSS Statistics.

The information presented in Table 11 shows that there is a correlation of 0.811 between the two variables: children's play and social skills, being a high correlation according to Spearman's Rho coefficient. In such a way that the hypothesis raised at the beginning of the research is accepted: There is a significant relationship between children's play and the development of social skills in students

V. DISCUSSION

Taking into account the general objective and after analyzing and presenting the results obtained, it was determined that there was a positive correlation of 0.811 according to the coefficient of Rho Spearman, which is considered high, therefore the hypothesis is accepted: There is a significant relationship between the variables under study and also ratifies the importance of children's play, especially the intended symbolism (which obtained a correlation of the Spearman coefficient of 0.761) and participation (with 0.827) with social skills, because children acquire social skills while sharing with peers and other entities in their environment.

The data obtained are not far from those presented in the research work of Samamé (2019) where he concluded that there was a significant correlation of 0.666 between social skills and free play in sectors, in such a way that play has become an essential resource in classrooms and homes to strengthen communication and interaction between children and their peers.

With respect to specific objective 1, when applying the adapted Knox instrument on Preschool Game Scale, it was shown that 81% of the students had an average level, which could be related to the lack of interaction in the classrooms and the restrictions of games in parks with their friends.

But these results only show what Balaguer and Fuertes (2018) mentioned, that the game not only allows the child's imagination to develop but also provides tools that facilitate interaction with the individuals who are part of their environment.

With respect to goal 2, it was found that 65% of children in the first two years of Basic had an average level in terms of their social skills, due to the new distancing measures that have been adopted in the world to protect people's health, which is not far from the reality presented by Montalvo (2019)

In objective 3: When analyzing table 5 on the correlation between the handling of materials and the development of social skills, the relevance of the use of materials in child development was demonstrated, affirming what was mentioned by Moreno (2016) in his research work on the analysis of the pedagogical function of material resources in initial education, where it emphasizes that through the manipulation and experimentation of the resources available to the child, the internalization of the knowledge, skills and abilities that allow improving their emotional, cognitive and social development is facilitated, which will be priorities to develop in a changing world, where adaptation has become a primary skill for personal and professional improvement.

When reviewing objective 4, on the intended symbolism and the relationship that exists with social skills, the data obtained showed a high correlation of 0.761 between the variables, where it was found that symbolic play brings benefits to the social development of children. This result is not far from the research work of Mejía (2019), where he analyzed the relationship between symbolic play and communication skills, concluding that there was a Pearson coefficient of 0.92 which ratified the importance of symbolic play as part of the socialization process of children, especially in these moments where face-to-face game encounters have had to be restricted and technological entertainment has increased. And as García and Rodríguez (2019) proposed, symbolic play is a type of free and pleasant game, where stories, characters and scenarios are experienced and created that allow the child to feel pleasure when playing with others because this type of games is not rigid in relation to the rules and conditions.

When reviewing objective 5: The relationship between the dimension of participation and the development of social skills, it was evidenced that its correlation was 0.827 according to the Spearman coefficient, so it is considered high and this interaction that occurs during the game allows children to understand and express themselves. The results obtained strengthen what was investigated by Balaguer and Fuertes (2018), where they found that participation in collective games favors communication, companionship and the development of those democratic principles that help them to get involved in a sociocultural way in their environment, that is why the importance of adults as guides and models of children is highlighted, Not only with the imposition of manners but through their example, with the practice of values and in this way children learn naturally.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

1. In this work, it was determined that there is a high correlation between the variables children's play and social skills in children in the first two years of Basic Ecuador 2021. The most important was to verify that the game motivates and it is that motivation that encourages them to relate to their peers, build new knowledge and improve their social skills, this thanks to the data that were obtained by parents with online forms because they interacted more time with children and were able to verify changes in their behavior. One of the difficulties was not having a larger sample, which limits complex analysis, but allows to encourage future research.

2. The level of children's play of the students was analyzed, it was identified that a considerable number of students do not have the relevant space and accompaniment that allows them to improve aspects of child development, such as intended symbolism and participation. We had the help of the teachers, who carried out activities that allowed to verify the responses of the parents, although it cannot be ignored that the greatest difficulty was connectivity because not all children had the same resources and that limited interactions with teachers.

3. The degree of social skills presented by the students of Second Year Basic was identified and the most important thing was to identify the dimensions that require greater attention, mainly social independence, because social relationships provide them with tools that allow their adaptation in the environment. What facilitated the fulfillment of this objective was the use of an instrument that addressed different dimensions and the support of representatives and tutors because they observed the interactions of children with their peers and adults. But emphasis should also be placed on the most difficult, the lack of face-to-face interaction of children with their classmates because, although they share time in virtual classes, they cannot play and have fun in recreation time and therefore their interpersonal relationships are difficult.

4. Data on material handling and social skills were analyzed, it was determined that there is a moderate correlation because children do not need to perform this type of activities in company on the contrary many use objects or materials to build new elements when they are alone and in this way they are entertained while their parents finish their work.

5. It was analyzed or the correlation that exists between the dimension of the intended symbolism and social skills, it was evidenced that there is a high correlation, because the child adopts, assimilates and represents functions of the people in his environment through the use of inanimate objects or the representation of roles and thus externalizes his emotions, Therefore they are an important part in acquiring interpersonal skills such as cooperation.

6. Regarding the third dimension, it was concluded that participation has a high correlation with the variable social skills, the most important thing was to recognize that quality interaction allows improving relationships between peers and with adults because it is at that moment where favorable connections are created for harmonious socialization.

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