Social representations of Physical Education students and teachers on intercultural education in Chile

Representaciones sociales de estudiantes y profesores de Educación Física sobre la educación intercultural en Chile

Representações sociais de estudantes e professores de Educação Física sobre educação intercultural no Chile

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ABSTRACT

Representation is important for the vindication and recognition of socio-cultural characteristics in the educational system, which, historically, has been made invisible by a system characterized by its monocultural practices. The aim of this research was to analyze the meanings of intercultural education in Chile according to the social representations of physical education students and teachers. The method consisted of a mixed approach, with a non-experimental and cross-sectional multiple case study design. Participants were students and teachers in Physical Education Pedagogy. The results indicate that although there is a considerable percentage of participants who have work experience as teachers in rural contexts with high percentages of indigenous students, there is a need for higher education institutions to train their students to perform at their best in rural and indigenous contexts. It was concluded that there is a challenge for university institutions located in contexts with a higher prevalence of indigenous people to discontinue the Eurocentric monocultural discourse and episteme, rescuing indigenous epistemologies to integrate them into the curriculum and initial teacher training processes. The above, with the aim of developing a genuine dialogue of knowledge from initial teacher training to the pedagogical practices of teachers.

Key words: Social representations, Physical education, Intercultural education, Monoculturality, Multiculturalism.

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RESUMEN

El objeto de representación es motivo del desafío que existe por la reivindicación y reconocimiento de las características socioculturales en el sistema educativo, que históricamente ha sido invisibilizado por un sistema caracterizado por sus prácticas monoculturales. El objetivo de la investigación fue analizar los significados sobre la educación intercultural en Chile según las representaciones sociales de estudiantes y profesores de educación física. El método consistió en un enfoque mixto, con un diseño de estudio de casos múltiples, no experimental y transversal. Los participantes estuvieron compuestos por estudiantes y profesores de Pedagogía en Educación Física. Los resultados indican que, a pesar de que existe un porcentaje considerable de participantes que tiene experiencia laboral como profesores en contextos rurales con altos porcentajes de estudiantes indígenas, existe la necesidad de que las instituciones de educación superior formen a sus estudiantes para desenvolverse de la mejor manera en contextos rurales e indígenas. Se concluyó que, existe el desafío de que las instituciones universitarias que se sitúan en contextos de mayor prevalencia de personas indígenas descontinúen el discurso y episteme monocultural eurocéntrica, rescatando las epistemologías indígenas, para integrarlas al currículum y a los procesos de formación inicial docente. Lo anterior, con la finalidad de desarrollar un genuino diálogo de saberes desde la formación inicial docente hacia las prácticas pedagógicas de los profesores.

Palabras clave: Representaciones sociales, Educación Física, Educación intercultural, Monoculturalidad, Multiculturalidad.

RESUMO

O objecto de representação é uma razão para o desafio que existe para a reivindicação e reconhecimento das características socioculturais no sistema educativo, que historicamente tem sido invisibilizado por um sistema caracterizado pelas suas práticas monoculturais. O objectivo da investigação era analisar os significados da educação intercultural no Chile de acordo com as representações sociais dos estudantes e professores de educação física. O método consistia numa abordagem mista, com uma concepção de estudo de casos múltiplos, não experimental e transversal. Os participantes eram compostos por estudantes e professores de Pedagogia da Educação Física. Os resultados indicam que embora exista uma percentagem considerável de participantes que têm experiência de trabalho como professores em contextos rurais com elevadas percentagens de estudantes indígenas, existe a necessidade de as instituições de ensino superior formarem os seus estudantes para terem o melhor desempenho possível em contextos rurais e indígenas. Concluiu-se que existe um desafio para as instituições universitárias localizadas em contextos com maior prevalência de povos indígenas, no sentido de descontinuar o discurso e episteme monocultural eurocêntrico, resgatando as epistemologias indígenas de modo a integrá-las no currículo e nos processos de formação inicial de professores. O acima exposto, com o objectivo de desenvolver um verdadeiro diálogo de conhecimentos desde a formação inicial de professores até às práticas pedagógicas dos professores.

Palavras-chave: Representações sociais, Educação Física, Educação intercultural, Monoculturalidade, Multiculturalismo

INTRODUCTION

The different countries belonging to Latin America are characterized by being plural and multicultural, due to the fact that they have a considerable population belonging to indigenous peoples with diverse cultural practices, distributed between Mexico and South American countries such as Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and Brazil (Barabas, 2014). In this regard, these antecedents also permeate the educational field in the Araucanía region, characterized by having a high density of people of Mapuche descent, which translates into a notable population of students of indigenous descent (Rivera et al., 2013; Quintriqueo & Arias-Ortega, 2019). The above highlights the need to

incorporate indigenous and intercultural educational knowledge in transversal training for the development of the professional identity of teachers (Casillas & López, 2020), from their own pedagogical and educational principles for the training of students in a contextualized way, without denying the knowledge and know-how of indigenous peoples. In Chile, the intercultural dimension has been implemented in public policies in school education, in order to promote the inclusion of the knowledge and know-how of indigenous peoples (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2019). This has generated a series of advances, tensions and new challenges in various contexts of the continent, to develop an intercultural education for all students in the school educational context. In this regard, Chile is one of the Latin American countries that later integrated the development of indigenous education (Donoso et al., 2006; Lohndorf, 2022). In the context of the return to democracy, Chile offered a series of changes in public policies for the protection of indigenous lands, support for economic and social development, valorization of language and culture, and intercultural education (Luna et al., 2018).

In 1993, the indigenous law 19.253 was enacted, which was accompanied by the creation of the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI) and the Intercultural Bilingual Education (EIB) program of the Ministry of Education [MINEDUC] (Donoso et al., 2006). However, tension remains between Mapuche society and the Chilean state, since intercultural education becomes a space for the construction and reproduction of values, attitudes and identities of the hegemonic power of the state, where there is a predominance of knowledge and wisdom of a Western nature (Orellana, 2018). Subsequently, over the years, and through the educational reform in 2009 promoted by the

government of Michelle Bachelet, a restructuring of education is generated, through inclusive, participatory and democratic schools, which contributes to the strengthening of competencies and civic practices that enable relationships between different societies and cultures (MINEDUC, 2017).

Despite the approaches that have emerged in public policies through Intercultural Bilingual Education in Chile, education maintains its monocultural and homogenizing forms and practices, whose function is to indoctrinate, acculturate and Chileanize students, regardless of their social and cultural ancestry (Arias-Ortega et al., 2018). In this sense, Chilean education remains in debt, since it becomes an immediate need to establish comprehensive educational processes, without social bias on the part of the dominant culture and with social and cultural relevance, in order to overcome the hegemony of knowledge through the recognition and appreciation of diversity and Mapuche knowledge (Quintriqueo & Quilaqueo, 2019).

In summary, there is already evidence of the evolution of intercultural education in Latin America, from the 1930s onwards, where it has expanded to 17 countries (Fajardo, 2011), in addition to the increase since the development of research that has contributed to the field of interculturality in education (Paredes & Carcausto, 2022). Likewise, diversity has been visualized in educational establishments with the aim of ensuring better coexistence and social and cultural recognition (Villalta, 2016; Castaneda et al., 2021). However, even though intercultural education has been part of the discussion of public policies, it has remained little present in institutions responsible for the training of both boys and girls, as well as those institutions in charge of training new teachers (Ferrao, 2010; Cortez, 2019). The above may have consequences on what students, mainly belonging to contexts

of social and cultural diversity, think about the levels of preparation that their physical education teachers have, mainly affecting the relationships between educational actors, negatively influencing the teaching-learning processes (Moreno et al., 2021).

Social representations in the context of Physical Education

Various studies have been developed in which social representations have been used in the field of Physical Education, which leads to the connection between the common sense that participants have and the way in which they position themselves in relation to what they know and understand about their experiences and knowledge on one topic or another (Marín & Muñoz, 2023). In this regard, during the last decade, various studies have been developed associated with social representations in the field of education, and specifically in physical education. For example:

In 2012, the social representations that teachers in a physical education program had about their competencies and professional knowledge were described, revealing that they are more associated with concepts such as complex thinking, capacity, development, training and apprehension, focusing mainly on competencies and cognitive processes (Pérez et al., 2012). Later, Caniuqueo et al. (2018) studied the meaning of physical education according to the social representations of physical education students, resulting in the fact that the greatest connection between the object of study is associated with health and well-being, movement and human motor skills.

Years later, Rodríguez (2022) aimed to analyze the social representations of physical education teaching candidates regarding their interests that lead to the choice of this career. The results indicated that the interests were based on the taste for sports, and a minority by the taste for teaching. Likewise, Marín & Muñoz (2023) conducted research on the social representations that physical education teachers in training and already qualified have regarding the body, which resulted in similarities between teachers and students, converging in terms such as movement, body expression and the body as a structure.

In this context, for a further development of the subject in question, it becomes necessary to know, understand and explain the meanings that educational actors have of the various aspects related to their training and professional experience. That is to say, as Alzamora et al. (2005) explain, the lived school constitutes a source of experiences, conditions and development that is subject to the meanings and experiences that educational actors have about certain elements. However, this research maintains that these meanings and social representations are mediated by the social and cultural contexts to which the teachers and students of the course belong.

Social representations in intercultural contexts

The concept of social representations is: that part of the object to be interpreted outside of personal interpretation (Casillas & López, 2020), and these, in the words of Abric (1994), from a practical point of view, respond to four essential functions:

a) Knowledge functions: they allow us to understand and explain reality.

b) Identity functions: they define identity and allow the safeguarding of the specificity of groups.

c) Guiding functions: guide behaviors and practices.

d) Justifying functions: they allow positions and behaviors to be justified a posteriori.

In this sense, Abric (1994) himself states that social representation considers information, beliefs, opinions and attitudes about a given object (intercultural education). In this way, representation becomes the point of view of a community, which gives meaning to its behavior or practices (Olivares-Donoso, 2015). For Moscovici (1979) this has three dimensions:

a) Attitude: This dimension has to do with the affective and refers to the general disposition, whether positive or negative, regarding the object represented.

b) Information: is the way in which the knowledge and notions that a community has regarding the represented object are organized.

c) Representation field: Refers to the specific content of the represented object.

This is how social representations become a form of knowledge or a way of social thinking and the ways in which they are generated are: anchoring, as a way of approaching a problematic situation that affects a person's reality; and objectification, which converts a series of abstract denominations and classifications into concrete content (Borgucci, 2005). In this sense, the object of representation has to do with the intercultural education that is carried out in the Chilean school system. In this regard, this object of representation is the reason for the challenge that exists for the vindication and recognition of sociocultural characteristics in the educational system, which has historically been made invisible by a system characterized by its monocultural practices.

METHODS

The methodology has been based on educational research under a mixed approach (Bisquerra, 2019) and is supported by the theory of social representations proposed by Moscovici (1979), whose representation is subject to something or someone that can be human, social, ideal or material (Cuevas, 2016). In this sense, this research is of a procedural nature, since, in order to access the understanding of social representations, a hermeneutic approach is necessary. Thus, it seeks the knowledge and deepening of particular facts for the elaboration of the representation, which is linked and mediated by history, context and culture (Banchs, 2000; Materán, 2008; Cuevas, 2016).

Design

This research is of a non-experimental and cross-sectional design and is based on the study of multiple cases (Coller, 2005; Mansilla & Huaiquián, 2015). The study of multiple cases refers to the search and analysis of information that is similar or different from each other. However, as Coller (2005) explains, when selecting the cases it is convenient that they are similar in some aspects, since it would be possible to observe and analyze a phenomenon under similar conditions. In this sense, the cases correspond to physical education teachers and students of pedagogy in physical education. Thus, a sample with certain similarities was observed and analyzed at a given time. In this regard, from a quantitative perspective, frequency analyses were carried out that allowed contributing to the analysis and hermeneutics as a research paradigm (De Franco & Solórzano, 2020).

Participants

The research had the participation of 76 students and teachers of physical education, which were divided into 39 teachers and 37 students of pedagogy in physical education (Table 1). This

sample was divided into 25 women and 51 men. Regarding the place of residence, 5 of the participants live in rural areas, while 71 participants reside in urban areas. It should also be noted that 18 participants consider themselves to be Mapuche, and 58 respondents considered themselves non-Mapuche. The type of sampling was non-probabilistic and intentional, where they were selected as typical cases and, to reach more participants, the snowball technique was used.

Instruments

This research collected information using the semantic network technique, where participants answered a questionnaire based on the object of study. To do this, the instrument was divided into elements associated with experience in rural contexts and during initial teacher training, and in the second part, a question specifically associated with the representation of intercultural education was incorporated. This instrument was validated based on the Delphi method (experts). The questionnaire included a series of questions about their knowledge and skills on intercultural education in a school context. Subsequently, participants defined a stimulus concept (Intercultural Education) with ten words, which were ranked with values from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most significant word and 10 the least significant.

Analysis procedure

To analyze the results, firstly, the results obtained were tabulated in a spreadsheet. Then, using the SPSS statistical software, a frequency analysis of the questions prior to the semantic network was performed. Subsequently, for the analysis of the semantic networks, the M value and the FMG value were identified to subsequently perform the interpretive analysis based on the results obtained.

Ethical aspects

This research was carried out under the guidelines set out in the Singapore Declaration on Integrity in Research, characterized by four fundamental aspects: a) honesty in the aspects of the research; b) responsibility in its execution; c) professional courtesy and impartiality in relationships; and d) good management of the research on behalf of others. Likewise, since the participants are people, the principle of beneficence and non-maleficence was used, so that the well-being of the participants was maintained at all times, reducing any type of risk. This study also maintained the principle of respect for autonomy, which establishes that participants have the freedom to determine their actions. This was developed through informed consent in which participation in the research is agreed. It should be noted that the data collected in the study were confidential and private, referring to the anonymity of the identity of the participants and also to the privacy of the information obtained and revealed (Moscoso & Díaz, 2018).
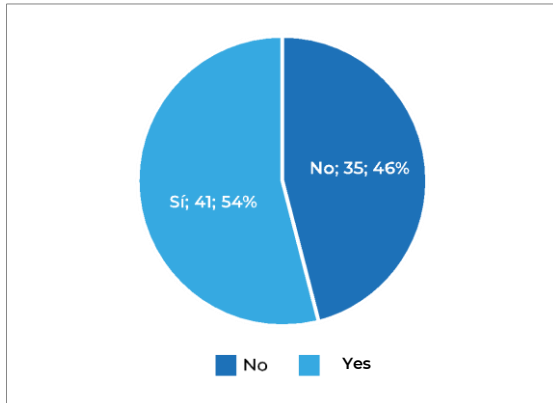
RESULTS

Regarding the results obtained, it has been possible to identify that 54% of the participants in this research have had some work experience, internship and/or practice in rural contexts, while

46% of the participants declare not having any type of experience (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Experience in rural contexts.

In this sense, knowing whether higher education institutions provide sufficient tools to operate in contexts of social and cultural diversity (rural) becomes essential. However, only 39% of participants claim to have received such tools from their educational institutions. In contrast, 38% say they have not received training to operate fully in rural contexts, while 23% are not sure they have been trained in such areas (Figure 2).
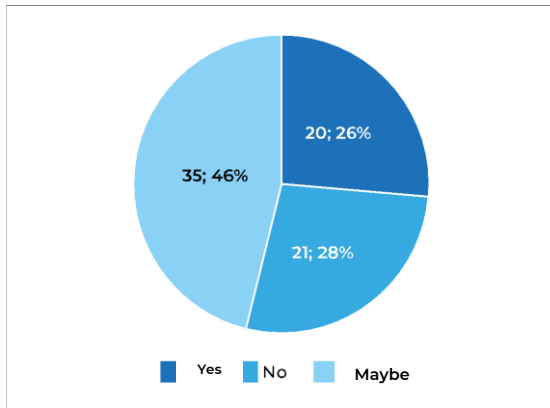
Figure 2

Skills to perform in rural areas.
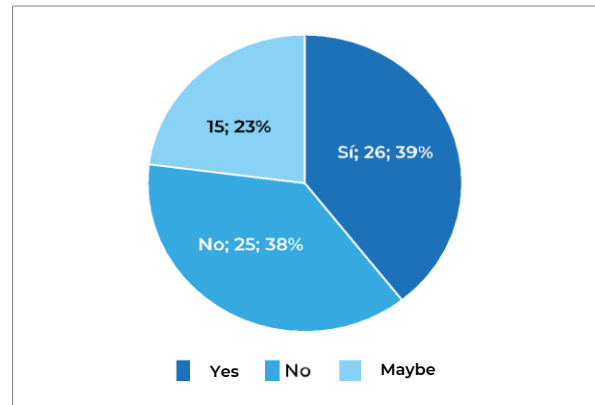
It is already known that educational establishments located in rural contexts are characterized by having high rates of students belonging to the Mapuche society and culture. In this regard, it is also relevant to know whether physical education teachers in training, and those who are already teaching, have the necessary skills to function in indigenous contexts. In this sense, it can be revealed that 26% of the participants did obtain the tools for the development of skills in this area, while 28% do not believe they have the necessary skills to function in indigenous contexts, with a majority of those who are not sure, with 46% (Figure 3). The above becomes an alarming figure when considering the high percentage of Mapuche students in Chile.

Figure 3

Skills to function in an indigenous context.

Considering the low figures in relation to the competencies that physical education professionals in training and in practice should acquire, there is a majority that declares that there should be an improvement in the training that higher education institutions have given their students in the different pedagogies related to intercultural education. In this regard, 75% of the participants surveyed strongly agree with implementing such improvements. However, 24% say that it may be necessary, while 1% stated that it is not necessary (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Improvement regarding intercultural education.
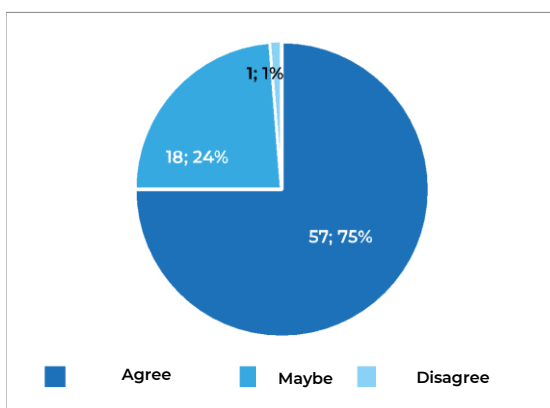
Semantic network analysis concept of intercultural education

Based on the responses given by the 76 participants, 242 words were identified, with a wide variety of meanings regarding the concept. In this way, the first 20 words that obtained the greatest semantic weight (M) were described with the respective semantic distance from the central core (FMG) (Table 1).

Table 1

Semantic network of the concept Intercultural education.

Word	M	FMG (%)
Culture	249	100
Respect	221	88,75
Diversity	215	86,34
Inclusion	151	60,63
Education	102	40,95
Empathy	85	34,12
Identity	80	32,11
Integration	68	27,29
Tolerance	68	23,19
Context	65	22,16
Traditions	60	20,45
Coexistence	58	18,24
Knowledge	56	17,61
Tradition	55	17,29
Learning	52	16,34
Language	52	16,34
Equality	45	14,14
Values	43	13,51
Language	39	12,25
Communication	38	11,93
Total	**1802**	

In the semantic network shown in Table 1, it can be seen that the concepts with the greatest semantic weight with respect to the central core are: Culture (100%), Respect (88.75%) and Diversity (86.34), which are represented with greater density in the word cloud in Figure 5. In this sense, it can be inferred that the concept of intercultural education is directly related to culture and this is linked to the development of an attitude of

respect that must be had for the diversities existing in educational contexts. Likewise, among the words that remain in the center of Table 1 (approximately between 30 and 60%) are the words: Inclusion (60.63%), Education (40.95%), Empathy (34.12%) and Identity (32.11%), which are represented with less density in Figure 5. The above allows us to infer that intercultural education would allow for greater inclusive practices in the educational process, supported by an attitude of empathy, which would result in a strengthening of the personal, social and cultural identity of students (Table 1).

Figure 5

Word cloud by semantic weight.

Regarding the words with the lowest semantic weight (between 10% and 15%), there are the words: Equality (14.14%), Values (13.51%), Language (12.25%) and Communication (11.93%). These indicate that intercultural education should be focused on providing greater equality among students who are characterized by their social and cultural diversity, which is supported by the diversity of values, language and forms of communication possessed by students who belong to indigenous or minority societies (Table 1).

DISCUSSION

According to the results obtained, it is evident that there is a considerable percentage of participants in this study who have work experience as teachers in rural contexts, which makes it extremely necessary for physical education teachers to have sufficient skills to adapt pedagogical and didactic practices to the rural context in which they are immersed (Pérez et al., 2012; Chaparro & Santos, 2018). The above implies that teachers must situate themselves in rurality and in the dynamic relationship between the rural and the urban (Sánchez & Jara, 2019). For the development of these skills, both work in the classroom with students and ways of addressing educational problems that emerge from sociocultural diversity are involved, considered one of the main characteristics of establishments located in rural contexts (Sánchez & Norambuena, 2019). It should be noted that, in this process, as indicated by Vera et al. (2012) and Sandoval et al. (2021), the personal and professional characteristics of the teacher are fundamental, since the ways in which he faces and conducts the pedagogical process make him an active mediator in the teaching and learning process of children and young people.

In this context, despite the fact that rural schools represent a broad field of teaching work, there is a dichotomy between rural and urban schools. Since, even though both have the same curricular framework, they must be assumed epistemologically and methodologically from different approaches (Boix & Buscá, 2020). This is how higher education must respond to the training needs that train teachers and future graduates, in order for them to acquire the skills to function in the labor market, whether rural and/or urban (Álvarez et al., 2009). In this sense, initial training requires that universities allow their students to maintain a constant approach to rural schools, from their initial, intermediate

and professional practices, which allows them to know the dynamics of teaching work in these contexts (Ramírez-González, 2015). However, the results obtained, where 38% of the participants declare that they did not receive the skills in their university training, agree with what was stated by Ruiz & Ruiz-Gallardo (2017), who state that teachers who work in rural contexts have little experience, coupled with the lack of training received at the university to face these realities.

In Chile, the majority of students enrolled in rural schools are indigenous (mostly from the Mapuche people), and to serve this school population, there is a total of 26,285 teachers (Arias et al., 2020). In this context, this research showed that 46% are unsure and 28% declare that they do not receive sufficient training to function in indigenous contexts. The above highlights the disconnection of public educational policies based on bilingual intercultural education with the initial teacher training processes, whose programs have not considered the indigenous cultural and linguistic dimension (Turra & Ferrada, 2016). That is, higher education has also been developed from a monocultural perspective of the educational system, whose function has been to train individuals for the world of work from ideologies for modern society through the invisibility of the needs of contexts characterized by their social and cultural diversity (Ortiz & Riquelme, 2017).

Within the framework of the vast majority (75%) that is in favor of implementing improvements in teacher training, Ortiz & Riquelme (2017) expose challenges to improve the educational system based on intercultural education, which consists of the implementation of educational policies that guarantee compliance with laws that promote quality education for all, that respond to the needs of the various contexts; Schools and universities must guarantee the access, integration and accompaniment of their students without falling into attitudes of social and cultural discrimination; and, specifically, higher education institutions must discontinue the Eurocentric monocultural discourse and episteme, rescuing indigenous epistemologies, to integrate them into the curriculum and initial teacher training processes.

Regarding the semantic network, Intercultural Education (IE), has a direct relationship with the concept of culture, given that, in its definition, IE is considered a dialogue of cultural knowledge (Fuentes & Arriagada, 2020; Quilaqueo, 2019), which occur in contexts where one or more people with different cultural characteristics interrelate (Quilaqueo & Torres, 2013; Izquierdo, 2018). However, to carry out a genuine IE, it is necessary to highlight the second and third concepts of the results of this research (respect and diversity). Since IE cannot exist without showing attitudes of respect towards social and cultural diversity (Ibáñez-Salgado et al., 2012). It is for this reason that today, the concept of inclusion remains so current in the educational system, since IE and educational inclusion have multiple connections that guide educational practice as a projection that brings together the entire community in common lines of action (Pibaque-Pionce et al., 2018).

Considering other concepts that were given greater value (education, empathy, identity, integration and tolerance), in every intercultural educational process, empathy and tolerance become basic principles (Esteban-Guitart et al., 2012). And to the above, one of the main intercultural competences is added, which refers to identity as a process of recognition and configuration of personal and collective identity in relation to others, as an intersubjective process (Morales, 2015). The above is confirmed by Craib & Vicente (2018) when they explain that the development of sociocultural identity synthesizes

a formative process towards the integration of historical, social, and cultural aspects in a given context. That is, EI becomes fundamental in the development of identities considering that in intercultural relations it is not cultures that interact, but rather people and groups with different identities (Ávila & Martínez, 2009; Comboni & Juárez, 2013; Araoz et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the university system provides theoretical tools for graduate teachers to function in contexts of social and cultural diversity, with a specific lack of training in skills to function in rural and indigenous contexts, considering the above as a warning due to the high rate of Mapuche students living in urban and rural areas in Chile. On the other hand, the physical education students who participated in this research know or have notions of the concept of interculturality, which serves as a basis for

greater awareness and strengthening of attitudes of respect for existing diversity, allowing the implementation of inclusive strategies based on respect, tolerance, empathy for others and their culture.

Finally, there is an incipient component regarding the consideration of rural areas in the field of professional teacher development, whose programs do not consider this issue from the cultural and linguistic dimension. Therefore, the university, apart from the theoretical components of its training programmes, must promote participation and teaching practice in rural and indigenous contexts, given that, on various occasions, due to territorial or economic issues, pedagogy students do not have these practical experiences, so that, later, upon graduation, professionals will be inserted in these contexts without the necessary tools to generate quality education, regardless of the context in which they are located.

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