Identity of place and care of the physical school environment

Identidad de lugar y cuidado del entorno físico escolar
Identidade do lugar e cuidado com o ambiente físico da escola

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Abstract

Introduction: To examine the relationship between place identity and care of the physical school environment. While care is understood as an attribute of the relationship that requires education and commitment, as a relationship between the one who cares and the one who is cared for, it is achieved when both people accept it, nurture it and commit to it. **Methodology:** A mixed method is approached, using descriptive statistics to present the information, data analysis was performed through IBM SPSS statistics software to perform statistical tests and relationships between variables, contrasting with its qualitative aspect from observation through a checklist, only to improve reliability. **Results:** a positive relationship is shown between identity of place and care of the school physical environment; with respect to identity of place and student education levels, the relationship is inverse and negative with a dependent value of -10.71. **Conclusions:** the finding can be used to create educational guidelines that contribute to institutional strategies, to achieve greater awareness and care about the space they use, concluding that schools should be conceived as environments that resonate deeply with students, fostering a stronger sense of identity and connection, to solve the opportunities for improvement found in the identity of place as students' academic levels increase.

Keywords: Care; Education; Physical environment; Identity of place.

Resumen

Introducción: Examinar la relación entre la identidad de lugar y el cuidado del entorno físico escolar. Si bien, el cuidado es entendido como atributo de la relación que requiere de educación y compromiso, como una relación entre el que cuida y el que es cuidado, se logra cuando las dos personas la aceptan, la nutren y se comprometen con ella. **Metodología:** Se aborda un método mixto, usando estadística descriptiva para presentar la información, el análisis de datos se realizó a través del software IBM SPSS statistics para realizar las pruebas estadísticas y relaciones entre variables, contrastando con su vertiente cualitativa desde la observación a través de una lista de chequeo, solo para mejorar la fiabilidad. **Resultados:** se muestra una relación positiva entre identidad de lugar y cuidado del entorno físico escolar, con respecto a identidad de lugar y los niveles de formación estudiantil, la relación es inversa y negativa con un valor dependiente de –10.71. **Conclusiones**: el hallazgo puede ser aprovechado para crear lineamientos educativos que aporten a estrategias institucionales, para lograr mayor conciencia y cuidado sobre el espacio que utilizan, concluyendo en que las escuelas deben ser concebidas como entornos que resuenen profundamente con los estudiantes, fomentando un sentido más fuerte de identidad y conexión, para resolver las oportunidades de mejora encontradas en la identidad del lugar al ir incrementando en los niveles académicos de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Cuidado; Educación; Entorno físico; Identidad de lugar.

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Resumo

Objetivo: Examinar a relação entre a identidade local e o cuidado com o ambiente físico da escola. Embora o cuidado seja entendido como um atributo do relacionamento que requer educação e comprometimento, como um relacionamento entre o cuidador e o cuidado, ele é alcançado quando ambas as pessoas o aceitam, nutrem e se comprometem com ele. **Metodologia:** foi utilizada uma abordagem de método misto, com o uso de estatísticas descritivas para apresentar as informações; a análise dos dados foi feita com o uso do software estatístico IBM SPSS para realizar testes estatísticos e relações entre variáveis, contrastando com seu aspecto qualitativo de observação por meio de uma lista de verificação, apenas para aumentar a confiabilidade. **Resultados:** foi demonstrada uma relação positiva entre a identidade do lugar e o cuidado com o ambiente físico da escola; com relação à identidade do lugar e aos níveis de educação dos alunos, a relação é inversa e negativa, com um valor dependente de -10,71. **Conclusões:** os resultados podem ser usados para criar diretrizes educacionais que contribuam para estratégias institucionais, a fim de alcançar maior consciência e cuidado com o espaço que utilizam, concluindo que as escolas devem ser concebidas como ambientes que ressoam profundamente com os alunos, promovendo um senso mais forte de identidade e conexão, para resolver as oportunidades de melhoria encontradas na identidade de lugar à medida que os níveis acadêmicos dos alunos aumentam.

Palavras-chave: Cuidado; Educação; Ambiente físico; Identidade de lugar.

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Introduction

As Morin (1999) posits, "the mission of education in the planetary era is to strengthen the conditions for the emergence of a world society composed of proactive, conscious, and critically engaged citizens in the construction of a planetary civilization" (p.57). He also argues that teaching must transform into a mission that promotes strategies for life, fueled by desire, pleasure, and love—not just for knowledge, but for students as well (Grinberg, 2002). This mission, in a planetary era, seeks the formation of a more humane world. The concept of care—from an educational standpoint—emerges as a new alternative that redefines, from an ethical and pedagogical perspective, relationships within the school context, advocating for a culture of student care. This care extends beyond a protective role, encompassing various dimensions: care of speech, academic care, care of the body and mind, and care for others and the environment. Noddings (2002) considers that the central role of the school is to care and educate for care. In this sense, the aim is to foster relationships in schools where students both care and feel cared for. In the words of Cajiao (2004), "the quality of a school should be measured, among other things, by its school climate, the conditions of coexistence among all members of the community, and the capacity to build relationships of solidarity, respect, and appreciation." This should involve an effort by the administrative staff and teachers to promote actions that transcend academic obligations, materializing through specific actions the development of other aspects of the curricular proposals related to the social and human formation of their students. In the city of Bogotá, recent district administrations have made significant investments in new buildings and resources for basic and secondary education to provide quality education in dignified conditions. However, despite these new environments and various resources, teachers and administrators often express concerns about how to foster care for the physical surroundings and new resources of the school. In most public institutions, it is challenging to get students to care for their physical environment. The maintenance of buildings, equipment, gardens, and parks should involve the entire educational community, necessitating the application and development of care as a transversal element from the early years of education. The focus of this research was on practices of coexistence to explore how these practices— whether explicit (as curricular content) or implicit (part of the individual)—reflect the degree of place identity and how this identity influences care for the physical environment. Therefore, it is essential to ground this work in urban pedagogy, environmental psychology, and human geography, emphasizing the importance of the school as a place of social encounter. According to Páramo (2007), public places offer educational opportunities to learn from them and from interactions with others; public spaces act as a set of opportunities for social and environmental learning. This interaction and learning opportunity attribute functions and purposes to places, imbuing them with meaning and sense, leading to recognition with the environment, assimilation of behaviors, and satisfaction of needs that develop identity, attachment, and care, based on these considerations, the following research question is proposed: What is the relationship between place identity and the school physical environment? Additionally, a specific guiding question arises: What is the relationship between place identity and students' educational level? In this article, the general objective is to examine the relationship between place identity and the care of the school physical environment, the specific objective is to analyze the relationship between place identity and educational level. Hypotheses are formulated for this information.

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Transpersonal Transactions: Person- Environment This perspective focuses on recomposing the

subject-object dichotomy, suggesting a dynamic relationship between them, positioning them as interdependent aspects of the same unit. This approach opposes both the positivist behaviorist tradition, which bases environmental objectivism on stimulus reality, and the subjectivist tradition centered solely on individual perspectives. From the transactional perspective, there is a reciprocal influence between the environment and the person, termed interdependent or transactive influence.

Notion of Place Canter defines "place" as a unit of analysis for various disciplines such as humanistic geography, architecture, environmental design, and environmental psychology, where people's actions are influenced by the nature of the place itself. Relph (1976) asserts that place is not just the "where" of something but includes everything occupying that space, seen as an integral and significant phenomenon. Place is felt emotionally through rituals, landscapes, other people, personal experiences, and concerns for the place. The essence of place lies at the deep center of human experience.

Place Identity Identity is understood the characteristics of an individual that allow their recognition. Identity forms from social interactions starting with family, school, and people encountered throughout life, and includes relationships with space (Páramo, 2007). Over a person's life, identity can be seen as a product of primary relationships (emergence of self), childhood (conservation and evolution of self), and adolescence (consolidation of self) (Honess & Yardley, 1987). Place identity, a substructure of personal identity, refers to "those dimensions of an individual that define personal identity in relation to the physical environment." Place identity is part of self-concept, comparable to gender identity, political identity, or ethnic identity. Proshansky et al. (1983) extend identity theory to environmental psychology, proposing that place identity is a socialization of the physical world of self. It implies that self- identity development extends not only to distinguishing between self and others but also includes objects, things, and various spaces and places encountered. Research by Breakwell (1986; 1992; 1993) and Twigger-Ross and Uzzel (1996) suggests four processes related to place identity: 1. Place and distinctions (Place identification or differentiation of self from others, e.g., "I am from Bogotá, not Cali"). 2. Place and continuity (The place as a consistent reference from my past, e.g., "I live in a town because it reminds me of my childhood environment"). 3. Congruent continuity of place (With my current beliefs, e.g., "I live in a town because it aligns with my current self and how I wish to live"). 4. Place and roots (e.g., "Living in a city makes me feel good/I long to live in a city"). 5. Place and self-efficacy (e.g., "Everything I need daily is in the city").

According to Knez (2005), identity is generally defined as an internally subjective and individual concept. In line with Neisser (1993), it comprises five types of self- knowledge that are not experienced separately and are based on different forms of information: 1. Ecological Self: Directly perceived in relation to the immediate physical environment. 2. Interpersonal Self: Perceived and established through specific emotional communication signals. 3. Extended Self: Based on memory and anticipation. 4. Private Self: Discovered through exclusive personal experiences. 5. Conceptual Self: Based on assumptions and theories about human nature in general and about oneself in particular (Goleman, 2006).

Care and Education According to Chaux, those involved in a caring relationship "always seek to understand very well what the other needs before acting, asking, listening, and observing attentively." From this perspective, and according to Noddings (2002), the role of educators in moral education is active, not merely facilitative. The teacher or caregiver must persuade, negotiate, inspire, encourage, offer agreements, provide concrete help, and teach decision-making. Education for care cannot be based on permissiveness. Thus, teaching should be a cooperative task centered on respecting the student and fostering personal initiative, prioritizing the nurturing of the student's ethical ideal. Noddings (2002) identifies four

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main pedagogical strategies that contribute to nurturing the ethical ideal of care: 1. Modeling: The teacher provides a model of care to the students, as caring is a response to the experience of being cared for. 2. Dialogue: Reciprocal receptivity between the caregiver and the cared-for, achievable through genuine dialogue where participants discuss openly and honestly their concerns. 3. Confirmation: The teacher's ability to recognize the other as an act of affirmation and encouragement. 4. Practice: Creating conditions and spaces for the student to learn to care, reinforcing care as an educational process based on the experience of both caring and being cared for. Enrique Chaux proposes four possible ways for institutions and teachers to establish caring relationships (Ramírez et al., 2023):

1. Collective Construction of Norms and Agreements: Norms and agreements contribute to classroom care, especially when students participate in defining them. "When everyone participates in constructing norms and agreements regulating group interaction, a sense of shared responsibility and community is also built" (Chaux, 2005). 2. Prevention of Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation: Olweus (1983) has shown that bullying victims are at higher risk of depression and even suicide. Classroom care relationships must prevent bullying, recognizing its severity, identifying it, and establishing rules for action when it occurs. 3. Pedagogical Strategies that Promote Care: Cooperative learning is a strategy that fosters care. Encouraging small group work enhances understanding, interaction, and problem-solving, contributing to group relationships based on solidarity and inclusion and better learning outcomes. 4. Careful Evaluation of Student Performance: "Evaluations of student work and performance can have a significant impact on academic and civic formation." The way evaluations are conducted can positively or negatively affect care relationships (Cifuentes, 2005; Escobar, 2005).

3. METHODOLOGY

This is a social research study in the field of education, descriptive in nature, primarily utilizing participant observation. It involved 71 students from various grades of Secondary and Middle Basic Education (6th-11th grades) in a district school in Bogotá. Informed consent was obtained from school authorities, students, and teachers. Research Stages 1. Observation: Participant observation aimed to record, from the observer's perspective, the environments, proposals, or strategies in the school that may influence place identity development and care promotion. Observations were guided by a list of aspects extracted from the identification of the study object and the conceptualization of physical, Observation Moment: For this purpose, participant observation was used as a technique, which sought as its main purpose to record, from the observer's point of view, the environments, proposals or strategies existing in the school that may be influencing the development of place identity and the promotion of care. A checklist (Check List) was used as the observation tool to evaluate coexistence practices and the relationship between students and the school environment. This instrument allowed for the systematic recording of behaviors related to care for the physical environment, interactions among students, and their identification with school spaces, providing structured data for analysis. The observations were guided by a list of aspects extracted from both the identification of the object of study and the conceptualization achieved on physical care (see list of aspects to consider, auxiliary list of the O-DC instrument).

List of Aspects to Consider in the Participant Observation Process (O-DC)

Related Values, sense of Place, a. Appreciation for the physical appearance and natural environment of

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the school. b. Practices of care or neglect regarding the physical and natural environment. c. Distinctiveness of the place. d. Comfort with the place (I feel good in the school). e. Practicality of the place (I find the things I need in the school).

Questionnaire for Students (I-CE).

Dear Student, the purpose of this survey is to explore the knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes concerning the physical care of the school that are generated both by you and within the school environment. The response options are neutral and do not imply any positive or negative judgment. Additionally, the confidentiality of the information you provide is assured, please mark with an X according to your level of agreement or disagreement with each item; Abbreviations: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither agree nor disagree (NA/ND), Disagree (D), Strongly disagree (SD), Questionnaire for students (I-CE).

Table 1.
Data collection instrument.

Item/Number GENERAL (SCHOOL COMMUNITY)	Item	SA	A	NA/ND	D	SD
1	In class, in addition to covering the subject matter, civic education is encouraged.					
2	Reflection on the appropriate use of school spaces and resources is promoted.					
3	Coexistence in the classroom is promoted through agreements made with the students.					
4	The teacher is an example of physical care for the school.					
5	Campaigns involving students are organized for the care of the physical environment.					
6	During class, the teacher connects with students by sharing ideas and thoughts.					
7	A sense of identity with the school's principles and values is promoted from the classroom.					
8	Reflection on the spaces and contexts surrounding the school is promoted in different classes.					
9	Teachers take actions to care for the physical space.					
10	Teachers support students' initiatives for the care of the school.					
11	Teachers demonstrate commitment and attachment to the school.					
PERSONAL						
12	I like the physical appearance of the school.					
13	I like the natural context of the school.					
14	I am concerned about not engaging in practices that harm physical care, such as littering, graffiti on doors and walls, scratching desks, etc.					
15	I am able to connect with the physical and/or natural spaces of the place.					

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Item/Number	Item	SA A NA/ND D SD
GENERAL (SCHOOL COMMUNITY)		
16	There are spaces in the school that align with my personality and character.	
17	I feel like a part of the institution.	
18	I am committed to the school's goals, which I adopt as my own.	
19	Many spaces in the school feel familiar to me.	
20	I have had very personal experiences at the school.	
21	The school has allowed me to reconsider or strengthen aspects of my personal life.	
22	I recognize the importance and significance of the school for the neighborhood or locality where it is located.	
23	I am proud to study at this school.	
24	I would be willing to report someone who damages school property.	
25	I consider myself a responsible person regarding environmental care.	
26	If the school deteriorates physically, it conveys a poor image to the community.	
27	The appearance of the environment where we live reflects our personality.	
28	I would be willing to organize activities to maintain the physical care of the school, such as raising funds, planting trees, cleaning doors and walls, etc.	

Note: Own elaboration.

Care. 2. Questionnaire Application: A Likert scale questionnaire was used to consolidate information based on identifying knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes through which students express place identity and generate care practices in their school. The theoretical foundation underlying the conceptual structure of the 28- question questionnaire is associated with three categories of questions as follows: Category 1: School- Incentivized Care Strategies Category 2: Teacher- Incentivized Care Practices These categories encompass

11 questions aimed at investigating care practices and strategies promoted within the school environment, including actions encouraged in the classroom by teachers. These are grounded in pedagogical strategies proposed by Noddings to foster an ethical ideal of care (Modeling, Dialogue, Confirmation, and Practice), as well as strategies by Enrique Chaux that aim for institutions and teachers to establish caring relationships (collective construction of norms and agreements, bullying prevention, pedagogical strategies, and evaluation of care). Category 3: Aspects Associated with Place Identity This category comprises 17 questions that seek to explore the characteristics determining the degree of place identity. It draws from Knez's five classes of self-knowledge (Ecological Self, Interpersonal Self, Extended Self, Conceptual Self), The remaining information can be found in table 1.

For the study of the variables, a data analysis will be conducted, including the application of linear regression. This approach will allow us to understand the relationship between the variables and how stu-

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dents' place identity behaves in relation to their grade level, influencing their practices of caring for the school environment, to achieve this, the variable care for the school environment, will be held constant, and the regression model will be run with the remaining variables.

4.   RESULTS

The key findings regarding place identity and care can be summarized as follows: 1. Students' satisfaction with the physical and natural appearance of the school, despite being a recent building, is not very high. 2. There are significant levels of indifference or lack of concern for actions that would enable school care. 3. There is a weak relationship between the school spaces and how they represent personal aspects of the students. 4. Students are committed to the institution's goals, taking them on as their own. 5. The school is a significant space in students' lives, connected to personal experiences and the strengthening of aspects of their own lives. 6. Students are aware of the school's importance in the local context, recognizing it as a significant space for both themselves and the community. 7. Students do not recognize the connection between their environment and the development of their personality. 8. Teachers appear more as role models in a discursive rather than practical sense. 9. Mechanisms are lacking to involve students in raising their awareness and active participation in coexistence and environmental care processes. 10. The school seems to lack a defined plan that assumes environmental education as a continuous process. From a transactional perspective, the school environment has positively influenced students as a setting for personal growth and experiences. Conversely, students have influenced the school environment by feeling committed to the institution due to its significance for the community, generating initiatives that, although not part of planned strategies and mostly driven by individual impulse, demonstrate willingness and concern for its care. The school, as part of an urban environment, has provided opportunities for learning and facilities for place identity, serving as a social setting for student interaction and education. However, as an educational space and entity whose primary function should be care, it lacks strong elements currently leading to the development of a high sense of student identity. There are no strong campaigns or educational processes contributing to its care, as evidenced by student responses to educational processes and observations showing current deterioration and little signage or display of posters promoting space care. This reveals an initial flaw: the lack of attention from school management and teachers to propose an educational approach consistent with the new structure, fostering commitment to it. While the school has a new building, it has been designed without many aspects that would foster greater student recognition. Students do not find the school's physical spaces conducive to the development of their Ecological and Interpersonal Selves, both important aspects for place identity development. The grey structure, damp environments, and sparse vegetation contribute to a less favorable perception in these aspects. Nevertheless, there are institutional factors that could be leveraged to achieve greater identity and care within the institution, particularly related to its image as an important space in the local context. Therefore, strategically utilizing the degree of affinity can lead to better results in terms of identity and care. Among these factors, the way the school becomes a crucial space in students' personal lives plays a significant role. Certainly, there is a direct relationship between students' degree of identity with their school and its care. This is reaffirmed by the direct relationship between the aspects evaluated regarding place identity and their effects on care. Both positive   predispositions, which are exploitable, and negative aspects currently weaken both place identity and school care.

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Table 2.

Place Identity.

Indicator	Percentage (%)
Students who feel part of the institution	77%
Students committed to the institution's goals	59%
Weak relationship between spaces and personal identity	Low

Note: Own elaboration.

Table 2 provides a detailed analysis of place identity among students. According to the data, 77% of the students report feeling a strong sense of belonging to the institution, indicating a significant level of attachment to the school environment. Additionally, 59% of the students express a commitment to the institution's goals, suggesting a moderate level of alignment with the school's objectives. However, the table also highlights a weak relationship between the physical spaces of the school and the students' personal identity, indicating that the school environment does not strongly reflect or reinforce the individual identities of the students.

Table 3.

Care for the School Physical Environment.

Indicator	Percentage (%)
Agreement with teacher's role model for physical care management	Between 77% and 100%
High favorability in sixth, seventh, and ninth grades (>75%)	>75%
Lower favorability in tenth and eleventh grades (33%-37%)	33%-37%

Note: Own elaboration.

Table 3 presents the results of a survey assessing teacher agreement with physical care management role models in a school setting. The data is categorized by grade level and indicates a high level of agreement among teachers in the sixth, seventh, and ninth grades, with percentages exceeding 75%. However, a significantly lower level of agreement is observed in the tenth and eleventh grades, falling within the range of 33% to 37%. These findings suggest a notable variation in the perception of teacher role models in physical care management across different grade levels within the school.

Table 4.

Relationship between Place Identity and Care for the School Environment.

Grade	Participation in care campaigns (%)	Disagreement (%)
Sixth	High	-
Eighth	High	-
Tenth	Low	63%
Eleventh	Low	31%

Note: Own elaboration.

Table 4 explores the relationship between place identity and participation in school environmental care campaigns. The data reveals a strong association between a developed sense of place identity and acti-

ve engagement in these campaigns, particularly among students in the sixth and eighth grades. Conversely, students in the tenth and eleventh grades demonstrate a lower level of participation, with a notable percentage expressing disagreement with the school's environmental care initiatives. These findings suggest that a strong connection to the school environment is a significant predictor of student involvement in promoting its well-being.

Graphs 1.
*Based on Data from multivariable.*
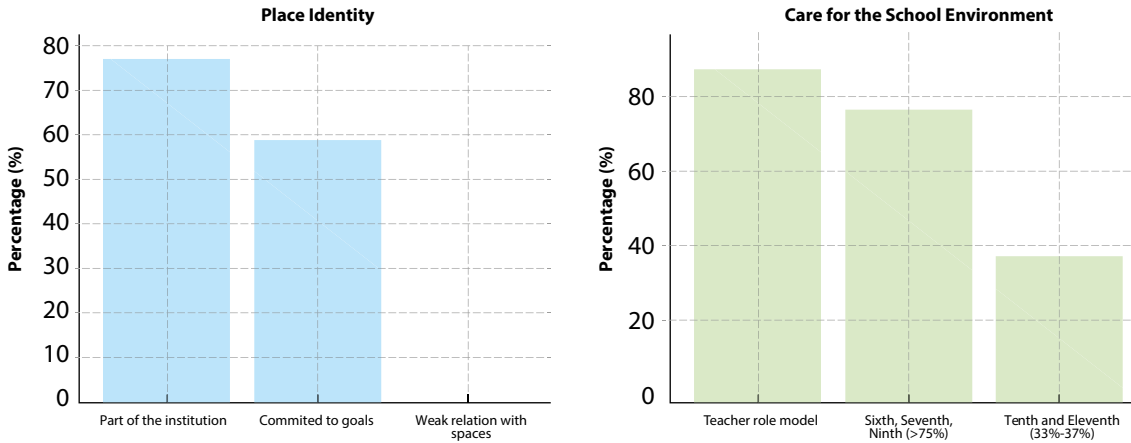
Note: Own elaboration.

These graphs visually represent the data organized in the previously presented tables. The first graph illustrates the percentage of students who feel a sense of belonging and identify with the school environment, based on their responses about Place Identity. The second graph focuses on students' attitudes towards Care for the School Physical Environment, where it shows varying levels of agreement across different grades.

Graphs 2.
Relation between identity and care.
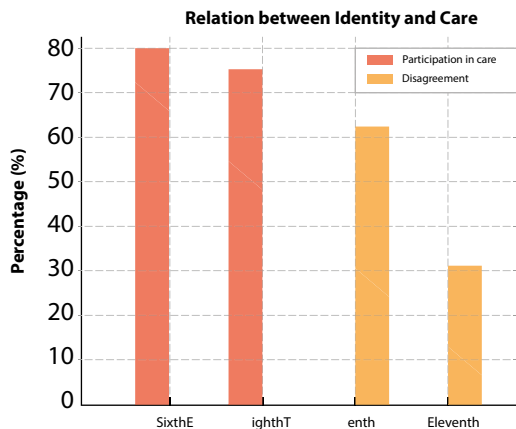
Note: Own elaboration.

The graph demonstrates the relationship between Place Identity and the Care for the School Environment, highlighting how the participation in care-related activities correlates with the sense of identity students have towards their school.

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Graphs 3.

Linear regression: identity of place vs. grade level.

Note: Own elaboration.

Here is the linear regression graph showing the relationship between grade level and identity of place. The red line represents the regression line, which predicts the identity of place percentage based on the grade level, the negative slope indicates that as students' progress to higher grades, their sense of belonging or identity of place decreases, the regression line equation is $y=-10.71x +153.38$, where y represents the identity of place percentage, and x represents the grade level. This suggests that there is a notable decline in the sense of identity with the school as students move to higher grades. This finding is important and could indicate the need to improve policies and strategies related to the school environment to maintain or strengthen place identity in higher grade students.

5. DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the discussions will be based on the results obtained from the research. Each discussion will draw from the specific data collected and contrast these findings with relevant theories. Three discussion sections have been generated, examining the relationship between place identity and the physical environment, the care of the school environment and the role of teachers, and participation in care campaigns in relation to place identity. These discussions aim to interpret the findings within the context of established theories and provide a deeper understanding of how the school environment and place identity are intertwined and impact students' educational experiences.

Place Identity and the Physical Environment

The results show that, despite 77% of students reporting a strong sense of belonging to the school, the relationship between the physical spaces of the school and the personal identity of the students is weak. This finding contrasts significantly with the place identity theory, which suggests that the physical environment should reflect and reinforce personal identity (Proshansky et al., 1983). Relph's (1976) theory also indicates that place is an integral part of emotional experience and should influence identity. The lack of connection between school spaces and students' personal identity may indicate a disconnect between the

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design of the physical environment and the emotional and psychological needs of the students. This mismatch suggests that the current school environment is not fully aligned with theoretical expectations of how the space should support the development of personal identity.

Care for the School Environment and the Role of Teachers

The data reveal high satisfaction with the physical care model provided by teachers in the lower grades (77% to 100%), but this satisfaction notably decreases in the upper grades (33%-37%). This variability suggests that the care strategies implemented by teachers may not be equally effective across different educational levels. According to Noddings (2002), care education should be active and include modeling, dialogue, confirmation, and practice. The decrease in positive perception of care in the upper grades may reflect a lack of continuity in applying these strategies. Additionally, the absence of effective mechanisms to involve students in environmental care may indicate that care education is not being adequately applied at all levels, which could negatively impact students' commitment to the school environment.

Participation in Care Campaigns and Place Identity

The results show high participation in care campaigns in the lower grades, with a notable decrease in the upper grades, and a direct relationship between place identity and participation in environmental care. This finding supports the theory that a strong place identity is associated with greater involvement in environmental care (Breakwell, 1986; 1992; 1993). The decrease in participation in the upper grades may reflect a loss of place identity as student's advance in their education. Place identity theory suggests that the connection between the environment and the self should be maintained and reinforced over time. The lack of participation in the upper grades could indicate that the school environment is not effectively fostering place identity in older students, leading to lower involvement in environmental care initiatives.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Schools should be envisioned as environments that resonate deeply with students, fostering a stronger sense of identity and connection. Effective planning of natural environments is crucial, as it enhances biophilia and contributes to the aesthetic and harmonious qualities of the space. Reviving planned tree planting campaigns, where students play significant roles, can be beneficial in creating environments that students feel more connected to.

Given that the school is a significant setting in students' lives, where they spend a considerable amount of time, its value should be integral to pedagogical strategies aimed at increasing students' awareness, ownership, attachment, and appreciation of their environment. To achieve this, it is essential to involve students more actively in educational processes, considering their ideas, perceptions, and preferences regarding the school. Leveraging aspects of strong identity, such as personal experiences, the school's importance in the local context, and positive student perceptions, can help enhance identity levels and address current shortcomings in physical and environmental care.

When constructing new and significant spaces like school buildings, it is crucial to implement robust campaigns that promote a culture of care, with a strong focus on reinforcing identity. Without this, students

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may not develop an awareness of the importance of these spaces for their lives and well-being. Therefore, educational spaces should incorporate elements of care pedagogy as a conceptual foundation, guiding the development of strategies for physical and relational care. As Páramo (2007) suggests, a significant portion of personal identity is formed through social interactions and adherence to rules, with schools being a primary venue for these relationships. Since place identity is a component of personal identity, the influence of the school as a physical and environmental space on students should not be underestimated. Curricular proposals need to integrate reciprocal elements that contribute to the holistic development of individuals, including care pedagogy. This involves establishing mechanisms for self-recognition, recognition of others, and actions that promote a culture of mutual care among people and between individuals and their environment.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to the article submitted for publication. There are no financial, personal, or professional relationships with any individuals or organizations that could influence or be perceived to influence the content of this manuscript.

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