

Indicators to determine the socio-educational vulnerability of children

Yamila Del Carmen Camacho Sojo^{1*} <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4264-2314>

Félix Lázaro Huepp Ramos¹ <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2717-1670>

Miladis Fornaris Méndez¹ <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4510-6610>

¹Universidad de Oriente. Cuba

*Author for the correspondence: yamila.camacho@uo.edu.cu

ABSTRACT

The unfavorable social and educational situations faced by some children constitute a highly topical problem that can lead to the exclusion of children from society. There are several researchers who have made incursions into the subject related to vulnerability; but there are insufficiencies in the identification of indicators for the determination of children in situations of socio-educational vulnerability: The objective of this article is to analyze the indicators proposed to detect situations of socio-educational vulnerability in children between zero and twelve years of age. For this purpose, several methods were used: analysis and synthesis, modeling, expert criteria.

Keywords: Vulnerability; Socioeducational; Indicators; Exclusion.

Introduction

The search for the best responses by States to reduce horizontal inequalities, vulnerabilities, exclusion, marginalization and poverty has led to the convening of national and international organizations in multiple spaces of confluence to discuss and project increasingly inclusive and development policies that allow the advancement of

nations in an effort to generate levels of human well-being that are a guarantee for sustainable human development.

In the 2030 Agenda, approved by the United Nations General Assembly, in its global action plan, in favor of people, planet and prosperity, education is attributed a strategic value for the realization of its educational actions; for its ontological reason, being valued as a process that enhances human welfare and development, in direct relation to the demands of the development of society, which is why it is stated that "The achievement of quality education is the basis for improving people's lives and sustainable development" (UN, 2018, p. 29).

The study of the situation of social and educational vulnerability of certain population groups of children and young people has been addressed by several researches, including Spicker et al. (2009); Martín Romero (2019); Peña Farias et al.(2015); Perona & Rocchi(2016); Camargo Rubio(2022), who have addressed these negative situations in various parts of the world and have pointed out important aspects for their definition and attention.

In 2022, during the development of the community project related to the care of children in situations of socio-educational vulnerability, insufficiencies were detected in the identification of indicators for determining children in situations of socio-educational vulnerability, an element that makes the timely detection of these cases impossible.

Taking into account these inadequacies, the objective of the present research is to analyze the indicators necessary to identify children in a situation of socio-educational vulnerability in the specific conditions of Santiago de Cuba.

In order to achieve this objective, different methods were used: the documentary analysis of different bibliographic sources such as scientific articles, degree theses, brochures, manuals, among other scientific texts, with the objective of considering the indicators to identify children, adolescents and young people in a situation of socio-educational vulnerability and to contextualize them, based on the educational reality of the aforementioned city.

The method of analysis and synthesis was used with the objective of studying the different existing definitions of the theoretical constructs under research in order to reveal the essential aspects and determine their characteristic features, which will make it possible to define the indicators of socio-educational vulnerability, their essential

relationships with other forms of vulnerability and to specify their essential characteristics.

The modeling made possible the theoretical construction of indicators for the determination of situations of socio-educational vulnerability.

Expert criteria were used to evaluate the feasibility and relevance of the indicators proposed for the determination of situations of socio-educational vulnerability.

The research was carried out in response to the demands posed by the Community Project "Attention to children in situations of socio-educational vulnerability" of the Special-Logopedia department, of the Faculty of Education Sciences belonging to the University of Oriente in Santiago de Cuba, which is developed in coordination with the Council of the Municipal Administration of Santiago de Cuba. In which the need to identify the indicators for the determination of children in vulnerable situations was initially raised.

Development

Vulnerability. Socio-educational vulnerability

In recent decades, the analysis of the vulnerability category has been a concept of wide diffusion, in the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy, vulnerability is referred to as "Quality of vulnerable" (RAE, 2014) and vulnerable "Who can be hurt or receive injury, physically or morally" (RAE, 2014).

Vulnerability makes it possible to address the phenomenon of inequalities in its dynamism and heterogeneity, as it seeks to understand the factors that affect poor groups and define their opportunities for the attainment of the state of social well-being, as well as to identify those resources that they possess and that can be mobilized to get out of their situation of risk. In other words, the concept proposes not only to identify those conditions of insecurity or risk of individuals and households, but also to explain the management of resources and strategies to face such situations.

For Spicker et al. (2009) "vulnerability arises when the population exposed to risk cannot avoid being affected" (p. 257).

For his part Martín Romero (2019) identifies the term social vulnerability as a concept that works that allows identifying:

A field of scientific intellection oriented to the detection of risks to which human groups and/or their institutions are subjected in their various modes of grouping or organization and for whose confrontation they lack in some degree of necessary, sufficient or timely resources (p. 78).

Likewise, Peña Farias et al (2015) state that vulnerability:

It is associated with the conditions of risk, of difficulty, which disable immediately or in the future, the affected groups, in the satisfaction of their well-being as subsistence and quality of life in sociohistorical, territorial and culturally determined contexts.(p. 116).

The above definitions illustrate that the term vulnerability is used to describe the exposure to risks presented by individuals and their inability to cope with this situation, which can lead to disadvantages in human development, inequalities, exclusion from society, among other situations that limit their normal development.

A large number of national and international scholars have referred to the category of vulnerability from different disciplinary fields (social, penal, psychological, pedagogical, approaches, dimensions and social perspectives), and there are critical approaches to it in the scientific literature, because they coincide in terms of the risk of something negative happening or taking place and it is due to certain conditions or properties that affect a group of people or social groups that are damaged.

Spicker et al. (2009) point out that:

...vulnerability is related to the possession and control of assets, which can be distinguished between tangible and intangible. Tangibles include labor and human capital, as well as housing and social and economic infrastructure. Intangibles include household relationships and social capital. (p. 246).

For the analysis of the situation of vulnerability, a set of socio-educational factors that can directly or indirectly influence the individual or collective situation with greater or lesser impact on children must be taken into account. These factors have been defined by different scholars on the subject and have been contextualized according to how the situation of vulnerability has been understood, which may be due to poverty, disasters, earthquakes, institutional neglect by the State, social and economic fragility, social resilience, children who suffer hunger, children who may be abused, children who are in

street situations, children who are not provided with the basic resources for their well-being, among others.

Addressing the topic that concerns us in this research, we will refer to social vulnerability. This is a relevant topic for the social sciences, since social inequalities are the object of analysis of the social sciences, as it allows us to explain the social disadvantages to which individuals are subjected.

The general definition of social vulnerability is associated with a condition of risk, as it is understood as the probability of experiencing affectations by certain situations caused by changes in the context or in human, social and/or cultural capitals and people's capacities.

Perona & Rocchi (2016) analyze social vulnerability as:

'As a social condition of risk, of difficulty, which disables and invalidates, immediately or in the future, the affected groups, in the satisfaction of their welfare as subsistence and quality of life in sociohistorical and culturally determined contexts' (p. 1).

On the other hand, when addressing the term educational vulnerability Díaz López & Pinto Loría (2017) point out:

The concept of Educational Vulnerability refers to those individuals who experience a series of marked difficulties throughout their school career that prevent them from making the most of the curriculum and the teachings within the classroom.(p.46).

These authors highlight the existence of barriers that can interfere with the passage of children and young people through education and that can be:

...emotional, family, interpersonal, related to the teaching and learning process or to the climate of the educational institution in which they are immersed; usually these conditions are accompanied by much more complex or profound factors or phenomena and, in most cases, lead to school failure. (Díaz López & Pinto Loría, 2017, p. 46)

It can be understood that a minor who has a situation of educational and social vulnerability when he presents a weakness in his environment with respect to the rest of the student body and that is reflected in his education for various reasons, all this analyzed in comparison with his peers who live in the same social context and who lack this limitation. This vulnerability is linked to the origin of the students, the socioeconomic and cultural level of the family or the conditions of their schooling.

Situations of socio-educational vulnerability are identified when there are weaknesses in the educational and/or social environment of the child, hindering the harmonious development of his or her personality, preventing his or her inclusion in society.

In the presence of these situations, the pertinent measures should be taken, since they constitute one more reason for diversity and exclusion of children in society, due to the non-fulfillment of the social and educational goals imposed on them.

The challenge is how to typify each situation, based on observable indicators and current conditions in a life history, its causes, effects and consequences for the normal development of children in a situation of socio-educational vulnerability. Hence, the importance of identifying indicators to determine children in situations of socio-educational vulnerability.

Indicators for the determination of children in a situation of socio-educational vulnerability

The identification of indicators makes it possible to study the object in question, proposing the essential aspects to be evaluated in order to reach conclusions about it. Taking the essential characteristics of the object of study.

Morresi et al. (2008), when referring to indicators, define them as: "an observable manifestation of a feature or characteristic of one or more variables of interest, susceptible of evaluation, which provides quantitative and/or qualitative information about that characteristic" (p. 10).

The determination of indicators will make it possible to identify those situations that may have social and/or educational consequences for the child. This will allow the implementation of actions, measures to mitigate, eliminate and transform the situation revealed.

Based on the study and analysis of different documents and materials, the following indicators were determined to identify the situation of socio-educational vulnerability in children.

The following is the dimension: socio-educational vulnerability, the indicators to determine situations of socio-educational vulnerability and the characteristics that the indicator should present (see table 1).

Table 1: Dimension and indicators for determining situations of vulnerability in children.

Dimensión	Indicador	Características
Vulnerabilidad Socioeducativa	Menores de 0 a 6 años identificados con familias socialmente complejas	Niños con familia con conducta social inadecuada, padres reclusos, ex reclusos, psiquiátricos, madre promiscua, presencia de malas relaciones interpersonales, maltrato familiar, abandono y violencia intrafamiliar
	Presencia de adicciones	Presencia en el seno familiar de adicciones al alcohol, drogas, juegos u otras, en uno de los miembros de la familia
	Presencia de familia con bajos recursos económicos	Condiciones económicas precarias, desfavorables e inestables que imposibilitan suplir las necesidades básicas de los miembros de la familia, condiciones relacionadas con la vivienda, hacinamiento, disponibilidad de alimentos, condiciones monetarias desfavorables, entre otras
	Padres adolescentes	Padres menores de edad con insuficiente preparación para la tarea de educar y cuidar integralmente a un niño. Muestran desatención, negligencia educativa, maltrato
	Educandos víctimas de maltrato infantil	Niños víctimas de maltrato físico y verbal, que lacera su integridad y el desarrollo de su personalidad
	Educando en situación de abandono escolar	Niños con ausencias reiteradas a la institución educativa o con desatención a las tareas escolares que le imposibilitan la adquisición de conocimientos, por negligencia institucional o familiar, lo que conlleva insuficiente preparación socioeducativa para su inserción e inclusión en la sociedad
	Ausencia de uno o ambos padres	Niños huérfanos, abandonados, al cuidado de otras personas, con padres reclusos, que imposibilita su atención sistemática y que por esta causa están en situación de desatención económica y/o afectiva
	Escolares con problemas de comportamiento	Escolares con problemas de indisciplina constantes, que muestran inadaptación a las reglas establecidas por la escuela y la sociedad en general
	Presencia de estilos inadecuados de dirección educativa en la institución	Se agrupan los niños con maestros que manifiestan comportamientos de mucha autoridad, permisividad e insuficiente preparación, que trae consigo dificultades en la adquisición de la cultura y del desarrollo armónico de la personalidad de los niños
	Bajo rendimiento escolar	Escolares con dificultades en el aprendizaje, por falta de hábitos de estudio y pobre desarrollo de habilidades cognitivas, que dificultan la adquisición de los contenidos del nivel en que se encuentran
Escolares con necesidades educativas especiales y/o trastornos del lenguaje	Presencia de escolares con algún tipo de necesidad educativa especial, asociada o no a una discapacidad que no reciben una adecuada atención educativa en la institución donde se encuentran	
Escolares con dificultades para acceder al aprendizaje del currículo según grado	Debido a trastornos o patologías genéticas, congénitas o adquiridas que se presentan: Presencia de niños con alguna patología o grandes periodos de hospitalización, que dificulta su desarrollo social y la adquisición sistemática de las materias escolares	

Source: Own elaboration.

The determination of the indicators makes it possible to detect children in these situations, and thus be able to take action to mitigate or solve the real situation in the context in which the children find themselves. The indicators are intended for children between the ages of zero and twelve years of age (early childhood and school children). For the validation of the feasibility of the indicators to determine situations of socio-educational vulnerability in children, adolescents and young people, the Delphi method was designed and is described below:

To determine the competence coefficient of the experts, the candidates were asked to fill out a self-assessment according to their level of knowledge in the topics related to the indicators to evaluate the development of professional skills, from which the coefficients of knowledge (kc) and argumentation (ka), necessary to determine the level of competence of the experts and their final selection, were specified.

Finally, we proceeded to obtain the competence coefficient (k), using the expression $k = \frac{1}{2}(kc + ka)$. From the results obtained, 15 experts with a high level were selected.

Next, we proceed to show the results of the expert criterion applied to assess the feasibility of the indicators determined to determine situations of socio-educational vulnerability in children.

Table 2 shows the absolute results of the experts' opinions in relation to the aspects they were consulted about.

Table 2: Absolute criteria of the experts.

Pasos	Muy adecuado	Bastante adecuado	Adecuado	Poco adecuado	No adecuado	Total
P1		9	6			15
P2		5	10			15
P3		13	2			15

Source: Own elaboration.

Legend:

Steps: Aspects to be assessed by the experts.

P1: Selection of the dimension and its indicators.

P2: Content of the indicators.

P3: Adequacy of the content of the indicators to the social and educational context of the children.

In the interview with (15) experts, 9 considered the selection of the dimension and indicators to be quite adequate (60%) and 6 considered it to be adequate (40%). With regard to the analysis of the content of the indicators, 5 (33%) considered it to be quite adequate and 10 considered it to be adequate (66%).

As for the adequacy of the content of the indicators to the social and educational context of the children, 13 consider it to be quite adequate (86%), and 2 consider it to be adequate (13%).

All the specialists agreed on the evaluation carried out, proposing that the indicators to determine situations of socio-educational vulnerability in children constitute a very adequate resource for the development of a quality process.

The suggestions and recommendations they propose are as follows:

- Socialize the indicators in events, articles, as they consider that they are feasible to be used to determine situations of socio-educational vulnerability.
- The values identified provide a high level of significance of the concordance of the specialists, reflecting between very adequate and adequate evaluation parameters, which indicates the validity of the proposed indicators.

Conclusions

Socio-educational vulnerability limits the development of the personality of children, adolescents and young people because it exposes them to situations of exclusion in society, as they are unable to comply with the established demands and standards.

The proposed indicators make it possible to determine situations of socio-educational vulnerability in children, allowing the development of actions to eliminate or reduce the situation in which the child finds himself/herself.