

IMPACT OF STEREOTYPES ON STUDENT LEARNING AT THE PRESCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract: This study analyzes the influence of gender, racial, and social stereotypes in early childhood education. It argues that these beliefs affect children's perceptions and opportunities, limiting their cognitive, emotional, and social development. The research was conducted in Tlalmanalco, State of Mexico, with eleven preschool teachers, using a mixed methodology and applying surveys validated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.871).

The results show that, although some teachers promote equity and diversity, practices that reinforce stereotypes still persist, such as assigning toys and roles according to gender. The need for educational strategies that promote gender equality and inclusion from early childhood is highlighted. Among the main recommendations are ongoing teacher training and working together with families to change patterns that are deeply rooted in society.

The study concludes that preschool education should be a space where values of equality and respect are reinforced, helping children develop a more inclusive view of the world. Eradicating stereotypes from childhood is crucial to building a more just and equitable society.

Keywords: Gender stereotypes, Preschool education, Gender equity, Educational inclusion, Child socialization.

Abstract: This study analyzes the influence of gender, racial, and social stereotypes in early education. It argues that these beliefs affect children's perceptions and opportunities, limiting their cognitive, emotional, and social development. The research was conducted in Tlalmanalco, State of Mexico, with eleven preschool teachers, using a mixed methodology and applying surveys validated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.871).

The results show that, although some teachers promote equity and diversity, practices that reinforce stereotypes, such as assigning toys and roles according to gender, still persist. The need for educational strategies that promote gender equity and inclusion from early childhood is highlighted. Among the main recommendations, it suggests continuous training for teachers and joint work with families to change entrenched patterns in society.

The study concludes that preschool education should be a space where values of equality and respect are reinforced, helping children to develop a more inclusive vision of the world. Eradicating stereotypes from childhood is crucial to building a fairer and more equitable society.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, society has undergone various changes in stereotypes due to actions that have remained ingrained in homes, classrooms, literature, music, and the media. Consequently, there have been various changes in individuals' behavior, mainly in their actions and social decisions.

García Villanueva and Hernández Ramírez (2016) state that "gender stereotypes are fixed beliefs, assumed without reflection and socially transmitted, about how each person is and how they should act according to their gender." These stereotypes are more deeply rooted in rural areas, due to customs and traditions that are not widely questioned.

At the preschool level, there is already a greater variety of resources, populations, and media, which allow teachers to have other alternatives for working with students. However, as long as there is no awareness of respect for diversity to eradicate stereotypes in classrooms and in the school community, this abundance of resources and courses will be meaningless if there is no openness or willingness, as mentioned by the following author:

"Educating also means keeping in mind, on the one hand, the uniqueness and diversity of human beings and, on the other, the need/responsibility/commitment to educate for social equality, gender equity, and planetary belonging, which ultimately means educating for life, that is, learning to live and coexist" (García Ramírez, CT, 2014, p. 442).

Well, it would seem that, given all of the above, preschool educators have a great responsibility not to participate in the reproduction of the aforementioned stereotypes, truly reflecting on their teaching practices in order to provide students with greater opportunities for play, learning, and reading with a variety of texts, without pigeonholing them into activities that are mistakenly considered to be only for a certain gender.

"The study of gender shows a dichotomy between the male and female universes. Schools, together with families, as institutions and agents of socialization, are responsible for educating while transmitting gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are social constructs and, therefore, can vary according to society and context." (Aroca-Aroca, M., 2022, p. 30).

General objective

To identify stereotypes at the preschool level.

Specific objectives

- Conduct a literature review.
- Analyze the literature review.
- Implement a strategy in the classroom.

Justification: This study refers to "The impact of stereotypes on preschool students' learning" and was carried out in the municipality of Tlalmanalco, State of Mexico, with the aim of identifying stereotypes at the preschool level.

This reflects an impact mainly in the social and cultural spheres.

In terms of the social sphere: Gender, racial, and social stereotypes, deeply rooted in our society, exert a significant influence on preschool education, shaping the perceptions and expectations that children have about themselves and the world around them. This early socialization can have lasting consequences on their cognitive, emotional, and social development, leading to limited opportunities. For example, girls may be expected to play with dolls and show interest in domestic activities, while boys are encouraged to participate in more physical games and activities related to science and technology. This shapes children's gender, racial, and social identities, limiting their vision of what they can be and achieve. At the same time, prejudice and discrimination can be generated, affecting children's social relationships both inside and outside the classroom. This can affect their academic performance, as they may feel less capable of achieving success in areas considered more appropriate for the other gender.

With regard to the cultural sphere: Stereotypes not only have an individual impact on learners, but also perpetuate and reinforce broader cultural structures. In preschool education, this manifests itself in various ways: by perpetuating gender roles that can lead to inequalities in adult life; Racial stereotypes can influence the expectations of teachers and peers, which can affect the academic performance and self-esteem of children from ethnic minorities; Stereotypes associated with social class can limit access to educational and cultural resources, creating barriers to the development of their full potential.

Not being open to diversity and insisting on the homogenization of identity limits the expression of cultural diversity, often due to unfounded fears or to avoid feeling rejected for trying to be different, thereby encouraging discrimination and exclusion.

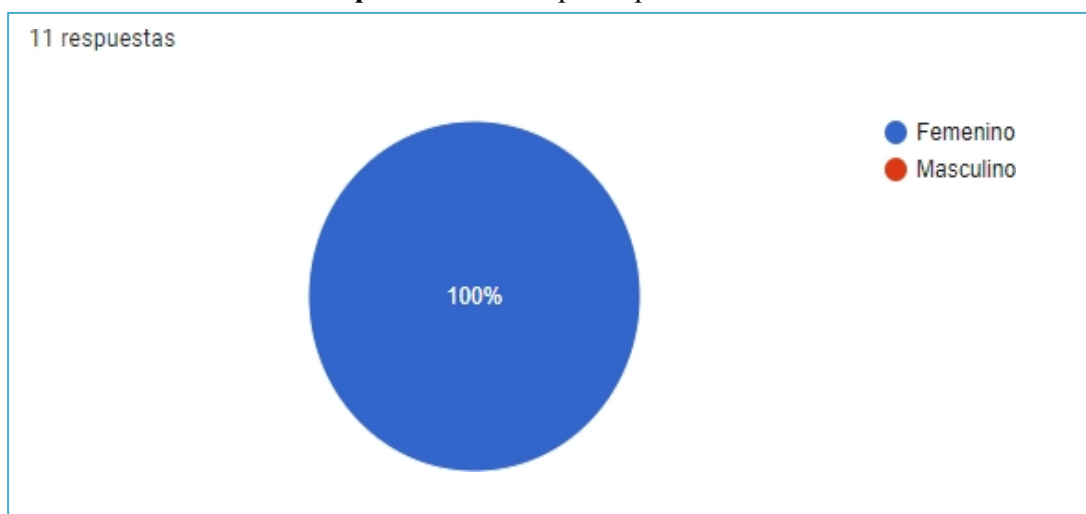
DEVELOPMENT

The methodology used in this research project, "Impact of stereotypes on preschool students' learning," consists of four phases: participants, design, instrument, and procedure, as shown below.

Participants.

The survey was conducted using the Microsoft 365 suite in forms with eleven preschool teachers, on a voluntary basis, with 100% of the participants being female; this is because in preschool teaching, 95% of the student body is made up of women from locations close to teacher training colleges.

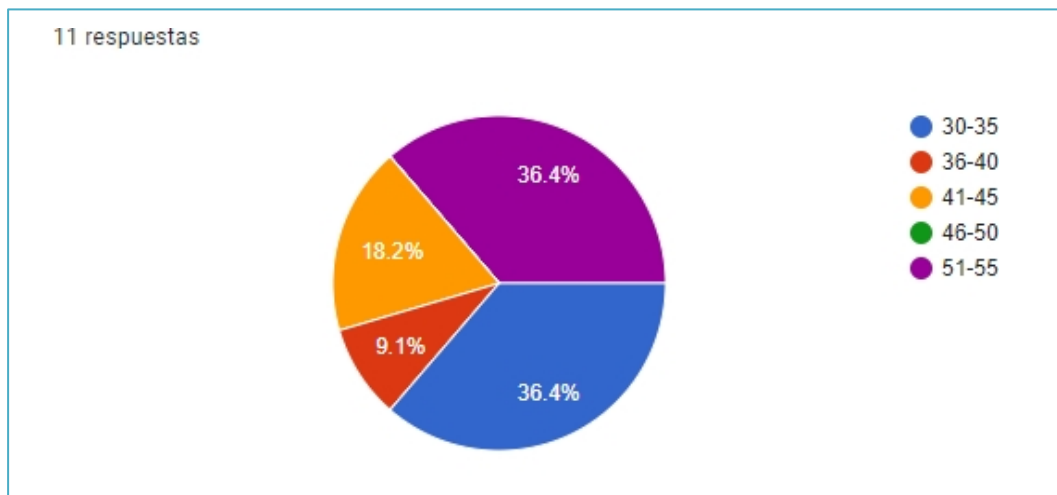
Graph 1. Gender of participants.



Source: Own elaboration. (2024).

The age of the participants ranges from 30 to 55 years old. This reveals that 36.4% of the participants are between the ages of 30 and 35, as well as between 51 and 55, showing that there is a balance between teachers with few years of service and those who are about to retire. with 18.2% of educators aged 41 to 45 and 9.1% aged 36 to 40.

Graph 2. Age of participants.



Source: Own elaboration. (2024).

Design

This research project has a mixed approach, as it presents both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. This is because during the research, a literature review was conducted that considered the following factors (gender, early childhood education, gender stereotypes, sexism, entertainment, stories, school, inequality, play, gender equality, childhood, coeducation, toys, Venezuela, teachers, family, patriarchy, advertising, diversity, violence, discrimination, psychosocial, vicarious, equality, attitude, subjectivity, child violence, professional training, silence, participation, public policy, masculinities, education policy, discourse, message, popular culture, roles) and data processing was carried out using SPSS software, as well as validation of the adapted instrument using Cronbach's alpha tool to validate this research.

Instrument

The instrument to be used consists of 10 questions that were adapted from the literature review "Differentiated pedagogical program to strengthen teachers' coeducational management, Basic Education Degree Program, University of Guayaquil, 2021" (Reza, 2021) because it meets the expectations of the research. It consists of different five-point Likert-type alternatives that constitute the assessment constructs, considering that 1 is Never, 2 is Almost never, 3 is Sometimes, 4 is Almost always, and 5 is Always. On the other hand, it is well known that the use of questionnaires, scales, and tests requires that they be valid and reliable instruments. Reliability,

understood as the accuracy in measuring a characteristic or attribute, can be calculated in different ways. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is one of the most commonly referenced and can be used in scale variables. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, J., & Reguant-Alvarez, M. (2020). The alpha coefficient, represented by the Greek letter α (alpha), is an estimate of the reliability of a scale, which must be greater than .70 to continue with the research.

Furthermore, this survey will be validated by Cronbach's alpha and ANOM, in order to ensure the reliability and relevance of equity in preschool education.

The Cronbach's alpha result for this survey is 0.871, which indicates that all participants answered in full and that the survey is consistent and viable.

Procedure

Step 1.- Visit different research portals to investigate stereotypes that arise in preschool education.

Step 2.- The literature review was analyzed and subsequently validated.

Table 1. Review and validation,

Key factors	Frequency	References
Family	1	Salamanca (2014)
Genre	15	Salamanca (2014); Villalobos (2022); Feijóo (2019); Jara (2019); Martínez & Vélez (2009); Jiménez & Galeano (2019); Mosteiro & Porto (2017); Quiaragua (2016); Puerta & González (2015); Serrano & Ochoa (2021); Camacho & Watson (2007); Collazos (2023); Cervantes & Chávez (2018); Fernández (2006); García & Hernández (2016)
Entertainment	3	Salamanca (2014); Collazos (2023); Fernández (2006)
Short stories	3	Salamanca (2014); Ochoa, D., Parra, M., & García (2006); García & Hernández (2016)

Patriarchy	1	Salamanca (2014)
Advertising	1	Salamanca (2014)
Coeducation	2	Salamanca (2014); Feijóo (2019)
School	3	Salamanca (2014); Garcia (2014); Quiaragua (2016)
Diversity	1	Salamanca (2014)
Inequality	3	Villalobos (2022); Castillo & Gamboa (2013); Lechuga, Ramírez, & Guerrero (2018)
Violence	1	Villalobos (2022)
Discrimination	1	Villalobos (2022)
Gender stereotypes	8	Feijóo (2019); Jara (2019); Martínez & Vélez (2009); García (2014); Mosteiro & Porto (2017); Serrano & Ochoa (2021); Collazos (2023); García & Hernández (2016)
Early childhood education	10	Feijóo (2019); Castillo & Gamboa (2013); Martínez & Vélez (2009); Jiménez & Galeano (2019); Lechuga, Ramírez, & Guerrero (2018); Mosteiro & Porto (2017); Puerta & González (2015); Camacho & Watson (2007); Azúa & Saavedra (2019); Ochoa, D., Parra, M., & García (2006)
Game	3	Feijóo (2019); Martínez & Vélez (2009); Puerta & González (2015)
Gender equality	3	Castillo & Gamboa (2013); Martínez & Vélez (2009); Camacho & Watson (2007)
Sexism	5	Castillo & Gamboa (2013); Martínez & Vélez (2009); Quiaragua (2016); Puerta & González (2015); Azúa & Saavedra (2019)
Psychosocial	1	Jara (2019)

Vicario	1	Jara (2019)
Equality	1	Martínez & Vélez (2009)
Toy	2	Martínez & Vélez (2009); Puerta & González (2015)
Attitude	1	Martínez & Vélez (2009)
Venezuela	2	García (2014); Ochoa, D., Parra, M., & García (2006)
Childhood	3	Jiménez & Galeano (2019); Serrano & Ochoa (2021); Cervantes & Chávez (2018)
Subjectivity	1	Jiménez & Galeano (2019)
Child abuse	1	Jiménez & Galeano (2019)
Professional training	1	Mosteiro & Porto (2017)
Teachers	2	Quiaragua (2016); Azúa & Saavedra (2019)
Silence	1	Quiaragua (2016)
Participation	1	Serrano & Ochoa (2021)
Public policy	1	Cervantes & Chávez (2018)
Masculinities	1	Cervantes & Chávez (2018)
Education policy	1	Azúa & Saavedra (2019)
Discourse	1	Fernández (2006)
Message	1	Fernández (2006)
Popular culture	1	Fernández (2006)
Roles	1	García & Hernández (2016).

Source: Own work (2024).

Step 3.- A strategy for working with teachers will be implemented.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

It should be noted that this research project, "Impact of stereotypes on preschool student learning," proceeded at this stage of the research to validate the hard data, which was collected through a survey of eleven educators in the Tlalmanalco school district.

All of them responded, showing consistency.

Table 2. Summary of data processing.

		N	%
Casos	Válido	11	100,0
	Excluido ^a	0	,0
	Total	11	100,0

a. La eliminación por lista se basa en todas las variables del procedimiento.

Source: Own elaboration (2024).

Subsequently, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.871 was obtained, showing reliable consistency to continue with the research. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is one of the most commonly referenced and can be used in scale variables. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, J., & Reguant-Alvarez, M. (2020).

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha.

Estadísticas de fiabilidad	
Alfa de Cronbach	N de elementos
,871	10

Source. Own elaboration (2024).

Analysis of Results

Graph 3. Diversity present in the classroom to relate activities.



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

Analysis: This graph shows 45.5%, which indicates that most teachers are able to identify their students' skills and interests through various learning strategies. This is extremely important for revisiting subsequent strategies that include diversity in the classroom. Some 36.4% of educators almost always identify the type of students they have, and only 18.2% sometimes notice the type of students they are working with.

Figure 4. Organization of collaborative teams.

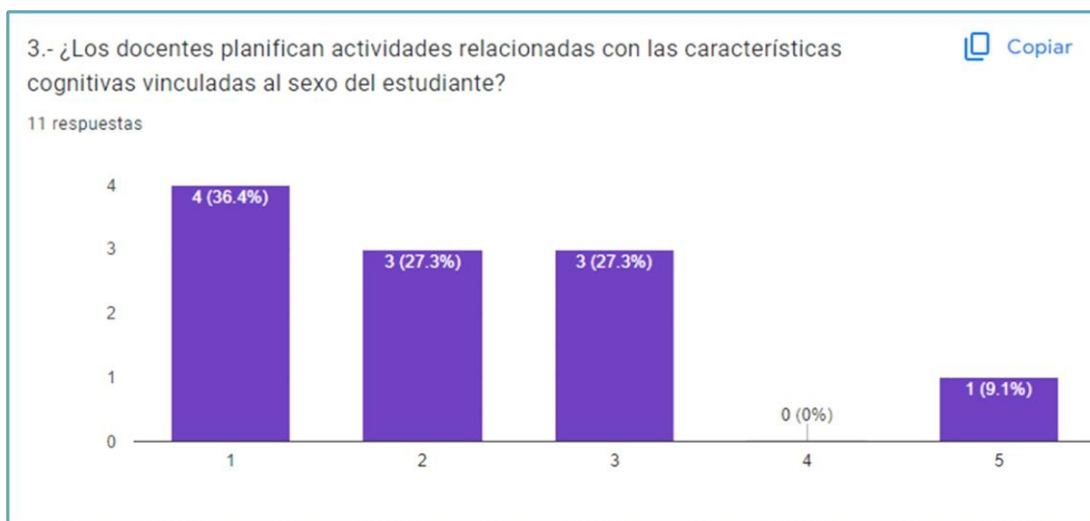


Source: Own elaboration (2024).

The results indicate that only 18.2% take their students' abilities and interests into account, while 36.4% of teachers almost always organize collaborative teams in

relation to the skills and interests of the students, however, 45% of them almost never or sometimes do so, which is important to analyze. Because it is important to take into account the characteristics of the students.

Graph 5. Planning activities related to the student's gender.



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

This table shows that the gender of the students is not a factor that determines the activities planned by most educators, showing that 36.4% of them never take this aspect into account, which shows that they are on the right track, because the less gender difference there is in the classroom, the more constructive the coexistence will be. 27.3% of the participants almost never take it into account, another 27.3% sometimes consider it, and only 9.1% always take it into account.

Therefore, action still needs to be taken to raise awareness among teachers about the importance of this aspect.

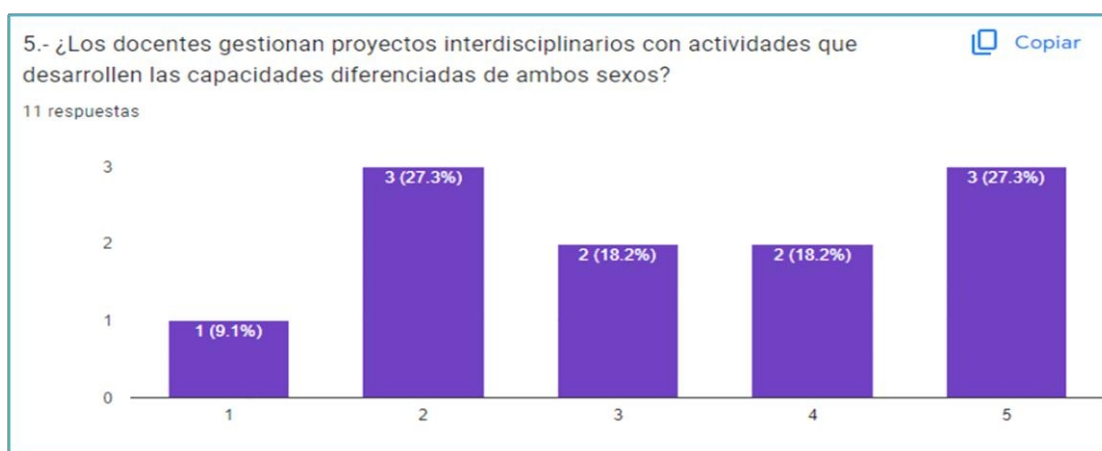
Graph 6. Design of authentic activities.



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

36.4% of educators believe that they always design activities to promote dynamism and equity, considering that they have a heterogeneous group, while another 36.4% almost always take this into account, which shows that it is quite good to have this approach, as it provides better learning opportunities for students. Only 27.3% sometimes consider it, but they do take it up, which is quite good.

Graph 7. Project management by teachers to promote activities differentiated by gender.

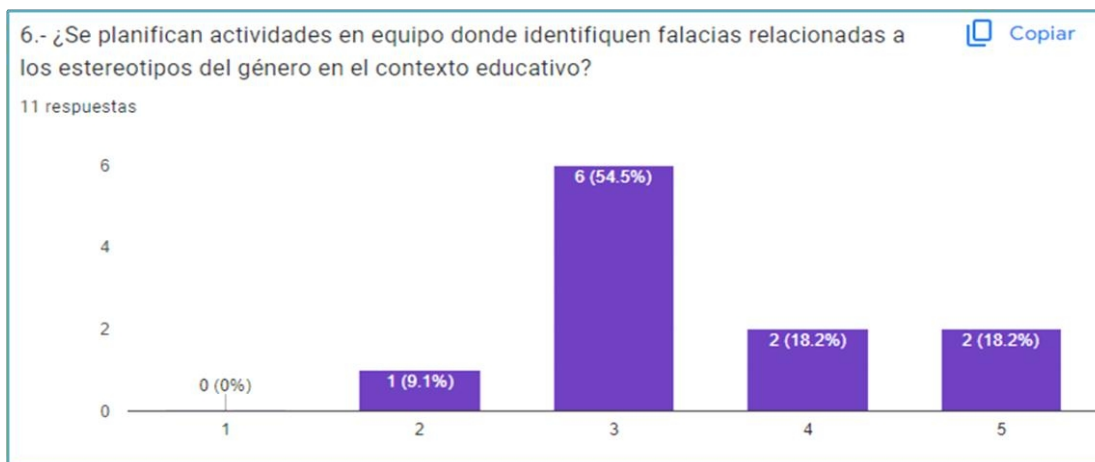


Source: Own elaboration (2024).

Regarding teachers' management of interdisciplinary projects, differentiating by gender, 27.3% always do so, 18.2% almost always, another 18.2% sometimes, 27.3% almost never, and only 9.1% never consider it. It is therefore necessary to strengthen this

aspect must be strengthened so that there is no difference between students based on their gender and to avoid reproducing stereotypes.

Graph 8. Planning team activities to identify fallacies related to stereotypes.



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

18.2% always plan them, 18.2% almost always, 54.5% consider that they sometimes plan them, and 9.1% consider that they almost never plan this type of activity. It is therefore important to work more on this type of activity in the classroom in order to raise awareness among the school community and eradicate gender stereotypes.

Graph 9. Management of collaborative reading activities to strengthen equity.

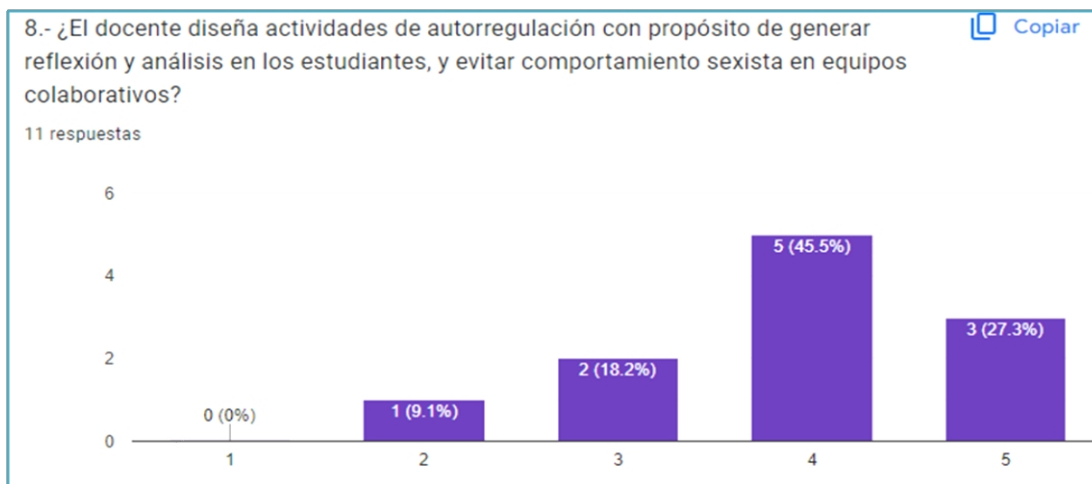


Source: Own elaboration (2024).

In this regard, 54.5% consider that they sometimes use this type of reading to strengthen equity, only 18.2% consider that they always use it, 9.1% almost always, and 18.2% of educators

say they almost never do so. It is therefore important to raise awareness among the school community through this type of activity, as it is a very useful tool for reflection through the analysis of various text carriers.

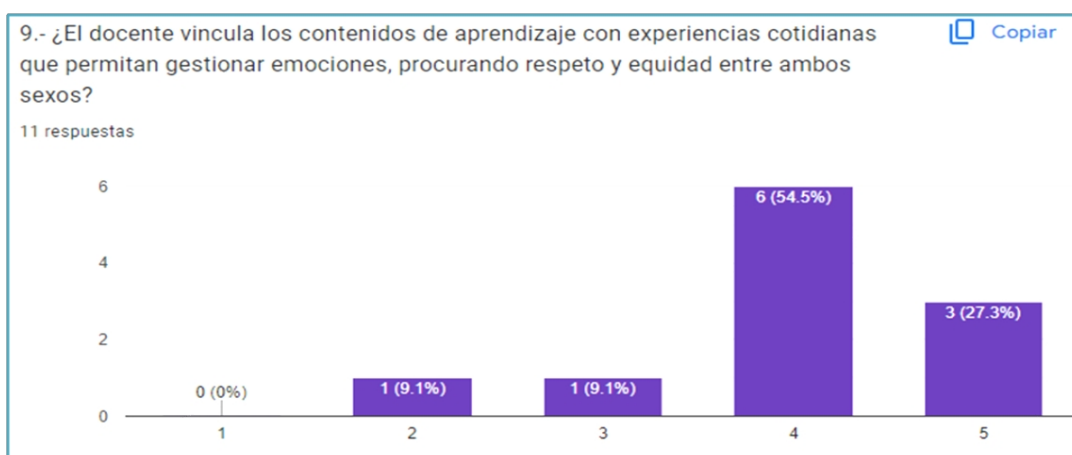
Graph 10. Teachers design self-regulation activities to avoid sexist behavior.



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

27.3% of teachers consider that they always design self-regulation activities for their students, with the aim of avoiding sexist behavior, 45.5% consider that they almost always do so, 18.2% sometimes do so, and 9.1% almost never do so. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the importance of teachers in creating an atmosphere of respect in their classrooms. One way to do this is by reflecting on various situations to raise awareness among students so that sexist behavior can be gradually eradicated in the classroom, the school community, and at home.

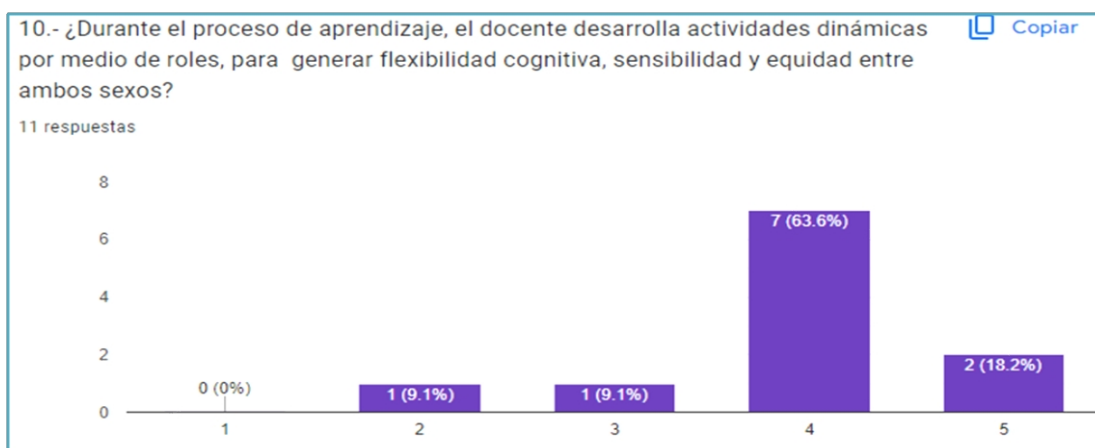
Graph 11. Teachers link learning content to everyday experiences.



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

Regarding linking learning content to everyday experiences to promote equity, 27.3% of educators always do so, 54.5% almost always do so, and 9.1% consider that they sometimes or almost never do so. In summary, it can be seen that progress is being made, indicating that learning strategies are being implemented that strengthen gender equity in classrooms and in the school community.

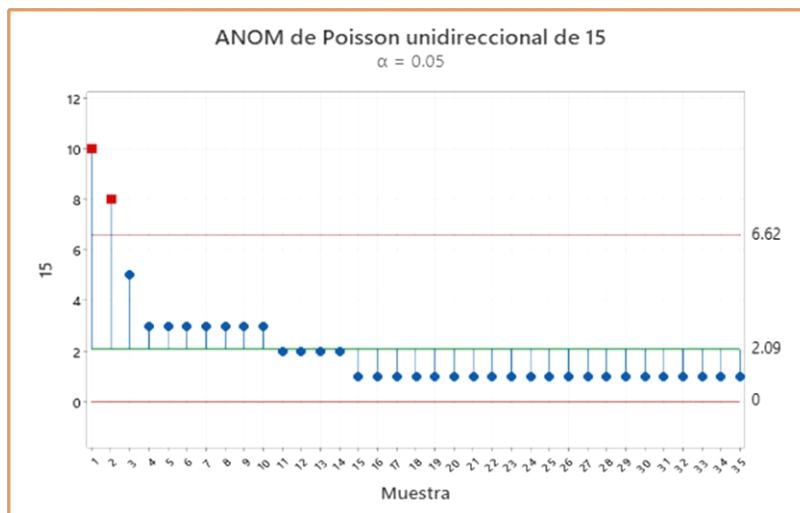
Graph 12. Teachers develop dynamic activities through role-playing.



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

In this section, I outline that at the preschool level, progress is being made in eradicating stereotypes in the classroom because educators are committed to designing diverse activities that constantly raise students' awareness of respect for diversity and gender equality in particular. This graph shows that 18.2% of participants always develop dynamic activities using role-playing to raise awareness about gender equality, 63.6% almost always do so, 9.1% sometimes do so, and another 9.1% almost never do so. This data was then validated using statistical software designed to perform data analysis efficiently, rigorously, and accurately, in order to establish the reliability of the research and measure the factors for success.

Graph 13. Analysis of ANOM measures.



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

A table was created to validate repetitions, which used mini tap software (ANOM single factor) to perform the normality test, obtaining a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$, indicating that we are on track with the research process.

CONCLUSION

It should be noted that this project on "The Impact of Stereotypes on Preschool Student Learning" was carried out in the municipality of Tlalmanalco with educators working in this school district.

In the classroom, stereotypes generally manifest themselves when educators offer students certain teaching materials, mainly classic stories and toys, which often perpetuate stereotypes of gender, race, and social class. Similarly, when interacting with adults, there is a noticeable difference in treatment, which can reinforce these stereotypes, as can the traditional activities or games that are used, which often reinforce certain traditional gender roles. It can be observed that gender distinctions are still characterized by certain clothes and colors. It is worth mentioning that due to the openness of social media, there is now greater awareness of respect for diversity. It is essential that preschool education be a space where equality, respect, and diversity are promoted. By challenging stereotypes, educators can help children develop a broader view of themselves and the world in order to build a more just and equitable society.

Stereotypes have a profound impact on preschool education, perpetuating social inequalities and limiting the development of children. It is essential that teachers, through continuous training, acquire sufficient tools to eradicate stereotypes, starting at the preschool level, in collaboration with parents, as they are a key factor. However, it is necessary to raise their awareness in order to broaden their culture in favor of gender equality, which often causes girls to be greatly limited in their aspirations and potential, and boys to be prevented from expressing their feelings naturally or spontaneously, thereby forming erroneous stereotypes. I conclude that both families and teachers play a very important role in the education of girls and boys, and often do not realize the great responsibility that this entails, taking this role lightly. Therefore, they are invited to use more inclusive language when interacting with people, as well as to make use of diverse teaching materials that represent a variety of cultures, races, genders, and abilities; to promote values of equality and respect, and to create opportunities in the classroom or at home to reflect on certain attitudes or actions that violate respect for gender equality; It is important to use a variety of text sources and work with them in different ways so that children realize that they can have big dreams, that they can express themselves freely as long as they respect others, and that they can play with all colors and toys without feeling bad because that does not define their gender.

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