Implementation of public policy of school coexistence in Colombia

Implementación de la política de convivencia escolar en Colombia

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Abstract

Introduction: In Colombia, after legal processes derived from cases of direct and structural violence that had students as victims, Law 1620 of 2013 was enacted; despite the existence of the public policy, this scourge persists.

Objective: This article presents the results of a study that determines the perception of middle school students and teachers about implementing the public policy of school coexistence and mitigation of school violence in the municipality of Tunja, Colombia.

Methodology: Two questionnaires were used, which were applied, one to 1,074 students in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades of public and private schools, and the other questionnaire was applied to 50 teachers assigned to these courses.

Results: Regarding the perception of the implementation of the policy, it was found that there is a significant difference between the responses of students and teachers in the factor of socialization of the procedure ($t = 3,207$, $p = 0,002 < 0,005$) in the aspects of strengthening and perceived impact there were no significant differences.

CONCLUSION: There are differences in the perception that both groups have regarding implementing the School Coexistence Law in their Educational institutions. It was evidenced that the teachers have a more positive perception than the students concerning implementing the policy.

Keywords: bullying, school coexistence, school violence, public policy, conflict, and peace.

Resumen

Introducción: En Colombia, luego de procesos judiciales derivados de casos de violencia directa y estructural que tuvieron como víctimas a estudiantes, se promulgó la Ley 1620 de 2013; a pesar de la existencia de la política pública, este flagelo persiste.

Objetivo: Este artículo presenta los resultados de un estudio que determina la percepción de estudiantes y docentes de educación media sobre la implementación de la política pública de convivencia escolar y mitigación de la violencia escolar en el municipio de Tunja, Colombia.

Metodología: Se utilizaron dos cuestionarios, los cuales se aplicaron, uno a 1074 estudiantes de noveno, décimo y undécimo grado de escuelas públicas y privadas, y el otro cuestionario se aplicó a 50 docentes adscritos a estos cursos.

Resultados: En cuanto a la percepción sobre la implementación de la política, se encontró que existe una diferencia significativa entre las respuestas de estudiantes y docentes en el factor de socialización del procedimiento ($t = 3,207$, $p = 0,002 < 0,005$) en los aspectos de fortalecimiento e impacto percibido no hubo diferencias significativas.

Conclusión: Existen diferencias en la percepción que ambos grupos tienen respecto a la implementación de la Ley de Convivencia Escolar en sus Instituciones Educativas. Se evidenció que los docentes tienen una percepción más positiva que los estudiantes sobre la implementación de la política.

Palabras clave: bullying, convivencia escolar, violencia escolar, políticas públicas, conflicto y paz.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article explores the perceptions of students and middle school teachers from public and private schools in Tunja, Boyacá, regarding the public policy on school coexistence. The discussion begins with the definition of perception, understood as a process of extracting and selecting relevant information that generates a state of clarity and lucidity, enabling behavior that aligns with the highest possible rationality and coherence with the surrounding world (Oviedo, 2004). Public policy is conceptualized as the course of action and information flows related to a democratically defined general objective, developed by the public sector often in collaboration with the community and the private sector (Lahera, 2002).

1.1. Historical background

Publications in the Scopus database related to perception research date back to 1860, marking the initial attempts to develop a theory of perception, particularly about color description and the sensations experienced by individuals. Gladstone (1860) found that despite advancements in understanding colors, general experience often conflicts with and alters visual perception. Subsequent studies aimed to describe sensation and perception (Davies, 1870; Bastian, 1869; 1870; Perea, Marcet, Labusch, Baciero, & Fernández-López, 2023). Additionally, Zenker (1867) proposes a theory of color based on perception (Nadler *et al*., 2023).

In the middle of the last century, perception research expanded to include studies on physiology, the central nervous system, sensations, vision, and their effects on memory, learning, personality, psychology, and social behavior (Uddin, Fernandino, Neta, Greene, & Mooshagian, 2023). From the perspectives of sociology, philosophy, and psychology, researchers explored topics such as functionality (Brunswik, 1949), the relationship between cognition and behavior (Bruner & Postman, 1949), and the role of necessity (Pastore, 1949; McClelland *et al.,* 1949). Additionally, studies examined motivation, attitude change (Hastorf & Knutson, 1949), valuation (Carter & Schooler, 1949) and various aspects of perception, including roles, social conceptions, and thresholds (Radke & Trager, 1950; Luchins, 1950; Child, 1950; Graham, 1950).

Current scientific research on perception encompasses a range of topics including decision-making, stimuli, animal studies, big data, computer systems, sustainable development, learning, and the physiology of perception (Jones *et al*., 2023). Investigations have also examined various aspects such as risk estimation on online social networks (Pensa *et al.,* 2019), literacy needs in language assessment among Iranian teachers of

English as a foreign language with a focus on evaluation policies (Firoozi *et al.*, 2019), and the perception of solar panels usage in residential areas in Bahrain (Alsabbagh, 2019).

Regarding public policies identified as antecedents, in the decade of the '80s, research focused on community power, inclusion, organizational disposition, education, commerce, and theories in North America (Chriqui *et al.*, 2023). Lyon & Bonjean (1981) discuss the influence of community power and the outcomes of policies through the routines of local American politics. Treib (1982) highlights how public architectural planning policies in California did not account for tabernacle art. Additionally (Turk, 1981) demonstrated that organizational changes affect political deviations within police forces. Finally, Nelson,(1989) analyzes the internal political conditions of U.S. trade policy, examining both the liberal framework and protectionist dynamics.

At the beginning of the millennium, studies in public policies focused on nationalism, social movements, poverty, and community development with an emphasis on equity, gender, religion, and sustainability. One study analyzes the evolution of nationalism in the French Basque Country, its role in policy development, and political debate (Gurrutxaga, 2005). The impact of civil society became a subject of research, with scholars examining, among other things, the role of NGOs in urban management for sustainable communities in Brazil (Teodósio, 2002) and their participation in the construction, implementation, and evaluation of public policies in Russia (Peregudov, 2006).

Equity is a crucial component of the discourse, as highlighted by Penna *et al.* (2004) who emphasize the importance of including "Violence against women" in the nursing curriculum. Additionally, a longitudinal study on public policies related to breastfeeding in Brazil is noted (Moreira & Lopes, 2007). Finally, the concept of inequality as a category within public policies is examined in the South American context by Tilly (2003) and Gonzalez, Campo *et al.* (2017).

In the past ten years, publications on public policies have addressed global issues such as sustainability, culture, citizenship, and education in various international contexts. Notable studies include those on environmental education and sustainability policies in coffee-producing communities in Brazil (Pereira *et al.*, 2014) and the influence of the United Nations on the business practices aimed at replacing potentially hazardous substances (Kraft *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, De Andrade *et al.*, (2012) analyzed

environmental education within Brazilian public policy, finding that episte-mological budgets summarize the philosophical foundations and address the operational theory of dialogue (Baptista & Molina-Andrade, 2023). In the realm of culture, publications include those addressing politics and religion in Australia (Smith & Marden, 2012; García, 2012), the description of symbolic and instrumental policies in the Russian management of ethnic diversity (Osipov, 2012), and public policy as a tool for promoting culture in libraries and information sciences in Brazil (De Holanda *et al.*, 2013).

In Bangladesh, Devine & White (2013) analyze religion and moral order in relation to the subject. Finally, a study highlighting the incorporation of peace education into higher education public policies in Mexico, El Salvador, and Colombia (Islas *et al.*, 2018). Regarding publications that involve perceptions and public policies, studies conducted in European and Latin American contexts utilized individuals from various sectors of society as sources of information, including public officials, businesspeople, and educational system managers (Acuña *et al.*, 2023). In Europe, the work of Vernardakis (1992) is identified among the antecedents of scientific publications that involve perceptions and public policies, which analyzes the perceptions of the members of the ministerial cabinets of 5 ministries and union leaders to elaborate on the general policies of the French government. It concludes that government members are perceived as the primary arbitrators of social and economic policies (Vernardakis, 1992).

In contrast, in London, a study investigated perceptions regarding the intersection of technology and public policies among executives (Pettigrew *et al.*, 2023). This study creates a forum for discussion, identifying opportunities to enhance commitment among policymakers and analysts. The research focused on founders of start-up companies, executive directors, and venture capitalists who finance commercial technology ventures (Ablon & Golay, 2017). In addition, a comparative study examined the perceptions of entrepreneurs in Ukraine and Slovakia regarding government actions and business performance. The study concluded that perceptions of public policy are influenced by national culture and that public policies affect entrepreneurship development through these perceptions. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of informal institutions in shaping business perceptions of government actions and, consequently, business performance (Ostapenko, 2016).

In Latin America, a proposal for a public policy model aimed at reducing school violence and promoting a culture of peace focuses on the prevention and mediation of conflicts in large cities in Brazil (Santos *et al.*, 2023). The

study incorporates the perceptions of state public agents and managers of the public education system. Eventually, the definitions, typologies, and specific actions necessary for implementing the public policy are described (Chrispino & Herrera, 2008).

Guimarães (2009) describes the reorganization of the State System for the Evaluation of Educational Efficiency in São Paulo and its strategic role in the state's new educational agenda. The study emphasizes the creation of the Development Index of Education of São Paulo, which grants additional rewards for the outstanding performance of school teams. Additionally, it highlights the institutionalization of evaluation and maintenance systems as public policies in Brazil (Pérez-Nebra *et al.*, 2023).

1.2. International regulations on school coexistence

It is essential to include the pronouncements of supranational entities on school coexistence and the generation of norms in different countries that regulate the subject in question. This is how international organizations such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, (UNICEF 2012) have noted differences in the naturalization and institutionalization of violence across countries. These differences influence how current educational policies are approached and can positively impact efforts to reduce school violence.

A wide range of documents promote the protection of children and adolescents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948a), the American Declaration of the Rights of Man (Organization of American States, 1948), the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966a), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations, 1966b), and the American Convention on Human Rights (Organization of American States, 1969). Additionally, the Recommendation on Education for Understanding, Cooperation, Peace, and Education concerning Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1974) and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (United Nations, 1993), as well as the Declaration and Integrated Plan of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Democracy (UNESCO, 1995), also play significant roles. Other significant pronouncements addressing school violence at the international level have been made by the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO has been examining violence within institutions as a public health issue, emphasizing that women and children are particularly vulnerable. Among various forms of violence, the WHO has recognized bullying as a social disease that has escalated to significant proportions across different times, places, types,

and levels of schooling (Ascorra *et al.*, 2022). The organizations have general objectives to highlight the need to raise awareness about global violence and establish prevention mechanisms. Their specific objectives are to describe the magnitude and repercussions of violence worldwide, define the fundamental risk factors of violence, present the types of intervention and policy responses that have been implemented, and make recommendations for action at local, national, and international levels (Zapata & Ruiz, 2015). The actions of the State, through its regulations, aim to enforce, protect, and materialize the rights that ensure the protection of children against violent acts (Loubiès *et al.*, 2020). In some Latin American and Caribbean countries, regulations address the safety of children and adolescents against violent behaviors (del Pozo *et al.*, 2018). A review of these regulations will follow.

With the issuance of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, countries began the process of creating and adapting their public policies in alignment with international guidelines. These policies were applied internally through national regulations or high court rulings on violence against children. However, some countries still legitimize physical violence in institutions as corporal punishment (Loubiès *et al*., 2020). In Honduras, the Code for Children and Adolescents was established in 1996, following the Integrated Declaration and Plan of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Democracy, a document issued by UNESCO in 1995 (Puerta *et al.,* 2013).

Legislation in some countries, such as Antigua and Barbuda, permits corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure, as stipulated in Education Act (2008, art. 50), despite the recommendations of international organizations in their treaties. The government of Antigua and Barbuda has responded to such legislation by stating that it is a measure legitimized by the population, which will continue in force (UNICEF, 2012). In Costa Rica, the Law Against Sexual Harassment in Employment and Teaching, (Law No. 7476, 1995) was enacted in 1995 to combat sexual harassment in employment and education. By 2008, the Rights of Children and Adolescents were established, with the theme of "discipline without physical punishment or humiliating abuse." In Bolivia, legislation on the subject was introduced in 1999 with the passage of the Code for Children and Adolescents (Children and Adolescents Code, 1999). Haiti implemented the law against corporal punishment of children (2001), while Ecuador established its Code of Childhood and Adolescence (2003).

In the Dominican Republic, the Code for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (2003) was established. In El Salvador, the

Education Law was passed in 2004, though it did not address the issue of school violence in depth. The United Nations Human Rights Education Program was established in 2005. In Nicaragua, Ministerial Decree 134 of 2009 condemned violence (Darer & D'Emilio, 2014). Uruguay amended its Code for Children and Adolescents with Law No. 18.214 (2007), addressing the subject of violence. In Venezuela, the Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (1998) was created in 1998. In Argentina, a comprehensive protection law designed to prevent, punish, and eradicate violence against women was introduced in 2009 (Darer & D'Emilio, 2014). Similarly, with Law No. 13474 (2010) on the State of Rio Grande do Sul of 2010, the issue of violence in Brazil was regulated. For its part, Belize has the Education and Training Act of 2010, and in Chile, in 2011, the School Coexistence Law was passed (Darer & D'Emilio, 2014).

In Mexico, the law promoting violence-free coexistence in the school environment was established in 2012. Similarly, Paraguay's Law No. 4643 (2012) legislated against bullying in public, private, and semi-private educational institutions. In Peru, Supreme Decree No. 007-2001 ED (2001) and Law No. 29719 (2011) were enacted to promote school coexistence in educational institutions in 2011 (Darer & D'Emilio, 2014). In Cuba the UNICEF (2021) notes that the Childhood and Youth Code and the Family Code precede the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, this agency of the United Nations has recommended that the country prohibit all forms of corporal punishment, as there is currently no legislation forbidding it. Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, a country that has defended physical punishment if it is not applied arbitrarily, UNICEF has made comparable recommendations (Darer & D'Emilio, 2014).

In the Caribbean, there is a lack of uniformity and consistency in laws aimed at protecting children and adolescents within educational systems, with violence often being seen as a reflection of what occurs outside educational centers (UNICEF, 2012). Marthe (2012) reported that bullying in institutions in the Basque Country has reached 15%. Similarly, in Colombia, 30% of young people report experiencing intimidation, a rate comparable to that in the United States. López (2014) notes that UNESCO and its Member States observed the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for Children, which evaluated the period from 2001 to 2010. This initiative highlighted the global importance of fostering coexistence in education.

1.3. Colombian regulations on school coexistence.

Perceptions are recognized as a valid method for developing, implementing, and evaluating public policies across various sectors and geographical

contexts at both global and regional levels. This study focuses on Colombia, where specific legal and application characteristics are examined. Rodríguez-Burgos *et al.,* (2019) surveyed the effectiveness of the School Coexistence Policy in Colombia. They found significant differences between men and women in the effectiveness of the School Coexistence Law. However, they also concluded that there have been no substantial changes in the reduction of school violence since the law's implementation.

The government has entrusted the Ministry of National Education (MEN) with the responsibilities of formulating, directing, regulating, implementing, and evaluating general education policy, in coordination with the Departments and Municipalities. This delegation is outlined in Article 2 of Decree 5012 (2009). The MEN is tasked with establishing criteria and parameters to enhance access, quality, school environment, and comprehensive early childhood care, as well as ensuring equity in the provision of this public service. The educational policies developed by the MEN aim to delegate responsibility to educational institutions, which, in their autonomy, implement actions that contribute to creating environments that promote respect, human rights, values, and coexistence.

Likewise, it is the Ministry of National Education in Colombia that is responsible for creating strategies and allocating resources for the implementation of policies related to the professionalization of teachers. These strategies focus on learning themes and methodologies that address various situations in educational institutions, particularly those involving conflict. However, the repeated presence of violent behavior in educational institutions and the initial decisions by the Constitutional Court, specifically, sentences T-917 (2006) and sentence T-905 (2011), led this judicial body to mandate the Ministry of National Education to formulate a general policy.

This policy aims to prevent, detect, and address harassment, bullying, or bullying practices, ensuring alignment with existing programs and in collaboration with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute and the Attorney General's Office (Sentencia T 905, 2011). In 2013, the Congress of the Republic of Colombia, based on a proposal from the Ministry of National Education, enacted Law 1620 (2013). This law, titled *"por la cual se crea el Sistema Nacional de Convivencia Escolar y Formación para el Ejercicio de los Derechos Humanos, la Educación para la Sexualidad y la Prevención y Mitigación de la Violencia Escolar."* [By which the National School Coexistence System and Training for the Exercise of Human Rights, Education for Sexuality, and the Prevention and Mitigation of School Violence are Created] aims to contribute to the development of active

citizens who foster a democratic, participatory, pluralistic, and intercultural society, as mandated by the Constitution and the General Education Law (República de Colombia, 1994).

The law establishes a national system for school coexistence and training in human rights, sexuality education, and the prevention and mitigation of school violence. It is designed to enhance citizenship education and the exercise of human, sexual, and reproductive rights for students at preschool, elementary, and middle school levels, as well as to address and reduce school violence alongside teenage pregnancy (República de Colombia, 2013). This educational public policy was formulated to be implemented in all official and unofficial Educational Institutions in the country to strengthen the formation of adolescents in rights and duties that tend to healthy schoollife and the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescent's members of the educational communities.

Conversely, considering the regulatory framework supporting child protection, the government delegated the Ministry of National Education with the responsibility of designing and implementing educational policies. These policies aim to enhance the school system and contribute to the development of students through innovative administrative and pedagogical practices. Such practices include techniques for transformation and the establishment of clear objectives, which ultimately foster social development and improve the quality of life for individuals.

Public policy is understood as an integrative process comprising decisions, actions, inactions, agreements, and instruments, undertaken by public authorities, often with the participation of individuals, aimed at addressing or preventing a defined problem. This definition acknowledges the political aspect of public policy without conflating the two. Thus, public policy, as a social construct, can be defined as a strategy through which the government coordinates and aligns the behavior of various actors. This process involves a series of deliberate actions that manifest the realization of decisions concerning one or more collective objectives deemed necessary or desirable to address socially relevant issues (Torres-Melo & Santander, 2013).

Additionally, public policy can be understood as a series of successive initiatives, decisions, and actions by the political regime in response to socially problematic situations, aimed at either resolving them or managing them to acceptable levels (Oszlak, 2009). According to Roth (2002), public policy consists of several collective objectives deemed necessary or desirable and is implemented through means and actions managed at least

partially by a government institution or organization. This approach is intended to guide the behavior of individual actors or groups to address and modify problematic situations.

Therefore, public policy represents an institutional action, typically by the state, guided by predefined objectives and goals (Almeida & Ortega, 2008), and is subject to verification and evaluation. Understanding the concrete actions of the state enables an analysis of how obstacles and limitations encountered during the implementation phase are addressed, which can indicate whether a government faces a governance crisis. Dunn (2008) identifies several stages in the public policy cycle: the first stage involves planning within the government; the second focuses on formulating various options related to the specific issue; the third encompasses the execution of these actions, known as the implementation phase; and the final stage is evaluation, which assesses the results of the policy.

One of the stages of public policy is implementation. According to Torres-Melo & Santander (2013), the success or failure of this stage is contingent upon the members involved, as well as the coordination and cooperation among the various actors participating in the process. The effectiveness of implementation relies on the public organization's capacity to foster collective action dynamics. Furthermore, Torres-Melo & Santander (2013) emphasize that understanding the scope of the implementation phase is crucial for comprehending the role of policies in the relationship between the state and society, as well as for the effective management of rights guarantees.

Revuelta & Verduzco (2017) highlight that implementation can be examined from an organizational perspective using various models. One model involves the administration of activities and resources, where problems often arise due to deficiencies in planning, specification, and control. Another model focuses on organizational development, identifying the lack of consensus and commitment among those responsible for implementation as a fundamental reason for its failure. Finally, the conflict or negotiation model describes a continuous process among social and political actors, where the goal is to maximize expected benefits while the actors remain engaged in ongoing negotiations.

At the implementation stage, the commitment of the involved actors is essential to develop the work schedule, actions, indicators, and resources necessary to invest in professionals and logistics. Implementation refers to

how public policy is executed to generate real societal impacts and is thus related to the governance of public affairs. This phase focuses on coordinating activities, aligning actors, and fostering interactions to ensure the policy's success (Ortiz-Padilla *et al.,* 2018). The governance of the policy process depends on its structure, whether it follows a top-down or bottom-up approach (Torres-Melo & Santander, 2013).

In Colombia, studies have evaluated teacher's perceptions of civic education, human development, and teaching practices associated with school coexistence. Huertas (2023) describes how teachers associate student's behavioral problems with poor maintenance of school facilities and equipment, negative attitudes toward school, a weak sense of belonging to school communities, and conflicts during recess as well as entry and exit times. Additionally, these studies highlight that personal fulfillment fosters progress in achieving performance goals, reflecting teacher's potential for satisfaction and social recognition of their work. Arboleda *et al*., 2022 concluded that the pedagogical process is a means of learning to live together, promoting human well-being and enhancing the quality of life in the community.

Research has shown a growing interest in the effects of school coexistence processes on the academic performance of Colombian students. Evidence of this can be found in a study that emphasizes the importance of identifying factors influencing the behavior of aggressors, which will facilitate the development of mechanisms to help victims and bystanders report these incidents.

The study also highlights those cyberbullying impacts student's academic performance, where aggressors tend to have low or basic performance, while victims often achieve high or superior performance (Vega *et al.,* 2020). Montero *et al.* (2022) describe how promoting forms of school coexistence based on dialogue—where plurality, listening, tolerance, and an open disposition towards understanding others—validates humanizing values, which in turn have a fair and equitable impact on students' academic performance. Additionally, new strategies have been introduced to the curriculum to promote school coexistence, utilizing physical activity as a tool (López-Sánchez *et al.,* 2023).

In Pasto, Colombia, studies have analyzed socio-environmental factors, sociocultural deprivation, violence, and school coexistence. One article found that socioeconomic, political, territorial, and family control factors can influence the experience of values, conflict resolution, regulatory

adjustment, and interpersonal relationships—key elements of school coexistence (Perez *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, it was found that the combination of positive or negative experiences among adolescents determines higher or lower levels of cognitive functioning, adaptation to normative contexts, and social competencies, with sociocultural deprivation acting as a predictor of school failure, classroom disruption, and the need for attention (Narváez & Obando, 2020; Narváez-Burbano *et al.*, 2020).

Legal actions and studies have been identified concerning the school coexistence policy in Colombia, its implementation, and its evaluations. However, no study has been found that evaluates this public policy from the perspective of the teachers and students who are directly impacted by its actions. Therefore, the research question for this article is: What is the perception of middle school students and teachers regarding the implementation of the public policy on school coexistence and the mitigation of school violence in the municipality of Tunja, Colombia?

The evaluation of educational policy is measured by the impact generated by the Law of Coexistence on the academic community after its implementation in each institution. This is assessed through educational strategies, care routes, the systematization of information on cases of school violence, and the creation of plans, programs, and projects that operationalize the Law of School Coexistence. This study is relevant because its results add a valuable element to the variables used to evaluate public policies concerning school coexistence. Moreover, the impact of policy implementation is most directly felt by students and teachers, making their perceptions critical to developing a holistic view of its implementation and its influence on their well-being or discomfort.

This study aims to determine the perception of middle school students and teachers regarding the implementation of public policy on school coexistence, training for the exercise of human rights, education for sexuality, and the prevention and mitigation of school violence in Tunja, Boyacá, in 2018. To achieve this, two questionnaires were designed, validated, and administered to gather insights into the perceptions of students and teachers concerning the socialization of public policy, the strengthening of related activities, and the perceived impact on those involved.

The results were analyzed using SPSS statistical software (version 22), and conclusions were drawn that were compared with contemporary scientific literature.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Instruments

The Questionnaire "Efectividad de la Política Pública de Convivencia en las Instituciones Educativas de nivel secundaria del Municipio de Tunja" [Effectiveness of the Public Policy on Coexistence in Secondary Educational Institutions in the Municipality of Tunja] is based on previously applied questionnaires such as the one carried out in the city of Barranquilla (Colombia), related to the characterization of abuse between peers in a sample of schools in that city (Hoyos, Aparicio, & Córdoba, 2005), where it was described the incidence of different manifestations of peer abuse in a sample of schools in the city of Barranquilla (Colombia).

In addition, the investigation of "Violencia en los colegios de Bogotá: contraste internacional y algunas recomendaciones" [Violence in Bogotá Schools: International Comparison and Some Recommendations] (Velasquez & Chaux, 2008) was also taken into account, which was part of the report on school victimization in Bogotá: prevalence and associated factors, sponsored by the District Secretariat of Government of Bogotá.

Thus, an instrument of 44 items with a Likert scale was constructed, allowing the measurement of the perception of the existence of violence in Educational Institutions, tolerance to violent behavior and its consequences in relation to school dropout. The first instrument was validated by 10 experts in Public Administration, Law, Sociology and Education who are part of the Secretaría de Educación del Departamento de Boyacá and the Municipality of Tunja. With the instrument validated externally by experts, a pilot test was carried out on 90 secondary school students and teachers at the Colegio de Boyacá (which does not participate in the population under study) with character- istics to verify that the wording and the items were understood in addition to allowing the internal validity of the instrument through statistical tests of Cronbach's Alpha. The questionnaires were made up of 20 questions that evaluated the factors associated with the implementation of Public Policy; the socialization factor is items that question the routes of attention, actions, training, and training in school life issues. The second factor, strengthening, relates to pedagogical projects and activities promoting school life in educational institutions. Finally, the third factor, perceived impact, is composed of questions aimed at investigating the adequate

implementation, reduction of violence, and the effectiveness of activities within the law of school coexistence.

The questionnaire was conducted with a Likert scale with five response options where 1 is the option's choice, and five strongly disagree. For the construction of the variable, factor analysis was performed, where, in the student survey, a KMO of 0,787 was obtained; the sample adequacy measure (MSA) marked above 0,6; the commonalities were above 0,5; the cumulative variance in three factors of 89 %, while Cronbach's Alpha was 0,899. On the part of the questionnaires for teachers, a KMO of 0,687 was obtained; similar to results of those obtained in students, the sample adequacy measure (MSA) scored above 0,6; the commonalities were above 0,5, with a cumulative variance in three factors of 78 %, while Cronbach's Alpha was 0,857. The results obtained in both questionnaires give validity and reliability to the items that make up the questionnaires.

2.2. Sampling and participants

A Simple Random Sampling was carried out. The formula proposed by (Rodríguez-Burgos, 2012) for the finite population was used to determine the sample size. It adds two elements to the procedure, the design effect with a value of 1,75 and the 15 % non-response rate. In addition, a 99 % confidence level was chosen, and the importance of p x q =0,5 and β = 0,05 were assigned, leaving the application of 1,056 questionnaires to students. For the selection of professors, it was established to apply the questionnaire to all those who taught in the selected grades, which means that they were 50 teachers, according to the formula, due to the small population all of them were selected. It should be noted that the official schools are those that the government sponsors, while the unofficial ones are those where parents of families finance the education of their children as a private service.

The questions are intended to determine the perception of the implementation of the Public Policy of School Coexistence, and the results were analyzed based on the means found in each of the questions that make up the factors of socialization of the policy, strengthening of activities of implementation and perceived impact of the school coexistence policy.

Table 1.

Applied questionaries and Students enrolled in grades 9th, 10th and 11th of secondary school in the educational institutions

EDUCATIVE INSTITUTION	TYPE OF E.I.	TOTAL ENROLLED STUDENTS	QUESTIONNAIRES APPLIED TO STUDENTS	QUESTIONNAIRES APPLIED TO TEACHERS
Normal Femenina Leonor Alvarez Pinzon	Official	486	446	20
Antonio Jose Sandoval	Official	229	215	10
Julius Sieber	Official	122	111	5
Colegio Boyaca	Official	63	84	4
Cooservicios	No Official	132	125	6
Andino	No Official	96	93	5
Total		1128	1074	50

Note. Data in Column 3 are from "[Consulta de colegios]" by Secretaría de Educación Territorial de Tunja (SIEDU Tunja), 2020, (https://siedutunja.gov.co/home/consultas/consultacolegio.html) and from "[Establecimientos Educativos del sector oficial y no oficial por municipio – Departamento de Boyacá]" by Gobierno de Boyacá, 2017, (https://www.datos.gov.co/Educaci-n/Establecimientos-Educativos-del-sector-oficial-y-n/emd6-ef7x/about_data)

For the present study, two questionnaires were designed, validated, and applied to students and professors from 4 official and two unofficial middle schools for grades 9th, 10th, and 11th, from Tunja, Boyacá department Colombia. In total, 1,074 valid questionnaires were obtained, distributed to 854 students belonging to official Institutions representing 79,5 % of the respondents, and 220 students belonging to Unofficial Institutions, representing 20,5 % of the total students. In Table 1 it is shown the institutions where questionaries were applied.

3. RESULTS

Regarding gender distribution 747 students were women, a value that represents a percentage of 69,8 % of the total, and 323 men, representing 30,2 % of respondents. Four of the students to whom the questionnaire was applied did not state their gender. Concerning the distribution by age, the students surveyed were distributed in two different axes: between 10 and 15 years, representing 42,6 % of the total, and 57,4 % of students who said they met or were older than 15 years. The distribution by school grade of the students reflects those 395 questionnaires were applied to ninth-grade students representing 36,8 % of the total, 351 to tenth-grade students that are 32,7 %, and 328 questionnaires to eleventh-grade students representing 30,5 %. On the other hand, 50 questionnaires were applied to teachers, so the genderdistribution comprised 37 women, representing 74 % of the total teachers surveyed, and 13 used men, representing 26 % of the full participants. In addition to this, the age distribution was obtained in teachers in four categories: children under 25 years of age, consisting of 4 teachers repre- senting 8 %; between 25 and 35 years, ten teachers for 20

%, five between 36 and 45 years representing 10 %, and 31 teachers over 45 years equivalentto 62 % of the total respondents. Finally, it was determined that no teacher surveyed held an administrative position.

The descriptive results obtained in the socialization factor of the Policy, students presented a tendency to agree or disagree (M = 2,61, SD = 0,776), while teachers have a tendency to agree (M = 2,02, SD = 0,826); Similar results were presented in the strengthening factor of implementation activities where students were neutral (M = 2,48, SD = 1,289), while teachers agreed (M = 1,78, SD = 0,840). In the perceived impact the students did not show a greater difference with the previous factors (M = 2,65, SD = 0,788), as did the teachers (M = 2,39, SD = 0,725). (See table 2)

Table 2.
Implementation of Public Policy application in Educational Institutions

FACTORS	POPULATION	AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
Socialization	Students	2,61	0,776
	Teachers	2,02	0,826
Strengthening	Students	2,48	1,289
	Teachers	1,78	0,840
Impact	Students	2,65	0,788
	Teachers	2,39	0,725

Regarding the results of chi-square χ^2, significant differences were found in the students'› responses according to gender in the socialization factor of the Policy (χ^2 = 32,753 p = 0,008 <0,01). These results are replicated in the perceived impact factor finding significant difference (χ^2 = 31,459 p = 0,012 <0,05). No significant difference was found in the students' responses according to gender in strengthening implementation activities. Regarding age, significant differences were found in the students' responses in the socialization factor of the Policy (χ^2 = 30,748 p = 0,014 <0,05). In other factors, no significant differences were found. Considering the students' answers according to the type of educational insti- tution to which they are affiliated, a significant difference was found in the socialization factor of the Policy (χ^2 = 33,278 p = 0,007 <0,01). As for the other elements, no significant differences were identified.

A significant difference was found in the teachers' responses, considering the age in the socialization factor of the Policy (χ^2 = 47,511 p = 0,049 <0,05). Similar results were presented the strengthening factor of implementation activities (χ^2 = 47,511 p = 0,049 <0,05). In the other factor, there were no significant differences, in the same way as in the gender and type of insti- tution they are linked.

About the socialization variable there are significant differences in between students respect to gender, age and Educational insti- tution, and while in teachers there are only in age where there are significant differences. Respect to the strengthening component, there are no signif- icant differences on students, while there is only significant difference on the sociodemographic variable age with teachers. While in the third variable there is only a significant difference related to the students' gender. Regarding the results of the t-student test, where the means obtained are compared, it was found that there is a significant difference between the responses of students and teachers in the socialization factor of the policy (t = 3,207, p = 0,002 <0,005). In the aspects of strengthening and perceived impact, there were no significant differences between the groups' responses evaluated.

4. DISCUSSION

This study supports that the institutional implementation of the School Coexistence Public Policy has been assessed from the perspective of teachers. It highlights activities focused on the socialization of the law's objectives within educational institutions, its inclusion in the Coexistence Manual, the establishment and monitoring of care routes, and the evaluation of outcomes following the implementation of Law 1620 (Miranda-Medina *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, it outlines situations of school violence and structures awareness-raising actions regarding human sexual rights to prevent violence in schools and follow up on cases based on their complexity and severity (Montero *et al.*, 2022). This is further supported by Acosta & Castillo, (2017), who conclude that Law 1620 of 2013 represents a response from the government to the demands of the educational sector and Colombian society to address the increasing violence in schools. This violence affects the human, sexual, and reproductive rights of millions of children and adolescents in formal education at the preschool, elementary, and middle school levels. Additionally, the law creates opportunities for the educational system to meet the objectives and goals defined within the framework of respective sectoral public policies. In addition, the implementation of a school coexistence program under the framework of the law leads teachers to perceive an improvement in the school climate (Peñalva *et al.*, 2015)**.** This observation supports the Constitutional Court's discourse, which highlights a general protection deficit for victims of bullying. Despite the existence of a clear regulatory framework and a public policy defined since 2013, these measures have not been vigorously implemented (Constitutional Court of Colombia, 2015).

The conclusions indicate that there has been progress in the implementation of public policy, which can address issues related to school coexistence. According to Huertas (2023), teachers in Colombia identify key coexistence problems such as absenteeism, bullying, drug abuse, violence, and vandalism.

These issues are often linked to students' lack of care for school facilities and equipment, poor relationships with teachers, negative attitudes towards school, a weak sense of belonging to the school community, and conflicts among students during break times and when entering or leaving the institution (Huertas, 2023). In contrast, Azqueta *et al.* (2023) found that school coexistence is primarily associated with promoting participation and positive interactions within the educational community. This association underscores the importance of school climate, which is integral to educational practice and is linked to students' learning, well-being, and health.

5. CONCLUSIONS

On one hand, student's perceptions of violence in the educational environment revealed significant differences based on gender. Female students tend to be more attuned to their surroundings in educational contexts. Regarding age, older students are generally more aware of the measures being implemented to ensure safety in educational institutions. Additionally, students in private (unofficial) schools are more attentive to maintaining safe, violence-free environments, possibly due to the importance of reputation and school coexistence in these institutions.

On the other hand, teachers with greater experience, specifically those with 31 to 40 years in the educational field, are more likely to perceive violent behaviors in students compared to those with less experience. Based on the results obtained, it is concluded that there are differences in how teachers and students perceive the implementation of the School Coexistence Law in their educational institutions. Teachers tend to have a more positive perception compared to students. This disparity may be attributed to the fact that teachers are directly involved in modifying regulations and norms, making decisions within each institution, and establishing values.

As a result, they may perceive the changes and their effects on students more positively. In contrast, students appear to lack knowledge on the subject, as their responses indicate a neutral stance regarding the institution's actions since the introduction of the Public Policy for School Coexistence.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We identified limitations in this study, notably that the sample represents only the city of Tunja and cannot be generalized to a national level, as other municipalities or departments in Colombia were not considered. Additionally, while this study contrasts the perceptions of students and teachers, it does not address the perspectives of teaching managers, policy managers, and other members of the academic community.

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