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Guidance for individual and social projection in youth and adult education: a mixed study on life projects

La orientación para la proyección individual y social en la educación de jóvenes y adultos: un estudio mixto sobre los proyectos de vida

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ABSTRACT

The future projection of personality and its contribution to personal development are essential components within lifelong learning, especially for emerging young adults. This aspect is accentuated in non-traditional education due to the unique life trajectories and characteristics of its students. Therefore, it is crucial to establish solid foundations to enhance appropriate guidance for young individuals at this level of education. To assess the guidance needs, a mixed-method approach was utilized, with phenomenological design at the core of the research strategy. The main findings indicate significant challenges in consciously establishing the guidance needs of the youth, both from the students and faculty perspectives. Notable limitations were observed in the faculty's preparedness to support students' individual and social projection, as well as in the use of comprehensive strategies to address life project planning.

Keywords: lifelong learning, adult education, educational guidance, personality.

JEL Classification: I21; I23

RESUMEN

La proyección futura de la personalidad y su contribución al desarrollo personal son componentes esenciales dentro de la educación permanente, especialmente para los jóvenes y adultos emergentes. Este aspecto se acentúa en la educación no regular debido a las singulares trayectorias de vida y características de sus estudiantes. Por tanto, resulta crucial establecer bases sólidas para mejorar la orientación adecuada para los jóvenes en este nivel de educación. Para evaluar las necesidades de orientación, se utilizó un enfoque de método mixto, con el diseño fenomenológico como núcleo de la estrategia de investigación. Los hallazgos principales indican desafíos significativos en establecer conscientemente las necesidades de orientación de los jóvenes, tanto desde la perspectiva de los estudiantes como del claustro. Se observaron limitaciones notables en la preparación del profesorado para apoyar la proyección individual y social de los estudiantes, así como en el uso de estrategias integrales para abordar la planificación de proyectos de vida.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida, educación de adultos, orientación educativa, personalidad.

Clasificación JEL: I21; I23

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the strategic objectives of any society, as it is considered an essential support for the activity of training the human resources it needs for its development (Dyson et al., 2021; Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021; Guo et al., 2019). Currently, its role in social progress and contribution to the integral development of the person is reconsidered with special attention, an objective covered by multiple educational policies (Kminek, 2023; Kopnina, 2020; Neece et al., 2020; Ormaza-Mejía, 2019). Educational policies emphasize the role of education and the integration of family, school, and community educational influences (Sheridan et al., 2019). In addition, they are aimed at intensifying attention to educational institutions as centers for the formation of values where the example and ethics of the teaching staff, their

suitability, and comprehensive preparation are decisive.

Non-regular schools aim to help young people and emerging adults develop personal skills in multiple dimensions (expressive, communicative, interpersonal relationships, and knowledge management). Additionally, students have the right to be oriented (González-Benito, 2018), as it constitutes a process that maximizes their ability to actively participate in social, cultural, political, and economic life and, additionally, makes effective their right to democratic citizenship (Hage et al., 2020; Hays, 2020; Rodriguez & Verney, 2021). Due to the usual life and formative trajectories of students in non-regular education, the mission of this level of education is to provide opportunities to complete studies to young people and adults who, for various reasons, did not begin or had to abandon their educational trajectory. In this regard, and with the conviction that each person can learn throughout life, the aim is to ensure that all people in this situation have the opportunity to access a quality education system appropriate to their interests, characteristics, and needs, with scientific and multidisciplinary support (Ghosh et al., 2020; Nylander et al., 2022).

This initiative requires quality and relevant educational processes promoting people's integral and permanent formation. The preparation of teachers to respond to diverse demands constitutes a cardinal process within these institutions due to the heterogeneity of the sources in terms of cultural capital, age, stage of development, and previous (formative and life) trajectories. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teachers and the educational institution (as a whole) to strengthen the educational processes based on the specific and general objectives of youth and emerging adult education. One of these objectives is for learners to achieve the cognitive independence necessary not only to conduct their learning and achieve the instruction objectives but also to prepare themselves for life based on an adequate individual and social projection.

However, an initial approach to this problem, prompted by multiple methodological debates, resulted in several questions and apparent limitations. A synthesis of the latter is presented below:

- Teachers need to gain a more excellent command of the characteristics of the educational program for young people and emerging adults, specifically about the component of individual and social projection, its requirements, and procedures for its incorporation into the professional performance of teachers.
- There is insufficient knowledge of the meaning of individual and social projection and its educational scope in this type of teaching, especially in what refers to the mastery of the category "life project," the foundations of its use, processes for it, and derived benefits.
- Incorporating these limitations and topics related to individual and social projection into the methodological work is very limited or almost null, so it is impossible to speak of an adequate problematization of the deficiencies to design possible solutions.

In addition to these shortcomings, young people show manifest difficulties in setting short, medium, and long-term goals; the coherent organization of objectives in the different spheres of life; as well as a poor relationship between the purposes and meanings of life about the role that school plays in their future life. In essence, young people present limitations to consciously outline autonomous goals, which integrate the satisfaction of needs in different vital spheres from a realistic sense of the environment and its possibilities.

To facilitate the specialized accompaniment by teachers and psycho-pedagogues, a study is needed to understand the current state of the configuration of the students' life project and the preparation of teachers to provide the necessary educational support. This approach aims to diagnose the orientation needs of young people and emerging adults with the final objective of promoting an adequate individual and social projection to them.

METHODS

Research design

The study was based on the mixed research route (Hernández & Mendoza, 2018). The same had a dominant type design, where the qualitative route dominated and had a fundamental design -for the organization of the research strategy- the phenomenological type, because the ultimate goal was the understanding of the guidance needs of young people and emerging adults in the context of non-regular education, as well as the processes of help and accompaniments offered by the institution. Although phenomenological designs are considered by some authors as studies devoid of theoretical basis so as not to "contaminate" the results (Yin, 2016), the literature review shows that the analytical-interpretative type phenomenological designs (IPA) usually have categories that, a priori, guide

the authors (MacLeod, 2019). These categories or preconceptions are presented as significant analysis themes in the results.

Like the QUAL-quan approaches, which were designed from an embedded perspective, the research contexts were assumed similarly according to those proposed by Yin (2016). According to this author, there are multiple levels of data collection during a qualitative study, so specific settings or participants in such contexts may be embedded (Yin, 2016). In the specific case of this research, the primary sample is composed of ten students. In contrast, the secondary sample comprises ten teachers, according to Hernandez and Mendoza's (2018) recommendation on sample size.

The subordination of the secondary sample is based on the cognitive need to know the representations, interpretations, and own forms of the worldview, on which the teachers' understanding is based regarding the current state of the orientation needs for the configuration of life projects. In both cases, gatekeepers (n=5) were employed to identify key participants and guarantee legitimate access to the field. In order to select the sample and evaluate the results, the following inclusion/exclusion criteria were developed:

For teachers

1- Willingness and experience on the subject
2- Experience they have had in this activity
3- Resources for the search for information and support of the actions.
4- Ways and methods used

For students

1- Willingness to participate in the study
2- To be young or emerging adults (18-35).
3- Providing relevant information on the current state of individual and peer future projects, as well as the treatment of the topic, as part of the educational process
4- Expectations about the attention to the life project and orientation needs.

The two phenomenological studies designed operate at two fundamental levels. The first is ideographic, where the analytic-interpretive approach (IPA) is applied to understand each case (Cuthbertson et al., 2020). The second level is integrative, as it responds to the overall research design and is subordinated to the following research questions, described in table 1:

Table 1.
Questions and indicators

Research question	Research indicators
What is the current state of the configuration of the life project?	- Life goals and needs according to spheres. - Main socio-psychological contents of the plans - External support for the fulfillment of life goals - Project typology according to the degree of development
What are the main counseling needs of youth and emerging adults?	- Needs for help and support related to goal setting, self-assessment of personal resources and real possibilities. - Needs associated with different forms of guidance action (psychological guidance in educational contexts, family guidance, vocational-professional guidance, etc.)
Support resources to help shape life projects	Preparation of educational agents for the psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of the life project Current state of the processes that contribute to the psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of the life project.

Source: Own elaboration.

Level 1 operated at the psychological level since the person-world relationship was assumed to be understood, explored, and interpreted from an individual operationalization (Larkin et al., 2019). This implied that the indicators were studied and analyzed from the data provided by the individual subjects. To reach a comprehensive perspective of the study phenomenon and clarify the basis for the future transformation of the problems encountered, epoché is considered at level 1, and the personal evaluation of any participant is eliminated, except the individual participant (researchers, related educational agents, significant others), by Zahavi (2021).

Although generalization is not pursued, the transfer of results is pursued (Yin, 2016), and in level 2, the results obtained in each case were integrated; these partial results were triangulated and then analyzed in terms of the referential framework, both theoretically and about empirical data obtained by similar research. This strategy enabled an integrative result, and although the central design continued to be the phenomenological study, the final results presented a broader scope.

The triangulation carried out was organized according to sources (data, information, participating subjects), methods (participant observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis, qualitative questionnaires), and perspectives (emic-etic). From the triangulation procedures, a single report is presented, which seeks to offer processed empirical data, essential elements identified from the applied phenomenology itself, and the result of the authors' analytical procedure.

Methodological conceptual section

The study was conducted based on a defined methodological, conceptual basis. This, although not applicable in level 1 due to the application of the epoché, constitutes the basis for the analyses carried out in level 2 and for the presentation of the integrative analysis. Since the life project constitutes a complex integrating category that allows studying the future projection of the personality about the context, this category is used as a conceptual framework for studying the individual-social projection of young people and emerging adults and their orientation needs.

For this purpose, the approach was assumed based on the mixed guidance figure proposed by Pérez et al. (2023), adapted to the research context. This adaptation was focused on the accommodation of the precepts raised by the authors above to the teaching level (structure and functioning; material resources, human talent, infrastructure; mission, vision, and scope of the teaching level). As this conceptualization provides an integral perspective of the life project in its double dimensionality (internal-external configuration), it favors the study of the processes that nestle the guiding action so that the category is approached from a perspective that integrates subjects and processes (Pérez et al., 2023). In this sense, we worked with the following conceptualizations described in table 2:

This methodological conceptual apparatus made it possible, at level 2, to integrate the results according to the current state of the study categories. It also offered the possibility of beginning the process of constructing alternatives for transforming the context. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that the study operated at three distinct epistemic levels: phenomenological (analytical-interpretative type), post-positivist (commitment to the reliability and scientificity of the study), and transformative-participatory (the transformation of reality is pursued with a participatory approach).

Table 2.
Conceptualizations

Conceptualization	Definition	Operationalization in context
Mixed guiding figure	The mixed guidance figure (FOM) is defined as a complex relational structure for the realization of university educational guidance, which is organized from three essential functions: professional education of the university staff, non-professional guidance of the university student body, and professional educational guidance services (in the process of professionalization). Its fundamental premise is to favor the integration of educational guidance concerning the formative process as a way to promote the psycho-pedagogical attention of the latent and manifest needs for help and accompaniment, starting from the processes in which such integration converges (unity of subjects and processes) (Pérez Gamboa et al., 2023, pp. 7-8).	- Work team and relational structure (integration of the guidance actions of the faculty, management, and team of educational psychologists). - Spaces are created for the realization of the non-professional guidance function of the students and the progressive integration into the guidance action. - Analysis of the guidance actions, professional improvement needs of the psycho-pedagogical team, and the possibility of integrating external professional guidance counselors (subjects or structures such as cabinets, welfare centers, guidance and diagnosis centers, or mental and community health departments).
Configuration of the developer's life project	As a psychological concept, it refers to a psychological structure qualified by being realistic (both internally and externally), where personality resources (internal factors) oriented to the transformation of reality are appreciated. The psychological contents (needs, motives, aspirations) are expressed in an integrated, coherent behavioral output, which assumes conflicts as an engine of change. At the same time, setbacks favor self-evaluation and autonomous growth (Pérez et al., 2023, p. 8).	- Diagnosis of vital needs and goals by spheres (personal, professional, family, cultural-recreational, sentimental-loving, socio-political) at the level of consciousness. - Diagnosis of the seriation of goals and concreteness of the life project at the activity level. - Diagnosis of conscious satisfaction concerning the life project's current configuration (internal-external).
Psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of the developmental life project	It is a process of systemic and systematic assistance and accompaniment directed to the participants, whose social task is the integral formation of the personality, including the student collective (Pérez et al., 2023, p. 9).	- Diagnosis of the needs to be met - Diagnosis of the current processes that articulate the guidance action (educational teacher, methodological work, educational guidance). - Design of the processes of assistance and accompaniment (expert and joint). - Evaluation of results and systematization of experiences.

| Programmatic combination of guiding modalities | As a concept and practice, it implies an intentional and contextualized integration designed for intervention models in educational guidance. This integration supposes a design where the areas and strategies of integral accompaniment, consultation/ advising, services, and programs are part of a flexible design for the realization of the guidance action (evaluation-diagnosis, intervention, communication, systematization) in the framework of the relations of help and accompaniment, which occur in the formative context (Pérez et al., 2023, p. 10). | - Design of tutoring and mentoring processes (peer, adult-youth).
 - Revitalization and systematization of the educational guidance process and the design of program-based services.
 - Design of actions with specialized external links to meet the needs of each vital sphere of the life project. |

Source: Own elaboration

RESULTS

The following are the main findings of the research, presented in two parts; the first corresponds to the results obtained in both phenomenological studies. On the other hand, the second part presents the integrative analysis and discussion of these findings.

Level 1. Two phenomenological studies on the individual and social projection of youth and emerging adults in alternative education.

The study made it possible to explore the lives, experiences, trajectories, and expectations of individual and social projection, using the life project as a guiding category. In the same way, the experiences, professional trajectories, and performances of the teachers were studied as a basis for the orientation of the individual and social projection of the students. Although initially focused on individual cases, this design allows the understanding of the realities that permeate life projects from the perspective of two groups of fundamental educational agents. The state of the configuration of the life project was explored, as well as the individual representation that teachers have of young people at this level of education and their preparation to attend to them integrally. The following legend was used to code and quote the testimonies of the participants, accompanied by the assigned number:

G: gatekeeper
Pp: teacher participant
Pe: student participant

Research context and entry into the field

The research context was non-regular education, which can also be understood as youth and adult education or lifelong education. In the specific case of this study, it is an educational level designed to help those students who dropped out of regular education, whether due to pedagogical abandonment, failure, or other causes. At this educational level, people who intentionally dropped out or were forced to abandon their studies converge. Usually, the academic objective associated with the entry is related to obtaining a level certificate (sixth, ninth, or twelfth grade). However, some students (the fewest) enter to prepare for a university degree.

However, the experience of the principal author of this article, as well as the diagnostic report offered by the psycho-pedagogical specialists who attend this level, show that students generally come from urban and rural areas with different degrees of economic and social development, with a cultural capital that tends to be low. In addition, the documentary review (reports, records, etc.) reveals that they usually come from families with a tendency towards dysfunctionality and the presence of psychosocial problems such as alcoholism, violence, and a history of criminality, among others. As part of the same historical evolution of this level of education, social representations of pejorative character and negative valence have been established about the students of this level.

Despite the results achieved in social insertion, support for continuous literacy, and other educational processes,

the negative representation predominates cognitively (due to the ideas and cognitive structures associated with the educational level and its users) and effectively (about accumulated experiences). In this sense, the initial inquiry suggested that this representation is more influenced by the global representation of youth and adult education than concrete facts. The first participants interviewed and the gatekeepers who negatively referred to this teaching later acknowledged that an acceptable socio-psychological climate usually prevails. In the words of a teacher (Pp4):

> I did not want, to be honest, to teach here, not because of anything clear (...), but because of what I had heard about who the students were. In the years that I have worked here, I have never seen anything of what was supposed to happen.

Life histories and previous formative trajectories can be expressed with shyness, inhibition in behavior in the context of social relationships, difficulties in group interaction, and collaborative learning. These difficulties, among other consequences related to instability in previous education and resources to self-manage training, lead to limitations in setting clear goals and objectives. Future projections in other dimensions of life, besides school, are also affected.

This is because, although attention to individual and social projection is defined within the curriculum as an educational component, the category "life project," in its broadest scope, is not included in the theoretical and methodological heritage of the faculty nor their preparation. This problem is accentuated when the individual and social projection is analyzed outside the professional sphere, a fact that is recognized as a necessity but seen as an aspiration beyond the reach of teachers, according to the following version (G1):

> What happens is that it is clear that we have to help young people (those who are not working) integrate into society, but our work does not stop there; we also have to help them become better people. Ah, what is wrong? Many of our teachers have a tremendous level in the subjects they teach, Spanish, mathematics, and others. However, they need help working with these kids, who, in addition, are a very heterogeneous group [sic].

Given these results, it became necessary to evaluate the possible causes, particularly regarding the preparation for life and the orientation required by these students. Although some have been mentioned, mainly related to life prior to entry, it is necessary to deepen the conditions that contribute to the aggravation or reduction of these problems in the education of young people and adults.

Future projection and life project: young people's opinions

What is a life project, and how important is it for our integral development as persons? With this question, we began, without using colloquialisms, each in-depth interview with the participants. All ten participants (100%) responded with a negative answer. Whether in oral or body language, the students expressed that they do not have these concepts incorporated as elements that regulate their lives in a general way or their education in a specific way.

In addition to being unable to define it, the sample of students questioned whether it is an "invention" for educational purposes or a new requirement. When given category examples, they say they understand but cannot specify what it implies personally. They refer to goals mainly associated with study and work, but these are either long-term goals without a clear path, or they are immediate and are related to an exam or a paper to be handed in. In this regard (Pe2) stated: "*I am going to put it logically because the truth is that I have no idea; I guess a life project is (something like) a plan, a list of things I want to achieve,*" and then Pe5 did the same:

> If it's a plan that, by the way, I think is a good idea, I don't have one... I mean, I think it's great, but until now I never thought about it. It doesn't mean that I don't think about the future, it's just that I'm more interested in the present and for now in finishing here (studies).

Although the notion of a life project does not exist in a conscious and well-structured way, the participants could carry out their main plans once they were offered basic notions. The main life goals were found to be distributed among the spheres because, although finishing their studies appeared in 100% of the sample, the participants mentioned life goals or needs in the family sphere (formation of their own family, role of caregiver, recreational activities or joint family life in extended families), in the sentimental-love sphere (high hierarchical goals for the time spent) and in the professional sphere (change or improvement of the job position). Pe8 and Pe6 stated the following:

> I know why I am here. I am not a brute (laughs), but in my time, I had to stop working; life was tough back then, well, and now, too, but my parents could not support me, and I was young; I wanted to go out and have money. Now I am an old man (he is 34 years old) and I want stability, which is what I am earning with the job offer I told you about, but I need the twelve (degree).

> (I was) a housewife, until one fine day, I said (name): You have to work and get out of these four walls; that is why I started here. I do not need a degree so much, but I want to be a seamstress for the courses they ask for, but I need the twelfth (grade). I want to be a seamstress, but I need a grade twelve (degree). With that, I work at home (she laughs); how ironic, but I am close to my children and the elderly.

As can be seen, studies at this level are a means to an end, almost always associated with the satisfaction of needs that are not directly related to study (90%). Only in one case (Pe7) the student referred to the need to learn as a goal in itself due to the intention of pursuing university studies. However, in no case (0%) was there any mention of the contributions of this learning to the development as individuals, the partial goals to achieve the proposed objectives, or the external aids provided by the school.

When asked about this, the participants were surprised since the overall representation is that this type of teaching is aimed at basic subjects as exclusive content. When the suggestion was made that perhaps various aids or supports had been offered to help them set and achieve their goals or prepare themselves for a better life, eight participants admitted being unable to identify such scenarios. At the same time, two said it was done, but only when there were problems in the group's performance or when it was directly required. According to one of them (Pe7):

> The teachers and my classmates know why I am here; I want to continue (for college) so nobody gets scared when I ask questions or seek help; sometimes, it is about something in class, but sometimes it is about a career or a personal problem. Other than that, well, I think sometimes in the classroom it is done; I mean, when there have been problems with grades or attendance, (program coordinator's name) comes and talks to us; other times it is other teachers, but they do, sometimes about school, but sometimes it is about life in general and why we are here.

Generally, preparation for life and individual social projection is not perceived as teaching content. Students are more aware of the didactic aspects and the content of the subjects than of the contributions (intentional and spontaneous) resulting from their participation and daily coexistence at this educational level. Regarding opportunities, needs for help, and accompaniment, the manifest opinions have to do directly with learning orientation (metacognitive strategies and learning styles). In contrast, the latent ones have as their core the attention for an adequate identity configuration. The young people interviewed usually refer, directly and indirectly, to their personal and school limitations, with greater emphasis on the former when it comes to questions related to the content of other spheres in addition to the professional one.

One of the most frequently pointed limitations was communicative competence and interaction with others. Seen as the basis of their future personal development, students expressed marked needs in this area. They made demands that could be satisfied by incorporating topics related to emotional education into the curriculum. However, other unmet needs about the different guidance modalities were also identified. Some of the most common are synthesized in guidance or education for harmonious coexistence as a couple (couple therapy in the voice of the participants); vocational-professional guidance and accompaniment for insertion/movement within the labor market; specialized psycho-pedagogical attention in accompanying family or personal situations, coping with situations of sustained stress or help in finding specialized clinical care. In the words of Pe1:

> Of course, I do (need help); I come many times after leaving work, and from here, I run to the daycare center (where they take care of their children after leaving school). Can you have the head to study like that? The same thing that (Pe7) mentioned a few days ago in class: we do not know how to study, we are not prepared, and I do not want to continue, only the intermediate technician, but if the objective is, as you say (referring to a question), to be better, then, of course, we can do much more.

Despite this system of needs, students do not mention the preparation of educational agents for psycho-pedagogical attention, the life project configuration, or the processes' current state. Only in the case of mentoring (informal, remedial, and poorly structured) are previous experiences based on the peer modality and directed to contents specific to the subjects without continuous support.

Preparing them for the future is an excellent idea, but how do we do it? The role of teachers in shaping life projects

Similar to what happened with the students, almost all the teachers (90%) denied knowing the life project

category. Only one teacher (Pp7) referred to the category from a scientifically grounded perspective.

> I can talk about the subject, not in a scholarly way, but I can mention some authors and research results, perhaps not so current, although I recognize the subject's relevance. Sadly, this is undoubtedly not a trend (question: is it?). I imagined it (before the negative answer); in my case, it is because I am also a university professor, which is my main job, and the topic of life projects of young people has gained space. However, even there (university), it is not something common.

Despite the initial refusal, because of the importance of the role of teachers in the attention to life projects, they were offered trim levels of help (conceptual elements, practical examples), and the teachers managed to elaborate in an incipient way a conceptualization of the category. However, precisely from this primary elaboration, the interviewees admitted not offering intentional support for concretizing the goals that make up these life projects; moreover, a fact more accentuated outside the professional sphere.

In this regard, the teachers offered a well-supported argumentation of their professional tasks, fundamentally in what refers to the quality of the content and the conduction of the teaching-educational process within the classroom. However, they admitted that they needed to improve regarding the diagnosis of the group, the assessment of needs for help and support, and their participation in the design and implementation of alternatives to promote individual-social projection through the promotion of life projects. For example, Pp2 maintained:

> I do my job well, or at least what I considered my job until now (...); I plan my classes well, and I talk with them (the students) about current issues, but I do it because I am required to do so, not because I consciously thought that I was working on an educational component (individual and social projection). The issue of integral development does take me by surprise, not because it is the first time I have heard it, but because, to be honest, I did not see it (and I do not see it, he adds in a low voice) as part of my functions as a teacher.

An alternative vision is the acceptance of the idea that teachers, at this educational level, should contribute to integral development and participate in the psycho-pedagogical attention and the configuration of the life projects of young people. This acceptance adds to the awareness of the insufficient preparation for such a task, both theoretically and methodologically, because although the work done in this sense is essential, it has not been directed to the component (individual-social projection) nor the category (life project). In this sense, the main concern is that this task or professional function (as it was also defined) is not part of their social work but is part of the work of psycho-pedagogues or other specialized agents (specialists, researchers, clinical psychologists). At least, this is what Pp10 says.

> Now I feel bad because, let us be clear, we do work, some more than others, because the faculty is large and almost all of us have other occupations. However, this methodological work is done, although not on this subject, which, I must say, seems more for scientists or psychologists, right? Formally, that is, by common sense, it is good that we have to help them as much as possible, but with this degree of commitment and substantiation (is that the word? add), it seems exaggerated. From the above (examining), one would have to start studying, see (methodological demonstrative) classes on how to do it, etc.

In addition, they state that they are not up to date regarding the main trends in the configuration of the life projects of young people and national studies on the subject. These limitations, added to the fact that teachers only conceive the educational teaching process as eminently instructive despite achieving explicit educational performances, suggest the seriousness of the difficulties in complying with this Youth and Adult Education component. This, together with the manifest ignorance of the typical characteristics of this stage of human development, causes teachers to have difficulties understanding behaviors based on the referents of personality development. The version of Pp3 alludes to the theme.

> It is tough. I studied psychology as a teacher, but much time has passed since then; these are not the young people of those days. I do not even know what the young people of today are like, no one understands them (laughs), besides, we have to take into account that here we teach basic subjects to people who are out of date, many of them because of severe problems, others because of personal problems. It is not easy to know what they are thinking (...) I prefer to give my classes, and that is all.

Another testimony (Pp6) refers to the experiences of help and accompaniment of a diffuse nature, particularly the guiding function of the teachers and their remedial scope.

> Helping is intrinsic to the work of a teacher, no matter the educational level, and I also believe that those who are here (teaching) by vocation do it with pleasure, but the help I offer is specific advice, a book, sometimes a friendly ear, so to speak (...) but that is very different from offering "real" guidance (quotation marks of the participant). For a problem, yes, but how that help should

be part of what I do as a teacher, I do not see clearly.

In general, teachers have marked difficulties incorporating the categories addressed as part of their professional functions since they see them as work content of other agents rather than as their own. They do not see themselves as subjects of specialized help or as subjects of organized preparation (training courses or professional improvement), nor do they perceive as necessary the inclusion of these educational agents in the process of help and accompaniment to be offered, as would be the integrated performance of the psycho-pedagogues who act at this educational level as advisors. Regarding the importance given to individual and social projection as an educational component, once its relevance within the curriculum has been clarified, it could be seen that, out of 10 interviewees, only 3 (30 %) could argue its relevance and inclusion in their practices. Contradictorily, it stands out that 40% of the teachers consider that they have experience in the subject.

This result was contrasted in the interview, based on the teachers' need for knowledge about implementing attention to individual and social projection in their professional performance. When asked about the processes from which they would do it, the teachers limited themselves to mentioning general elements of the class, but with no relation to the foundations of this decision. In a general sense, they recognize that individual and social projection is a component of this level of teaching. However, they do not link it to their teaching performance or justify why it is essential to pay attention to it.

Regarding resources, it was found that only 50% have the information literacy to search for updated information, generate ways and methods for individual and social preparation, and use virtual teaching-learning environments. Another limitation was expressed in the difficulties in adequately explaining how to use this information since they state that it does not appear either in the subject programs or in the guiding documents of their work, so, according to the testimonies of Pp5 and Pp6, a practical preparation is required on how to carry out this process at the educational level.

> Now, they demand that we use ICTs, which I see as good because they are another teaching tool. However, I do not know how to use these more advanced "things" (tools, programs) (...) the same thing happens to me with information and updated bibliography; I bring my lesson plan and work on the blackboard; I do not see how so much sophistication can help the kids (students).

> This is not to demerit, but neither should we deceive anyone; our students often have difficulties listening to this to read; imagine if we will add complex applications to that. Unlike a "normal" pre-university (participant's quotation marks) or university, where students have laptops and are up to date, here, many students do not know how to use technology sufficiently to interact with the environments you mention.

As can be seen, multiple edges of the problem converge, from the characteristics of the sources of income, their previous trajectories, and the heterogeneity of the groups to the characteristics of the educational process. All these factors hinder the inclusion of informative and reflective resources and the means to effectively and efficiently implement the alternatives that could be designed together.

Level 2. Integrative analysis of results

The study of life projects constitutes a necessity. Its importance within the efforts aimed at ensuring that education responds to the integral development of the person has been patented by multiple studies (del Río and Cuenca, 2019, 2022; del Río-Marichal et al., 2019; Garbizo et al., 2020; Pérez et al., 2021). Its attention goes beyond the limits of education. It extends to training as a critical ontological category in human development, so it is instituted as a psycho-pedagogical support for promoting well-being (Morgado et al., 2022; Pérez Gamboa et al., 2019). However, the primary studies reviewed as background research were conducted in the university context. The differences between the two levels are notable. They can be seen in elements such as organizational structure, social function, mission, vision, substantive processes and scope, and faculty preparation.

In Youth and Adult Education, there needs to be more teacher coverage in the centers that make up this type of education. To alleviate this problem, various alternatives have been used: teachers hired by the hour with pedagogical training, university professors without advanced pedagogical training, and other moonlighters who attend schools at this level to teach the classes corresponding to the subject they teach. This is one of the biggest problems they face and, at the same time, it is a challenge to achieve the proposed objectives, taking into account that the ultimate goal of a comprehensive education is to promote well-being based on personal meaning and the essential values of

individuals (Pérez et al., 2023; Subero & Esteban-Guitart, 2023).

Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that the difficulties in the operational handling of the concept of "life project" are not a problem of the educational level but are seen in other populations, mainly university professors. However, the multiple mentions of the university as a social institution and "ideal" educational level allowed us to explore how the representation that students (of themselves and their education) and professors (of their role and the social task of this educational level) have makes it difficult to include the category "life project" in the actions of both groups. As in the university, these schools have guiding teachers (year or group coordinators); methodological work is carried out, and educational policies demand updating and quality practices. Although outreach and research do not occur the same way as in higher education, the teaching process can include the life project conceptually.

Similarly, the research shows a latent need for the professional improvement of the teaching staff in subjects related to the psychological foundations of working with young people and emerging adults. The very conception of emerging adulthood as a second psychosocial moratorium (Papalia & Martorell, 2017) is part of the teachers' imagination. Said authors refer to elements such as economic dependence, postponement of the conformation of one's own family, and the instability of the worldview at the beginning of the stage.

One of the aspects of this need for improvement alluded to the emotional and sentimental, as objects of study, affectivity, and attention as part of the teacher's role. Preparing to assume emotional education and providing specialized services constituted a frequent element in the discourse. In the specific case of this educational level and relation to the educational trajectories and psychosocial problems affecting its students, attention to emotional intelligence and the regulation of behavior in social contexts are essential aspects of identity transformation, as they limit the effects of precariousness and situations of exclusion and pedagogical abandonment (Garcés-Delgado et al., 2022; Kurtović et al., 2021).

As for the ways to achieve the introduction of the category to the processes, as well as the transformation of these processes so that real help is achieved in them, the difficulties are marked. In its broad sense, guidance is not represented as a process intrinsic to this level of teaching, as it does appear in the literature on the university and pre-university context. However, even so, difficulties diagnosed at both levels are reproduced in this context, among them: limited integration between guidance departments and faculties, the need for an updated guidance curriculum, the dichotomy of teacher guidance professional guidance counselor, direct and remedial intervention/ participation of the educational psychologist, among others (Pérez, 2022; Sánchez et al., 2019; Ormaza-Mejía, 2019).

The scopes of the multiple social and educational agents involved at this level highlight the importance of integration as an articulating notion of guidance action. The conceptualization of a "mixed guidance figure" constitutes an opportunity to achieve this integration since it seeks to make awareness of the guidance possibilities of each agent and the necessary transformations in the context so that the integral strategies of help and accompaniment are inserted.

Not only should vocational orientation be projected, in the psycho-pedagogical attention, to students who express the desire to pursue higher education, but, for the career, it is necessary to take into account personal background, precarious situations, support networks and other factors that limit future projection and decision making (Navarro, 2021). The conscious reformulation of narratives expressing personal-social identity is a prerogative for individual-social projection while allowing a more accurate diagnosis of life projects (Méndez, 2020).

The materialization of alternatives and initiatives to achieve individual and social projection that lead to self-motivation, self-assessment, confrontation, and reflection by students from the individual and group levels is limited. However, the study revealed that this is not exclusively due to insufficient knowledge of the primary theoretical and methodological references related to this educational component but that a vital identity and representational transformation are necessary so that the processes' protagonists do not act as disruptive agents. Thus, the real potential that is evaluated can be achieved.

CONCLUSIONS

The future projection of the personality and its expression in social behavior is an imperative in the current educational panorama, even more so in the education of young people and emerging adults, especially those who have experienced situations of pedagogical abandonment, student dropout and whose life histories are mediated by diverse psychosocial problems. According to the results obtained in the sample studied, the category "life project"

can be considered a theoretical, methodological, and practical resource to promote the integral development of the individual.

However, for this ideal to be attainable, it is necessary to promote transformations at the individual, process, and culture levels. From the processes where guidance takes on greater personal significance and operational relevance, it is essential to facilitate the integration of the actions of the various educational and social agents that interact at this level of education.

Although guidance needs to go far beyond the professional sphere of the life project, providing comprehensive psycho-pedagogical care in other areas of life, such as family, sentimental, love, or personal, requires innovative approaches, the incorporation of psycho-pedagogical supports and the transformation of the social representation of the education of young people and adults who have experienced situations of precariousness or social exclusion.

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